



Detroit Water and Sewerage Department Meeting Minutes - Final Board of Water Commissioners

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Wednesday, February 19, 2025

2:00 PM

To attend by phone call one of these numbers:
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Use Meeting ID: 815 7263 5118
Use Passcode: 482262021

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BOWC Meeting and Public Hearing 5th Floor Board Room, Water Board Building

A Final Project Plan for the DWSD Sewer Rehabilitation and Designating and Authorized Project Representative FY 2025 Clean Water State Revolving Fund

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Einheuser called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Commissioner Lane Coleman, Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon,
Commissioner John Henry Davis, Commissioner Jane Garcia and
Chairperson Michael Einheuser

Excused: 2 - Commissioner Linda Forte and Commissioner Jonathan Kinloch

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairperson Einheuser requested approval of the agenda.

**A motion was made by Commissioner John Henry Davis, seconded by Vice
Chairperson Mary Blackmon that the agenda be approved. The motion carried
by a unanimous vote.**

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairperson Einheuser requested approval of the minutes of January 15, 2025.

**A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by
Commissioner John Henry Davis that the minutes be approved. The motion
carried by a unanimous vote.**

A. Director Brown's Update on the Southwest Detroit Event

Director Brown's update on the Southwest Detroit event reported by Samuel Smalley,
DWSD Deputy Director stated that on Monday, February 17, 2025 around 2 a.m., a 54
inch transmission main disrupted in Southwest Detroit at Beard and Rowan Streets.

Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD), Fire, Police, Department of Public Works (DPW), General Services Department (GSD), and Housing and Revitalization Department (HRD) were on site to assistance and provide relief from the flooding.

Director Brown reported that crews were there to address the homes and cars affected by the five to six feet of flood water in the streets. He said that Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT) provided buses to transport residents to recreational facilities prior to relocating them to hotels. He stated that Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) was notified as it is their asset that flooded the community, and that a split cost will be associated with the 133 households.

One hiccup that the Department faced was the ability to provide translators for the community. There were 80 buildings and safety inspectors on hand to help with the welfare check and Spanish-speaking translation. He also said that there was a six inch water main break damaged by the 54 inch transmission that left approximately 50 residents without water service and a 48 hour boiled water alert was issued. Director Brown said there are currently four homes without water. There are approximately 400 homes in the footprint of this event and about 200 homes with damage. The Department also had a sanitation contracts in-place to help clean the homes, along with electrical, HVAC and DTE on hand to provide their services. The Department also had a claims process in progress to help uninsured residents with property damage and the contact number for residents to call at (313) 774-5261.

Vice Chair Blackmon extended commendations to the Director, leadership, and staff for the expedient aid to the Southwest Detroit residents. She was really gratified by how the Department responded quickly and provided the community with a sense of comfort.

Commissioner Garcia stated that Latin Americans for Social and Economic Development (LaSed) had taken on the responsibility of providing the community with translation assistance. She also said that a lot of the residents were afraid to answer their doors due to law enforcement presence. Many of them were also not eager to sign any waivers or leave their homes. Director Brown added that at the time of the incident and for public safety and health reasons, any volunteer assistance that was available was necessary, and there was an academy of student police officers that happened to be able to help. He stated that the waiver has been used by the Department during several other events: the Jefferson/Chalmers Event, Basement Backup Program, and the Sewer Line Lateral Program. The waiver clearly states that you are not waiving your right to claim any State, Federal or City ordinance and that you have the right to reserve and make a claim. He also said that there was no force to sign the document, but there was pressure to get the document out to the community to start the work process.

Director Brown added that American Water Resources (AWR) had made a monetary donation and offered to provide their assistance with the cleanup and would waive any fees for the next six months to those residents affected in the footprint of this event.

Commissioners Forte and Kinloch arrived at 2:13 p.m.

Commissioner Davis echoed Vice Chair Blackmon's comments and commended the Mayor, Director Brown, leadership, and all the other City Departments that came to move mountains in the middle of the night. He was appreciative of the Downriver dive team, Oakland County, and Monroe County for this regional cooperation.

Vice Chair Blackmon asked Director Brown speak to on a communication that he received from the Department's strong-critic and community advocate, Monica Patrick-Lewis that read as follows: "Director Brown, over the years we have been on opposite sides of issues on more than one occasion. The Detroit response to the recent mass flooding in Southwest Detroit has been a clinic on how to address similar events nationwide. The team that the City put into the field according to reports, included multiple Departments all focused on solving this crisis as soon as possible, was a step above. The Detroit police going door-to-door to offer the residents help was terrific. To learn that residents were not being offered shelter, but hotel accommodations with transportation and access to food was so heartwarming and demonstrated how Detroit knows how to treat folks engaged in a crisis, not of their making. There is a lot of criticism when things go wrong. But at this moment, we applaud these heroic efforts that can be envied nationwide. Thank you to the City of Detroit."

Chairperson Einheuser stated that our hearts go out to these residents that have been misplaced. I cannot imagine being awoken at 4 a.m. with water coming into the home and temperatures in the single digits, is a frightening prospect. They are in our thoughts and prayers. I too want to reiterate how proud we are of the Mayor, Director Brown, and the field service people working in these weather conditions. It is unfortunate that the system is old, but it is a very proud day for Detroit.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes per speaker)

- a. John Laslou came before the Board about the infrastructure. He said he was thankful that the water quality is good, but unaffordable. He argued that he should not be charged for drainage from rain water.
- b. Jermaine Paynes said he was thankful for all the assistance from the first responders in the Southwest community. He said the infrastructure needs major repair and the focus of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) should be geared toward water main breaks and sewer collapses. He gave commendations to all the skilled trade workers, Detroit Police Department (DPD) and the Mayor. He also thanked Commissioner Garcia for her support in the Latino community.
- c. Theresa Landrum commended the Department for the quick response to the water main break. She asked if this event would increase the rates for the City. She said her community has been flooding for years. She wants an audit of DWSD and GLWA to see if the funding of the CIP is being used for these aged-old infrastructures.
- d. Attorney Norrel Hemphill, of We the People of Detroit (WTPOD) came to thank the Department for addressing an elderly resident that had an issue with her sewer lateral and thankful for the resolution. She also said there were approximately 27,000 residents initially enrolled in the Lifeline Plan and that 11,000 households have currently re-enrolled. She wants to know what happen to those remaining residents that were previously enrolled in the Lifeline Plan.
- e. DeMeeko Williams, Chief Executive Director with Hydrate Detroit, thanked Director Brown, Deputy Director Smalley and the field technicians for their efforts with the Southwest Detroit community flooding. He wants to know why DWSD is offering to pay for this event when GLWA is the owner of the asset.
- f. Rosalyn Ogburn asked that the Department keep the community updated on the

next steps. She commended the staff on their efforts in addressing the Southwest Detroit event. She also wants the Department to address the infrastructure.

g. Gwendolyn Howard echoed the previous speakers and gave accolades to the Department's response to the flooding event. She also mentioned that the Department had not updated the website with the Federal poverty income level for the 2025 year.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

A. [2025-44](#) Receipt of Correspondence

Sponsors: Crowell

Attachments: [Nassar Aljalham - Response](#)
[Gaston Nash - Response](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Communication or Report be received and filed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

B. [2025-45](#) Receipt of Correspondence

Sponsors: Phillips

Attachments: [We the People of Detroit - Letter to DWSD](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Communication or Report be received and filed. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

7. ITEMS FROM THE COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Kinloch thanked the Mayor, Director Brown, and staff for the gratitude in their response to this flooding event.

Commissioner Forte echoed all the commissioners responses regarding the Southwest community. She also commended Matthew Phillips, Chief Customer Service Officer, for addressing a matter she brought to his attention.

Vice Chair Blackmon added that she had the opportunity to view a media advertisement from the University of Phoenix that spotlighted Mr. Matthew Phillips, Chief Customer Service Officer, and wanted to acknowledge his outstanding representation of the Department.

8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was none.

9. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (Items 9A-G)

A. [2025-26](#) The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to **approve Amendment No. 5 to DWSD**

Contract 6002651 (CS-1943), with iVantage Group for temporary staffing services, by adding \$500,000.00 in funding, for a total amended not-to-exceed amount of \$1,965,000.00. No change to scope of services, or terms and conditions. The BOWC also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Welch

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract Amendment be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

B. [2025-28](#)

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to **approve DWSD Contract 6006934 with Bob Maxey Ford, Inc., a secondary contract for as-needed OEM parts, repairs, and maintenance services for DWSD Ford owned vehicles; for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$1,000,000.00 and a term of five (5) years.** This also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Welch

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

C. [2025-29](#)

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to **approve DWSD Contract No. 6006947 with RSI Enterprises, Inc., to provide Payment Plan Collection Services for Delinquent Receivables, for a duration of two (2) years with an option to extend. This is a revenue contract with no payments made to the vendor. The vendor is compensated by retaining 16% of all amounts collected.** This also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Welch

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

D. [2025-30](#)

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to **approve DWSD Contract No. 6006955 with EJ USA, Inc. (formally known as East Jordan) for Brass Curb Stops of various sizes; for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$339,312.93 and a term of two years.** The BOWC also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Welch

Attachments: [bid tab 6006955 ej usa brass curb stop](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

E. [2025-31](#)

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to **approve DWSD Contract No. 6006962 with Motor City Pipe & Supply Co. for Gate Valve parts, for a total contract amount not-to-exceed \$601,549.50 and a term of two years.** This also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Welch

Attachments: [bid tab 6006952 motor city gate valve](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract be approved.. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

F. [2025-32](#)

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to approve **Amendment No. 1 to DWSD Contract 6006476 (CS-1989), with M. E. Simpson Company, Inc., for City of Detroit Leak Detection in Targeted Neighborhoods, by adding \$198,213.68 in funding, for a total amended contract not-to-exceed amount \$500,000.00. No change to the scope of services or contract terms and conditions.** This also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Welch

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract Amendment be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

G. [2025-35](#)

Detroit Water and Sewerage Department Easement Agreement

The Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department authorizes the Director to **approve a DWSD easement between NP DETROIT COMMERCE CENTER, LLC** and also authorizes the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Bahri

Attachments: [14250 Plymouth Easement Documents](#)

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that this Contract, Real Estate Easement be approved. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. [2025-33](#)

Upon recommendation of Samuel A. Smalley, P.E., Deputy Director, the Board of Water Commissioners for the City of Detroit, Water and Sewerage Department recommends **adoption of the “A final project plan for the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department Sewer Rehabilitation and Designating an Authorized Project Representative FY 2026 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)”**. The BOWC also authorizes the Chief Financial Officer and the Director to take such other action as may be necessary to accomplish the intent of this vote.

Sponsors: Smalley

Attachments: [CWSRF FY2026 BOWC Resolution](#)
[CWSRF FY2026 BOWC Presentation](#)
[Public Meeting Notice CWSRF FY2026](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Jonathan Kinloch, seconded by Commissioner Lane Coleman that this Resolution, BOWC be adopted. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

i. PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS (3 minutes per speaker)

a. Jermaine Paynes asked how was it determined for Corktown and District 6 to be chosen for the infrastructure improvements. There are many other neighborhoods that have catastrophic issues with sewer mains that need upgrading. How are those neighborhoods chosen? He said that there are sewer mains behind his properties with sewer issues. He has hired plumbers to evaluate and determined that the mains have trees and branches growing inside causing taps to be destroyed. He said Downtown tends to get more attention than the communities that are at high risk for flooding.

Commissioner Kinloch responded that Corktown is the oldest community within the City that has had infrastructure failure directly tied to the age of the infrastructure with this community. Director Brown added that this is not the only project that we are working on, but we have the funding source for these two projects that have been engineered and designed. We have several projects that are on-going or in construction that are being paid for with other dollars. The oldest part of the system starts at the River and goes north and the closer you get to 8 Mile is the newer part of the system. So the data that engineering has gathered in the assessment has determined this area is worthy of these dollars. It does not mean we will not work in the Brightmoor area and other parts of the city. The Department is asking the Board to approve our opportunity to get a low to no interest rate bond from the State Revolving Fund.

Chairman Einheuser added that it is important that we are applying for this money and we cannot apply if we do not state what it is for. But it does not curtail any other projects.

b. Theresa Landrum stated that her community on Barrett at Harvest and Olga has been meeting with Great Lakes Water Authority (GLWA) representative, Greg Marker, who is working on a 3500 foot tunnel for the Northwest Interceptor down into the central sewer overflow at the Oakwood Pumping Station in Southwest Detroit, on the corner of Liddesdale and Beatrice Streets. Back during the Kilpatrick administration, they built

a \$200 million structure to accommodate overflow and extra water in the 48217 zone. For 25 years we have had serious flooding on our streets. When we spoke with Mr. Marker and told him our concerns, we talked about the infrastructure repairs and drainage needed for our community. It has been on the radar for years for infrastructure improvements and has experienced flooding since the inception of the 3500 foot tunnel. "Ms. Landrum said there is new construction in Corktown, Midtown, Tech Town, and Downtown. We are the borderline community, salvaged between River Rouge, Ecorse, Melvindale, and Dearborn. We are down here where Marathon is the only oil refinery in the State. We experience a high amount of environmental impacts, and flooding is one. During the 2021-2024, our homes were flooded basement deep. Many residents have not received any help from the city about cleanup. The streets have been flooding for over 20 years. I do not see that when I go to Corktown. It seems to me that the borderline communities that are predominantly African American are left out of these improvements. We need the city to come assess our community and address the flooding issue. Come evaluate these black communities for consideration".

c. Michelle Jackson of the Chandler Park neighborhood states that the Department continually put band aids on street flooding concerns for the last four years. Last year it was so bad that two residents lost their vehicles.

d. DeMeeko Williams with Hydrate Detroit said there is a need to update on where we been, what we have done, and where we are going. He agrees with Mr. Smalley for the concern of the Department getting support from the State. We want to ensure that the drinking water quality is safe. GLWA has had a few communities with lead higher than the Michigan lethal limit. He wants to ensure that our water is clean. Mr. Williams asked how much of an investment does DWSD and GLWA make. He also said there was a time when we did not have any chemist or water quality experts to ensure that the drinking water was clean. The uranium on the dock is owned by Manuel (Matty) Moroun. This is the fifth anniversary that the City was supposed to have the Detroit River Ordinance Plan to ensure we have clean water. The investments that we are making are supposed to ensure clean drinking water in the city and the region. Mr. Williams said that he supports Mr. Smalley's decision making, and that there should be a greater participation of other authorities in the region to come together and invest. We need a thorough status report.

e. Attorney Norrel Hemphill asked if this was discussion was for the DWSRF or the CWRSF? She asked for a brief description of the SRF process. Please describe what overburden and significantly overburden means, and why these two terms are important in the SRF process? Is there a prior list within DWSD that outlines the clean water projects and the infrastructure projects that need upgrading or fixes? Can you provide the ages or age range of the infrastructure, particularly the Downtown infrastructure and the infrastructure as it spreads out into the neighborhoods? Finally, will this new system in Corktown be a combined system or separate? If combined, why? Or if separate, why?

ii. ROLL CALL

A motion was made that this resolution be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 7 - Commissioner Forte, Commissioner Coleman, Vice Chairperson Blackmon, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Garcia, Chairperson Einheuser and Commissioner Kinloch

11 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was none.

12. COMMENTS BY COMMISSIONERS

There were none.

13. COMMENTS BY THE CHAIR

There were none.

14. OTHER MATTERS

There were none.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Einheuser requested a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson Mary Blackmon, seconded by Commissioner Linda Forte that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

How to Make a Request for Public Comment

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<http://cityofdetroit.zoom.us/j/81572635118>

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We respectfully request that you maximize your three minutes by sharing all your comments/questions at one time. You will only be called upon once for public comment during the same committee meeting, full board meeting, or hearing.

Once the Chair closes public comment, there will be no other public comments accepted and all the attendees will remain muted for the duration of the meeting.