



ATTN: Matthew Phillips
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department
Board of Water Commissioners
Customer Service Committee
735 Randolph St.
Detroit, Michigan 48226

RE: Easy Pay and Promise Pay

May 7, 2025

Dear Matthew Phillips:

I am writing concerning the Board of Water Commissioners meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 2025. During public comment, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department customers shared issues they experienced when DWSD transferred them from the Lifeline water assistance plan to the Easy Pay payment program – and were confused about DWSD’s relationship with Promise Pay. One customer wanted to know why she was moved from Lifeline to Easy Pay. She succinctly expressed the sentiments of community members that we have been lifting. The transfer process caused her to experience a hardship, as her billing cycle was changed with no notice, and illuminated the need for more transparency from the water department.

The responses from Board members and Director Brown only further complicated the situation. We appreciate their willingness to provide context in real-time. However, when conflicting and inaccurate information is shared it creates a larger problem.

To highlight this point: Director Brown stated there was no contract between DWSD and Promise Pay and that he did not know how information pertaining to the Easy Pay program made its way from weekly planning and information-sharing meetings with “advocates” to the public comment section of the Board of Water Commissioners meeting.

For the record, please note the following:

We the People of Detroit has not met with any representative from DWSD nor DWSD's director, Mr. Gary Brown, on a weekly basis. For transparency and to keep the community informed, should WPD meet with DWSD outside of their regularly scheduled public meetings (found online at <https://dwsd.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>) – we summarize the purpose and outcome of the meeting, and we share it with the public in writing.

As to the matter of how representatives from We the People of Detroit and the general public learned about the company Promise Pay and the Easy Pay program, I have shared the materials in Appendix A: Table 1 - Easy Pay Documentation Shared by DWSD below. **Table 1 shows that since the special meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners on July 30, 2024, to discuss Easy Pay**, there have been policy documents, presentations, reports, etc. shared about Easy Pay and regular discussion about enrollment in the program (please see Appendix B: Easy Pay flyer below). ***At the Board of Water Commissioner's meeting on April 16, 2025, why did members of the Board and Director Brown state that DWSD has no relationship with Promise Pay and that there are no customers enrolled in Promise Pay's payment program called Easy Pay?***

Please provide clarity about Promise Pay's Easy Pay program for DWSD customers:

1. Relationship: DWSD & Promise Pay

- a. Please share the request for proposals (rfp) process used when selecting Promise Pay for servicing past due DWSD accounts.
- b. What date was the contract signed with Promise Pay?
 - i. By whom?
- c. When did Promise Pay begin servicing DWSD accounts?
- d. Does Promise Pay receive 11% of the money collected from DWSD customers through Easy Pay as reported?
 - i. If so, is there a cap?
- e. How are the funds collected by Promise Pay distributed to DWSD?

2. Customer Accounts & Easy Pay/Promise Pay Impact

- a. Are industrial and commercial customers with arrears being transferred to Easy Pay?
- b. How many customers enrolled in Easy Pay were formerly on Lifeline?
- c. What is the average amount of arrears owed by residential customers enrolled in Easy Pay?
- d. How does enrolling customers into Easy Pay affect DWSD's billing system?
 - i. What happens to DWSD customer accounts when they are enrolled in Easy Pay?
 1. How are the arrears owed reflected on the customers' account after enrollment in Easy Pay?

2. Are the customers' arrears transferred to Promise Pay/Easy Pay's billing system?
 - a. If so, how are past due water bills treated/categorized after the transfer?
 - i. Are these water bills now treated as debt?
 - ii. Will Promise Pay report past due water bills to credit bureaus?

3. Transfer to Promise Pay System, Arrears Payment & Default

- a. How many customers have been transferred from DWSD's Easy Pay into the Promise Pay collection system?
 - i. Or does that process begin in September 2025, as mentioned in the April 16, 2025 Director's Report?
- b. What happens as arrears are paid over the 36-month period?
- c. What happens if a customer defaults on the Easy Pay program payments?

In commitment to building the Beloved Community,



Norrel Hemphill, Esq.

APPENDIX A: Table 1: Easy Pay Documentation Shared by DWSD

APPENDIX B: DWSD Easy Pay Flyer

CC: Board of Water Commissioners

Bruce Simpson, Detroit Ombudsman

Gary Brown, Director, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

Bryan Peckinpugh, Public Affairs Director, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

Debra Pospiech, General Council, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department

APPENDIX A: Table 1 – Easy Pay Documentation Shared by DWSD

Table 1: Easy Pay Documentation Shared by DWSD

	Document Title	Date & Meeting	Link to Document Online
A.	Detroit Water and Sewerage Department Meeting Agenda – Final Board of Water Commissioners	July 30, 2024: BOWC Special Meeting No. 1	LINK TO AGENDA (from DWSD's Legistar calendar)
B.	DWSD Easy Pay Presentation	July 30, 2024: BOWC Special Meeting No. 1	LINK TO PRESENTATION
C.	EASY PAY Policy 500-CS-Payment Plan Agreement	July 30, 2024: BOWC Special Meeting No. 1	LINK TO EASY PAY POLICY AGREEMENT
D.	BOWC Customer Service August 7 2024 - Draft V1	August 7, 2024: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	Formerly available HERE . (Broken link.) 8/7/24 Customer Service Committee Agenda
E.	Detroit Water and Sewerage Department Meeting Agenda – Final Board of Water Commissioners	August 21, 2024: BOWC Meeting	EASY PAY Policy 500-CS-Payment Plan Agreement-v.3 - For BOWC Review
F.	Customer Service Metrics: BOWC Customer Service September 4 2024	September 4, 2024: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service September 4 2024
G.	Customer Service Presentation: BOWC Customer Service October 2 2024 - DRAFT	October 2, 2024: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service October 2 2024 - DRAFT
H.	Director's Report: Board Report - Metrics - 10162024	October 16, 2024: BOWC Meeting	Board Report - Metrics - 10162024
I.	Customer Service Presentation: BOWC Customer Service November 2024 - FINAL	November 6, 2024: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service November 2024 - FINAL
J.	Director's Report: Board Report - Metrics - 11202024	November 20, 2024: BOWC Meeting	Board Report - Metrics - 11202024
K.	BOWC Customer Service December 2024 - Draft V1	December 4, 2024: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service December 2024 - Draft V1

L.	Board Report - Metrics - 12182024	December 18, 2024: BOWC Meeting	December 4, 2024: BOWC
M.	Customer Service Presentation – BOWC Customer Service January 2025 Draft 1	January 7, 2025: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service January 2025 Draft 1
N.	Director’s Metrics - Board Report - Metrics - 011525	January 21, 2025: BOWC Meeting	Board Report - Metrics - 011525
O.	Customer Service Presentation - BOWC Customer Service February 2025 Draft v1	February 5, 2025: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service February 2025 Draft v1
P.	Customer Service Presentation - BOWC Customer Service March 2025 V1 DRAFT	March 5, 2025: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service March 2025 V1 DRAFT
Q.	Director’s Metrics - Board Report - Metrics - 03192025	March 19, 2025: BOWC Meeting	Board Report - Metrics - 03192025
R.	Customer Service Presentation - BOWC Customer Service April 2 2025 DRAFT V2	April 2, 2025: BOWC Customer Service Committee Meeting	BOWC Customer Service April 2 2025 DRAFT V2
S.	Director’s Report - 18.Board Report - Metrics - 04162025 (2)	April 16, 2025: BOWC Meeting	18.Board Report - Metrics - 04162025 (2)

APPENDIX B: DWSD Easy Pay Flyer



EasyPay

\$10 ↓ Payment Plan

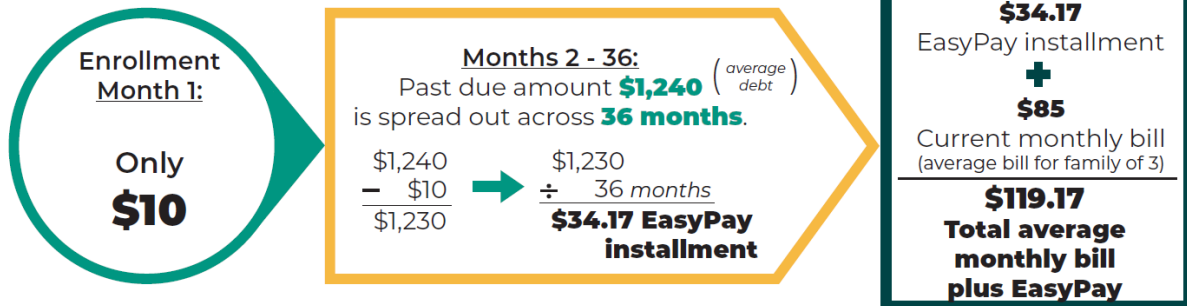
Detroit Water & Sewerage Department's (DWSD) easy way to keep your water running and pay your past due balance!

Open to ANY DWSD customer who has a past due balance and is not eligible for the Lifeline Plan.

EASY TO ENROLL WITH ONLY \$10 DOWN.

The remaining balance will be spread out across 36 months.

HOW IT WORKS



- NO INCOME REQUIREMENTS • INTEREST FREE •
- PROTECTED FROM SHUTOFF & PENALTIES •
(so long as you stay current on your payments)

EASY TO ENROLL & EASY WAYS TO PAY



Log in and sign up through the Customer Self-Service Portal at csportal.detroitmi.gov

OR Call 313-267-8000 and say "EasyPay" when prompted.

Then, make your monthly payment online, by phone or at a DivDat Kiosk.

Learn more at detroitmi.gov/EasyPayWater