

Board Minutes for the Board of Sanitary Commissioners Meeting of February 19, 2025

THE BOARD OF SANITARY COMMISSIONERS conducted a regularly scheduled meeting.

Board members present; Adam Leach, President; Tim Overton, Vice President; David Smith, Secretary; Aaron Clark, Board Member; and Steve Selvey, Board Member (remote).

**Department managers and staff present;** Rick Conrad, District Administrator; Joe Rhetts, Legal Counsel; Chuck Jones, Director of BWQ; Deana Cox, Financial Manager; Tim Stover, IT Administrator; John Anderson, District Engineer; Thom Noble, Director of Engineering; Chuck Jones, BWQ Director; Richard Ivy, HR Director; and Maggie Bales, Executive Office Manager.

**Public present:** Lora Jones-McClure.

**Public Comments:** None.

**Consideration of Minutes:** Mr. Leach entertained a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Smith moved to approve the Board Meeting Minutes as submitted for the meeting of February 5, 2025. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. The motion was passed (5-0).

**Consideration of Claims:** Mr. Leach entertained a motion to consider the register of claims totaling \$621,708.93. Mr. Clark stated a claim on page three of fifteen for disposal services to East Central Recycling in the amount of \$177,436.23. He stated a claim to Muncie Downtown Development in the amount of \$15,000.00. Mr. Clark stated that MSD provides clean up assistance and assistance with events downtown Muncie. He stated a claim for a \$4,000.00 flow monitoring for the Delaware Regional Waste District. Mr. Selvey moved to approve the consideration of the claims. Mr. Overton provided a second. Motion passed (5-0).

**District Administrator Update –** Mr. Conrad stated that progress is still continuing on the levee tieback construction. He stated that good feedback and response times have been received from the Army Corps, the hope is that construction will begin in the spring, as we had planned. Mr. Conrad stated that MSD has been going through a lot of rate adjustments this year, and Commissioner Clark had some questions about the information that was on sewer bills. He stated that now that bills are relying a little bit more on user classes, that information was not very obvious on individual bills, so that has been added to every user's sewer bill so the class can be seen. Mr. Conrad stated that residential is fairly straightforward, but institutional, governmental, commercial, have had a few questions about those. He stated that in some cases adjustments were made where the particular user fits better in a different category. Mr. Conrad stated that efforts will be made to try and better itemize all of the expenses that are on the bill, so it will not just say the class, but it will actually show the rates that customers are paying and how the fees are itemized, so you can calculate those and see those a little more clearly at home. He stated that an appeal process has been implemented that is a little bit more formal than what was done in the past. Mr. Conrad stated if customers see anything on the bill that is questioning, the first step is you can call billing, where they will explain what they have on it, and set up a record for you. He stated that any disputes, or appeals to how you are being classified, there is a procedure on there to submit that information in writing. Mr. Conrad stated that it will be reviewed here, and a response will be sent. He stated that there are measures where those need to be changed. Mr. Conrad stated that he would not guarantee that there are not one or two outliers out there as well. He stated MSD has finished the interview process for bond counsel for some anticipated bans and bonds that are needed in the future. Mr. Conrad stated that four separate firms were interviewed, the selected firm is Ice Miller. Mr. Clark stated his appreciation to Mr. Conrad for adding the user class to customer bills. He stated that Mr. Harmon brought it up in a previous meeting and

after further review it was determined to be a help to our customers. Mr. Overton stated his appreciation to Mr. Conrad for the effort to add the user class to the bills.

**Department Head Update – Jason Donati, Sanitation Superintendent.** Mr. Donati stated that he just wanted to provide an overview of the work our department accomplished last year in 2024 and to discuss on what we are currently working. He stated that he would like to begin by expressing his gratitude and appreciation for the employees in the department, especially during this cold weather, as they work out there as essential workers, ensuring that everything is taken care of and that our community's important work is handled. Mr. Donati stated that we have a great team, and he is thankful for all of them. He stated that he will not go through all of the numbers, as there are quite a few, but he has broken down the recycling and trash numbers separately in this report. Mr. Donati stated that the recycling program is still growing and that it is still a relatively new program. He stated that the community has accepted it well, and they are learning the program quite effectively. Mr. Donati stated that they are still working with some residents regarding the issue of not putting materials in bags, but the department is collecting a lot of material, and it is being done more efficiently and cleaner than in the past year. He stated that the tonnage for what the trucks have picked up has grown significantly compared to last year, which is a positive sign. Mr. Donati stated that the county-wide recycling drop-off is available, and there is a drop-off box at East Central Recycling where anyone in the county can drop off material. He stated that this is also where we encourage people to drop off cardboard and similar items. Mr. Donati stated that the school recycling program has expanded, and currently, large recycling roll-offs are available at Delta High School, Middle School, Cowan, Muncie Central, and Inspire Academy, and the tonnage collected from these locations can be seen. He stated that the department covers the fees for this service to encourage schools to participate in recycling. Mr. Donati stated that the department also offers a residential free shredding certificate for anyone who signs up for the recycling program, which allows residents to go to East Central Recycling to have their materials shredded for free. He stated that this acts as an incentive to encourage participation in the program. Mr. Donati stated that yard waste collection continues to be a significant task, and residents are offered Peterson and residential drop-off options for this material. He stated that he wants to draw special attention to electronic recycling. Mr. Donati stated that the department currently offers curbside pickup for electronics, as it is illegal in Indiana to throw anything with a cord or electronics into regular trash totes. He stated that residents are encouraged to recycle electronics either by dropping them off at East Central Recycling or by calling to arrange a pickup. Mr. Donati stated that this service has become increasingly expensive, with the cost of processing electronic waste doubling, but the department continues to offer it as an essential service. He stated that the paint recycling program is still going strong, where the department collects paint from the community, sends it off for mixing, and then distributes the remixed paint to nonprofit organizations and neighborhood cleanups. Mr. Donati stated that this has been a popular program. He stated that in the area of household hazardous waste, the department collected 24.47 tons last year through a countywide program, and 1,762 tires were recycled. Mr. Donati stated that 1,349 pounds of sharps were also collected, and he pointed out that East Central Recycling pays for the disposal of sharps to keep them out of the waste stream for safety reasons. He stated that the total trash collected last year was 29,357.85 tons, which is slightly down from the previous year. Mr. Donati stated that every resident is allowed to drop off 2,000 pounds of household trash at East Central Recycling, and the department covers that cost. He stated that the department also covers the tipping fees for the Muncie Mission, which dropped off 543 tons of material last year. Mr. Donati stated that 15 neighborhoods participated in neighborhood cleanups, and 56.20 tons of material were removed. He stated that the White River cleanup involved 252 volunteers, who removed 1.56 tons of material, including thirty-two tires. Mr. Donati stated that when negotiating the new contract with East Central Recycling, they agreed to freeze the tipping fees for two years to help offset some of the initial costs of the new recycling program. He stated that starting July 26, 2025, the third year of the new contract, there will be an annual CPI fee, which means the tipping fee will increase, and he will keep everyone posted on the new rates. Mr. Donati stated that code enforcement has been extremely busy, especially with the recent changes to the lease toter fees. He stated that the lease toter fee is increasing

from \$5 to \$10 per month starting March 1, and some residents have asked for the department to pick up their old toters, which the department is working on. Mr. Donati stated that the department has also been assisting the Building Commissioner's office and the Muncie Police Department with van-to-camp cleanups, and there is still more to be done. He stated that the mechanic garage has been doing a fantastic job of keeping all the vehicles running, including those for the Muncie Fire Department. Mr. Donati stated that the department is expecting to receive two new automated trucks, with the potential for a third, in June 2025, although these trucks have been significantly delayed. He stated that the trucks, which were ordered in April 2023, are now expected in June 2025. Mr. Donati stated that the cost of new trucks has increased due to inflation, and it is taking longer to receive new vehicles. He stated that the department is still looking at route optimization options and continues to monitor the use of overtime by essential employees. Mr. Donati stated that the department works every mandatory holiday, except for Christmas, to ensure that trash, recycling, and other services are carried out. He stated that the department also handles leaf season collection, neighborhood cleanups, and community outreach, and that code enforcement assists with salting and plowing fire stations, City Hall, 911, and other areas. Mr. Donati stated that the CNG station operates 24/7, which requires constant attention. He stated that usage by the Muncie Police Department has declined, and the department is considering raising the gas gallon equivalent rate due to rising costs. Mr. Donati stated that the gas contract with BP for the CNG station expires at the end of June 2025, and the department will begin looking at quotes for the new contract. He stated that the renewable natural gas program through the STX contract has been averaging \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month. Mr. Donati stated that leaf season needs to continue to be discussed, especially as this year's collection efforts were different. He stated that there are still bagged leaves that will need to be addressed as the weather improves, and the department is working on a plan to tackle this for the upcoming season. Mr. Donati stated that there are retirements and openings in the department, with an automated operator technician retiring at the end of the month, and part-time and full-time laborer positions currently available. Mr. Clark stated that he appreciates the work done on recycling and the mechanic work in the garage. He stated that it is great to be partnering with affiliates in the city and maintaining their vehicles. Mr. Clark stated his gratitude for this collaboration. He stated that they also received the route optimization report, which is something they asked for, as well as other ideas for process improvements. Mr. Clark stated that balancing out some of the routes could possibly make room for additional business in the future. He stated that they appreciate the efforts in doing that. Mr. Overton stated that it was a great job as always. He stated that some adjustments were made in code enforcement. Mr. Overton stated that he would like to know if those adjustments have been helpful. He stated that he also wants to know if any further adjustments are necessary. Mr. Donati stated that the adjustments have been extremely helpful. He stated that they currently have four full-time code enforcement officers. Mr. Donati stated that their duties have increased, and it has been very helpful. He stated that they are staying very busy, as reflected in the different numbers. Mr. Donati stated that, if you remember, the ordinance made changes related to clean outs, bulk items, and other matters, will be something they start closely looking at this year. He stated that they plan to address the move-out situations they deal with. Mr. Donati stated that they had a situation today where a pile of trash has been sitting out since the beginning of the week, and that is unacceptable for anyone to have to deal with. He stated that there are ways in the ordinance to start addressing that, potentially by charging them for cleanup, as they have service rates that are published every year. Mr. Donati stated that code enforcement has done a good job with this. He stated that it is almost like a case study right now, as they are taking pictures of these situations and analyzing them individually. Mr. Donati stated that they are developing the best protocol for addressing each case. He stated that he anticipates that, in the spring and summertime, when people are more active, there will be even more situations to manage. Mr. Donati stated that they are staying busy, and it has been extremely helpful with the changes made. He stated his gratitude for the support in these efforts. Mr. Selvey stated that he just wanted to mention that one thing was omitted from the report. He stated that he had heard that the efforts to keep the hardcore homeless camps somewhat clean were facilitated through the work being done. Mr. Selvey stated that he believes this effort does matter. He stated that he has seen the difference it has made. Mr. Selvey stated that he appreciates the help with the NFPs and community

development, as well as getting an accurate count for the number of homeless individuals in the community. He stated that, because of this assistance, they have probably finally received the first accurate number they have ever gotten. Mr. Selvey stated that this does matter. Mr. Donati stated that the code enforcement team helped with volunteers to get an accurate count of where people are. He stated that there is a point-in-time count done annually, which is essentially a survey in the community to see where people sleep at night. Mr. Donati stated that the code enforcement team was able to assist with that in some of the camps and areas they know where people are located. He appreciated Mr. Selvey for bringing that up. Mr. Smith stated that he appreciates Mr. Donati and all his staff for the great work they are doing on a daily basis, especially last year when he came to Jason about the STX contract. He stated that the revenue coming in for the district is appreciated, and he is grateful for Jason's support in that. Mr. Smith stated that he believes Jason mentioned the revenue averages about \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month. He stated that this additional line of income is valuable and thanked Mr. Donati for it. Mr. Leach stated that he wanted to know if Jason has considered any other facilities beyond Greenway for their electronics recycling program. He stated that he is curious about exploring additional options for the program. Mr. Donati stated that they have been working with East Central Recycling and the East Central Solid Waste District to determine if there is a better place to take their electronics for recycling. He stated that they have not found a good alternative yet. Mr. Donati stated that the increase in costs was likely due to more people getting rid of old TVs and other electronics. He stated that there had not been a price increase in a couple of years, which resulted in a significant rise all at once. Mr. Donati stated that they are still looking for alternative locations that could help reduce costs. He stated that they have also considered placing a limit on how much electronic waste each household can dispose of, as dealing with large amounts of old electronics is expensive. Mr. Donati stated that the bills are paid through grant money received from the East Central Solid Waste District, and they are working together to figure out how to address the costs. Mr. Leach stated that he appreciates the coordination.

#### **Old Business:**

**1. Resolution 2025-02 Amending and Fixing the Schedule of Sewer Rates and Charges to Add Non-Profit Billing Line.** Mr. Leach began by noting that this was a continuation of old business concerning the addition of a non-profit billing line. He explained that this new billing line is placed between commercial and residential billing, with non-profits having slightly higher usage rates but a lower fixed rate. Mr. Clark expressed appreciation for Mr. Overton's work on the matter, acknowledging that it had been an oversight on their part. He mentioned that a large community had turned out to remind them that non-profits in their class should also be reassigned. Mr. Overton thanked everyone for their efforts, stating that they had moved as quickly as possible and appreciated all the support. Mr. Selvey, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Leach all echoed the positive comments. Mr. Leach then called for a motion to approve Resolution 2025-02. Mr. Overton moved to approve, and Mr. Leach provided a second. Motion passed (5-0).

#### **New Business: None.**

#### **Additional Board Topics:**

**1.** Mr. Clark stated that on March 2, they have scheduled the first cost savings business meeting with the board and leadership at MSD, something that was started last year. He stated that he believes it has been very beneficial, especially with all the rising costs, and keeping this process going is important. Mr. Clark stated that there were some wins from last year, and he believes they can build on that and always look to improve the service they provide and the money they spend. He stated that he appreciates all those involved in that and that they will pull into that in March.

**2.** Mr. Overton stated that he agrees with Mr. Clark. He stated that to echo what Mr. Clark said, it would be helpful if the department heads could talk to their workers up and down the line. Mr. Overton stated

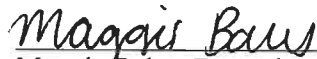
that sometimes the best ideas come from the people on the ground, so if they could speak with them when the meeting happens and come with their own ideas as well, that would be beneficial.

3. Mr. Selvey stated that he looks forward to coming back and being there in person for the next meeting. He stated that he thanks the public and the board for putting that forward.

4. Mr. Leach stated that he would try to say something nice and simple. He stated that he would pick on Mr. Rhett's and their legal team at Defur Voran, who continue to provide great service to them and the district. He stated that they appreciate their efforts in putting up with some of their questions. Mr. Leach stated his thanks to Joe, especially, but also to the entire team at Defur Voran for the great work they have done for them.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Leach stated our next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 5, 2025, at 11:30 a.m. in the City Hall Auditorium. Mr. Leach stated he would accept a motion to adjourn. Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting for February 19, 2025. Mr. Leach seconded the motion. Motion passed (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted,

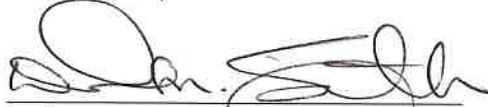


Maggie Bales, Executive Office Manager

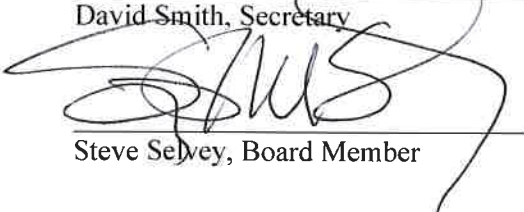
*Approved by the Board of Sanitary Commissioners  
Muncie Sanitary District*

  
Adam Leach, President

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Tim Overton, Vice President

  
David Smith, Secretary

  
Aaron Clark, Board Member

  
Steve Selvey, Board Member