

**OCEAN PINES SERVICE AREA
WATER AND WASTEWATER
Advisory Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 26, 2025**

Present **Water and Wastewater Advisory Board**
Fred Stiehl, Jim Spicknall, Bob Kane, Jack Collins, Will Gabeler
Worcester County Public Works
Dallas Baker, Chris Clasing
Worcester County Public Works - Water and Wastewater Division
Gary Serman, Meg Etzler
Worcester County Treasurer
Quinn Dittrich

Fred Stiehl called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Fred asked if there were any additions and/or corrections to the June 12th minutes. There was a correction to the minutes, under the Wastewater Treatment Plant sludge haul from Riddle Farm. We have hauled 3,636,000 gallons since the beginning of March. The original minutes listed it as 3,636.

Jack raised concern that the Board was not informed of the decision by the Commissioners to merge the Enterprise zones, on the budget side of things, and that everybody shared everybody's costs. Dallas noted that we are always looking at interconnections because it improves redundancy, making a system more resistant to failure. Discussion was held. Jim made the motion to accept the minutes as corrected and amended. Bob seconded.

Water Production

- We began the well resiliency evaluation, got the draft last week, and are reviewing it. We are focusing on the electrical and mechanical issues that caused the wells to malfunction and what we need to do to prevent this in the future.

Water Distribution (4/10/25 to present)

- One new service; 25 leak repairs
- There was a water main break on Rabbit Run with some run-off into the canal, but it took just a day for the water to clear. It was not sewer water but drinking water. There will be no violation charged. The entire event lasted about 90 minutes.
- Capital Projects:
We have replaced 1,635 out of 5,054 meters.
Blue tubing - will be ordered as needed

Wastewater Treatment Plant

- Storage lagoon permit –Gas main relocation completed. MDE Construction permit received last week. Getting project bid out.
- Belt Filter Design – 75% complete. The DBF engineering firm is currently working on the electrical equipment. This project is about a year and a half behind schedule.
- Sludge haul from Riddle Farm – from the beginning of March we have hauled 3,636,000 gallons of sewage to here at approximately 2 cents per gallon compensation. Discussion was held.
- FY 25 Capital projects:

1. Oxidation treatment tank cleaning (Treatment Unit #4) – awarded to Miller Environment Group. \$124,157.97. Budget was \$75,000. Remaining funds used from reserves; will add additional tank cleanings to future budgets.
2. Replacement mixer for the Flow Equalization Tank delivered and we are coordinating installation.
3. Clarifier No 1: bent rake arm – under repair. Additional corrosion to baffle weir wall discovered. Commissioners approved \$61,113.67 additional funding to repair.
4. Blower – commissioners approved additional funding to repair blower. Six to eight weeks to repair. Will add rotating replacement blowers to future budgets.
5. The clarifier and blower repairs left our maintenance account depleted. Commissioners approved an additional \$20,000 funding through remainder of fiscal year.
6. Additional \$178,000 was brought in for these four projects.

Wastewater Collections System (4/10/25 – present)

- No Sanitary Sewer Overflows.
- Household tanks replaced: 1 (plastic)
- Smoke testing is complete.
- FY 25 Capital Projects
 1. Busch pumps are ordered as needed. Seeing a price increase.
 2. Fiberglass vacuum tanks are ordered as needed. Are looking at other vendors.
 3. Lift station “T” pump replacement – installed week of 5/26/25.
 4. Receiving Tank Station “I” replacement – approved by Commissioners on 10/1/24. Delivery scheduled for 7/7/25. Will need to rent crane for installation.

Construction Projects (Total EDUs)

- Triple Crown Phase II (30) – Punchlist complete. Waiting on as-builts.
- Refuge at Windmill Creek (90) Phase 2 water under construction.
- Gum Point Road (15 sewer) no change.
- St Martins by the Bay (58 water) – 30% design was due 9/12/24. Waiting on engineer/owner agreement received from design firm on 12/23/24. Agreement being finalized.
- River Run Townhouses (56) project closed out. Maintenance bond released.
- River Run Single Family Homes (38) Pump station startup was held. Waiting for design engineer’s letter of acceptance stating pumps are working per performance curve. Waiting for punch list for water & sewer to be completed.

Bay Restoration Fee

Dallas referenced a copy of the June 10, 2025, letter sent to Maryland Department of the Environment’s Program Manager Walid Saffouri, and his response email sent the next day. Discussion was held.

The Bay Restoration Fee Criteria YTD was submitted and discussed. Prolonged sub-freezing temperatures in January and February affected nitrogen removal.

- Total Flow for 2024 year-to-date: 129.478 million gallons for the year with a daily average .901.

Financial Update

Quinn shared the Ocean Pines Service Area Balance Sheet through 5/31/25, the Budget Worksheet Report for 2026, the Income Statement through 5/31/25 and the allocation of sewer EDU for Ocean Pines as of 2/18/25. Discussion ensued.

Dallas referenced the Sewer EDU allocation spreadsheet provided by Quinn. Although it states it is updated as of 2/18/25, Quinn reported there have been no changes to the sheet. The figures are still valid.

General Discussion

Dallas addressed the letter from Fred regarding several matters that the Board would like to raise at our meetings. Dallas shared that if there are any topics the Board wants to put on the meeting agenda to let him know and he will be glad to do so. Fred asked if there was any way to receive the agenda earlier than the week before our meetings. Dallas shared that he always tries to get the agenda out but sometimes it isn't feasible.

Fred referenced the Strategic Plan that was developed some time ago by the Department and the Board. It has not been reviewed or revised in years, and he suggested we reopen this.

There was a proposed consultant's study of the size of water & wastewater pumps on Rt 589 to service potential development. Fred shared that if the Board had advance notice, they could better understand the future impact of such projects.

Dallas shared the history of this study. A developer was looking to put in townhomes north of the AGH facility. Originally 40 homes were proposed, then the figure was 160 to 220. The 40 homes could be handled by Pennington Commons. The Commons cannot handle 160+. Then the developer suggested installing their own lift station. Public Works does not want each possible developer to put in their own lift station. The more lift stations, the more money and manpower it costs to maintain them. The study in question did not cover the area where the developer was proposing development. A new study was proposed to cover the area in question and come up with a plan of what will be allowed and hopefully approved by the Commissioners. Then in the future we have backing regarding what will and will not be allowed in developing this area.

The interconnection of Ocean Pines' water system and Glen Riddle was discussed previously but at a public budget hearing it was noted that we have been providing water to Glen Riddle and there are questions from Ocean Pines residents as to how well this is managed. The question has been asked if we are interconnecting our water and wastewater with other areas, have these additional withdrawals been analyzed for their intrusion impact on our aquifer?

These are some of the topics the Board would like to address at future meetings.

Our next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, August 26, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.**

With no further business Fred made the motion to adjourn. Jack seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Etzler
Administrative Assistant