

MINUTES
NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MAY 1, 2025

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Darnell Brown.

I. Roll Call

Present: Darnell Brown
Ronald Sulik
Timothy DeGeeter
Jack Bacci
Samuel Alai
Sharon Dumas
Marjorie Chambers

The Secretary informed the President that a quorum was in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION – Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded, to approve the Minutes of the April 17, 2025 Board Meeting. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

III. Public Session

There were no items.

IV. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Chief Executive Officer, informed the Board that on April 15th NEORS participated in the groundbreaking for Birthing Beautiful Communities Birth Center and Headquarters, a recipient of a 2025 design and construction Green Infrastructure Grant Program grant. NEORS's Green Infrastructure Grant Program provides \$2 million each year to support stormwater management projects within the combined sewer area. The grant awarded to Birthing Beautiful Communities will provide \$227,000 in support of the installation of permeable pavers in the parking lot of the facility, which is located at 1802 East 65th Street. There will also be educational signage to explain the function of the permeable pavers in terms of managing stormwater. The sandy soil at this location will allow for the reduction of up to 400,000 gallons of stormwater annually.

On April 30th Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells participated in a hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. The hearing was related to the reauthorization of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and was titled “Building on the IIJA Successes: Identifying Opportunities to Strengthen Water Infrastructure Programs”. The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) requested that Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells participate and discuss NEORSD’s experiences with the State Revolving Fund and the support that NEORSD provides to its member communities in obtaining funding under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells was joined by Tom Goulette, City Administrator and Utility Superintendent for West Point, Nebraska, as well as Eric Oswald, Director of the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy, Drinking Water and Environmental Health Division. The hearing provided the opportunity to discuss national water funding issues as well as the importance of the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program, which was raised several times in questions from the senators. NEORSD will continue to support the Committee as they look to State Revolving Fund reauthorization in 2026.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells advised that Cathy Glisic has been selected to serve as the next Superintendent of the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant and invited Frank Foley, Director of Operation and Maintenance, to introduce Ms. Glisic.

Mr. Foley explained that Ms. Glisic began her new role on April 28th. Ms. Glisic began her employment with NEORSD as an investigator on the Water Quality and Industrial Surveillance team in 2009. In 2011, she transferred to Operation and Maintenance and has spent much of her career at the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant, serving as an Operator, Shift Supervisor, Unit Process Manager, and most recently, Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Foley also indicated that Ms. Glisic has served as an Assistant Superintendent at both Southerly and Westerly. Mr. Foley and President Brown congratulated Ms. Glisic on her new role.

Action Items

Authorization to Advertise

Resolution No. 90-25	Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 6119.10, for the Southerly Fluid Bed Incinerator No. 1 Refractory Replacement project with an estimated probable construction cost of \$1,950,000.00.
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MOTION – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded to adopt Resolution No. 90-25. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown requested additional information regarding the need for the project and the requirement of not awarding the contract in excess of 20% of the engineer’s estimate. Robin Rupe, Director of Engineering and Construction, explained that this project is for the second incinerator

to be updated along with some ancillary equipment inside the refractory, in order to ensure effective operations. In 2023, incinerator bricks and other equipment were replaced in the third incinerator, and in 2027, there are plans to make similar replacements to Incinerator No. 2. There is a stipulation to award within 20% of the engineer's estimate, which is \$1.95 million.

Authorization to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)/Request for Qualifications (RFQ)

- Resolution No. 91-25 Authorization to issue an RFQ, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for a comprehensive cost of service rate design study for both sewer and stormwater services, affordability analysis, and related services for years 2027 through 2031.
- Resolution No. 92-25 Authorization to issue an RFP, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for the security sensitive project presented in the confidential security memo provided to the Board with an anticipated expenditure of \$114,000.00.
- Resolution No. 93-25 Authorization to issue an RFP, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for the security sensitive project presented in the confidential security memo provided to the Board with an anticipated expenditure of \$70,000.00.

MOTION – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 91-25 through 93-25. After the following discussion , without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown noted that the reauthorization of the State Revolving Fund is informative, as it is an instrument that NEORS D relies upon to lower rates and requested additional information regarding the upcoming rate study. Ken Duplay, Chief Financial Officer, explained that the rate study period is for the years 2027 through 2031 and NEORS D is looking for a vendor to aid in the process. NEORS D is not anticipating any major changes to its rate structure. The vendor will need to present ideas to maintain equity in rates. The affordability analysis will include topics such as demographic analysis of the customer base, assessing population, income levels, and eligibility. As for the affordability programs, NEORS D is seeking opportunities to see best practices from around the country to expand its offerings. There will be an in-depth analysis of customers' financial status currently, five years ago, and five years into the future in order to determine how to best position those programs.

President Brown noted that other water utilities face difficulties relating to rate structure and disconnection programs and while it is always the goal to keep customers in service, there is no such thing as free water. President Brown recalled a conversation with utility representatives in Jackson, Mississippi where they have had a number of water and sewer related challenges, and they were impressed by NEORS D's Affordability Program, as they had never heard of anything like it.

President Brown asked for additional information as to how NEORSO is collaborating with other entities to determine best practices. Mr. Duplay agreed and added that under the leadership of Constance Haqq, Chief Administrative Officer, NEORSO is a leader in affordability offerings to customers and is always open to new ideas to expand those offerings and remove barriers to the programs.

Ms. Haqq explained that NEORSO has six different cost-saving programs. As part of the most recent rate study exercise, NEORSO expanded its programs to include eligible renters and increased the eligibility threshold from 200% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) to 250% of the FPL. NEORSO will again evaluate these programs to see if they can be enhanced under the new rate study. Additionally, NEORSO has a Barriers Removal Committee that meets monthly to assess what barriers customers are facing and ways to address them. For example, NEORSO now opens GJM on Saturday mornings to allow customers who are unable to call or come in during the week to discuss their accounts with Customer Relations staff, in addition to the Utility Assistance Resource Fairs.

President Brown voiced appreciation for the expansion of the cost-savings programs, as it positively impacts the community. President Brown also expressed interest in learning what the customer demographics are and eligibility for programs versus participation rates.

President Brown stated that he also sits on the Board for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, which provides wraparound support services to assist people with various needs in addition to food and has encouraged them to continue working with NEORSO and City of Cleveland, Division of Water to assist community members in need. Ms. Haqq agreed and indicated that NEORSO has staff at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank monthly to assist customers and Food Bank staff attend NEORSO's Utility Resource Fairs and provide each attendee with a bag of food.

President Brown added that, regarding Resolution Nos. 92-25 and 93-25, the precautions under the security sensitive projects are important in the current climate.

Authorization to Purchase

Resolution No. 94-25

Authorization to purchase twelve Sorbent Polymer Composite media modules from sole source vendor EnviroCare International for replacement in the Renewable Energy Facility's mercury scrubbers in an amount not-to-exceed \$148,800.00.

MOTION – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 94-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Agreement

Resolution No. 95-25 Authorization to enter into an agreement with sole source vendor Blackline Safety Corp. for the purchase of portable atmospheric gas meters in an amount not-to-exceed \$250,000.00.

MOTION – Ms. Chambers moved, and Mayor Alai seconded to adopt Resolution No. 95-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 96-25 Authorization to enter into a public improvement contract with Ohio Machinery Co. dba Ohio CAT to replace the radiator for the Environmental and Maintenance Services Center’s standby generator in an amount not-to-exceed \$175,000.00.

Resolution No. 97-25 Authorization to enter into a one-year requirement contract with Ohio Machinery Co. dba Ohio CAT for Caterpillar standby generator preventive maintenance and repair services in an amount not-to-exceed \$1,248,303.24.

MOTION – Mayor Bacci moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 96-25 through 97-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Rescind Resolution and Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 98-25 Rescission of Resolution No. 34-25, adopted February 20, 2025, which authorized a two-year requirement contract with Reworld Tron Corp. for regulated waste disposal services, and authorization to enter into a two-year requirement contract with Foundation Environmental LLC for regulated waste disposal services in an amount not-to-exceed \$247,107.00.

MOTION – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded to adopt Resolution No. 98-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Close Out a Public Improvement Contract

Resolution No. 99-25 Authorizing the Final Adjusting Change Order to close out Public Improvement Contract No. 23004147 with Shook Construction Co. for the Southerly Secondary Effluent Capacity Improvements project, to decrease the contract amount by \$155,577.94, thereby bringing the total contract amount to \$1,355,822.07.

MOTION – Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 99-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Property Related Transaction

Resolution No. 100-25 Authorization to acquire one parcel in fee simple known as PPN 457-33-005, located at 11201 W. Pleasant Valley Road, in the City of Parma, owned by Michael J. and Waydene M. Farrell, necessary for the construction and maintenance of the SWMP Project Area 6 – Flood and Erosion Reduction Near York and Pleasant Valley Roads (BDPA06) project, and to enter into a six-month no-cost lease agreement with the Farrells, and to allow for the entirety of the payment to be disbursed to Innovative Title and Escrow Services, LLC, with total consideration of \$302,000.00 plus closing costs.

MOTION – Mayor Alai moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded to adopt Resolution No. 100-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

V. Information Items

President Brown indicated that the Financial Report and Investment Advisor Performance Report for the three-month period ending March 31, 2025 was contained in the meeting materials and any questions should be directed to Mr. Duplay directly.

Mr. Foley provided the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Report for the first quarter of 2025, beginning with safety. During the first quarter, there were two lost or restricted time incidents, one strain and one fracture. On February 10th, a WQIS employee slipped twice and suffered a strain resulting in six restricted workdays. On February 12th, an SSMO employee fell from a ladder entering a control structure and fractured his ankle. There have been 46 total lost days in 2025. That number will increase as the employee with the ankle fracture was still out at the end of the quarter. The internal DART goal limit is 2 and the rate is currently approximately 1 for O&M and 1 District-Wide.

As for effluent quality, suspended solids, phosphorus and carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand were well under the accepted limits at each of the wastewater treatment plants. May is the time of year that phosphorus levels begin to increase so those levels will be closely monitored.

Mr. Foley provided a chart demonstrating maintenance costs at each wastewater treatment plant for the quarter, focusing on equipment assets with the highest maintenance cost for the quarter. Some of the more significant maintenance costs include rebuilding the Southerly Skimmings Pump No. 3 for almost \$60,000; the Southerly Centrifuge #1 cycle reducer was rebuilt for almost \$45,000. These types of rebuilding activities are expected; however, the centrifuge work has been more expensive than was anticipated and the contract funds have been expended. The Operation and Maintenance Department plans to request authorization from the Board to procure a new contract for this work in the near future.

Mr. Foley then discussed the Easterly Primary Collector No. 11, and explained that in the primary settling tanks, there are collectors with a series of drives, pulleys, chains, and flights. Flights go across the surface of the tank, scrape off grease, then sink to the bottom of the tank, pushing sludge to one end of the tank where it is removed. Because there are frequent problems with this equipment, the plant Engineering group is investigating the issue to determine what changes can be made to decrease associated maintenance costs.

Another area of concern at the Easterly WWTP is two 900-gallon water heaters. The water heaters are approximately seven years old and one of the tanks is exhibiting corrosion and potential structural issues that were not anticipated. The Plant Engineering group is researching this issue as well.

As for the collection system, there were no dry weather overflows in the first quarter and the automated collection system equipment has been available 100% of the time during wet weather.

The 2025 operating budget for the 11 O&M budget centers is \$74.8 million, and \$14.5 million was spent in the first quarter of the year. There is a 36% variance in electricity spending primarily due to timing of utility bills, as well as a \$600,000 variance in solids handling related costs. Spending is slightly lower than the first quarter of 2024.

Regarding personnel, the Human Resources Department has begun the next cycle of the Maintenance Training Program, and recently hosted two technical training showcases for employees throughout NEORS D who may be interested in the Maintenance and Operator Training Programs. The 2025 Maintenance Training Program will commence this summer with 12 positions. There were seven O&M employees who received promotions in the first quarter, and there are another 8 O&M employees who are new to NEORS D.

Mr. Foley invited Brian Flanagan, Superintendent of the Renewable Energy Facility (REF), to discuss solids management for optimal performance.

Mr. Flanagan explained that the REF is the most complex and expensive facility owned and operated by NEORS. As it relates to the disposal of grease and sludge, the facility disposes of 20.5 dry tons of grease and skimmings, and 94.5 dry tons of sludge daily. On the occasions that the materials have been hauled offsite, it requires nearly 20 semitruck loads at a disposal cost of \$30,000 daily.

The facility receives truckloads of restaurant and food processing facilities grease, where it is offloaded at the grease unloading station then pumped to the Skimmings Decant and Storage Facility along with the grease and skimmings removed from the various wastewater process tanks. At the Facility, the grease is concentrated by removing as much water as is reasonable, heated to liquid, and pumped to the REF for ultimate disposal.

The sludge solids that settle to the bottom of the wastewater process tanks is pumped to gravity thickeners, which are essentially highly concentrated clarifiers, and then pumped to the sludge storage tanks, which hold the feedstock for the REF. Finally, all of the materials are pumped into the fluidized bed incinerators for ultimate disposal.

Mr. Flanagan provided a slide demonstrating the dashboard that tracks the costs of incineration on a daily basis. This cost has decreased significantly since March 20, 2025 when NEORS commissioned its newly rehabilitated generator at the REF. Mr. Flanagan provided several examples of the baseline and variable costs tracked by the dashboard, such as staffing, utility costs, and chemical costs.

NEORS staff have been working over the past several years to improve the process control in order to minimize the inputs to the process and maximize the output of the processes of the REF. In 2021, it took an average of 6.6 MCF of natural gas to dispose of each dry ton of solids. Through enhanced process control efforts, that has been reduced by 40% to 3.9 MCF on average. There is a steam turbine and electrical generator that is used to generate electricity at the REF and each day that the generator is used, reduces electricity costs by \$2,400. As for sustainability, greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by 9.6 metric tons per day. The aforementioned generator that went online on March 20th, reduces electricity consumption by 10% to 15%, resulting in \$100,000 in annual savings.

In closing, Mr. Flanagan discussed the amount of collaboration required to keep the REF running, between various operators, engineers, maintenance technicians, and instrument technicians to maintain the more than 600 instruments in the REF and transmit data to the computerized control systems which are maintained by the Process Control and Automation Group. There are several departments that support the operations of the REF as well, such as Engineering and Construction,

which assists with the design and construction of various capital improvement projects, plant rehabilitations, and performance enhancements.

Mr. Flanagan expressed appreciation to the NEORS D staff that make the REF a successful facility, as well as the Board for providing support for the necessary projects.

VI. Open Session

There were no items.

VII. Public Session (any subject matter)

There were no items.

VIII. Executive Session

There were no items.

IX. Approval of Items from Executive Session

There were no items.

X. Adjournment

MOTION – President Brown stated business having been concluded, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded the motion to adjourn at 1:19 p.m. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.



Timothy J. DeGeeter, Secretary
Board of Trustees
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District



Darnell Brown, President
Board of Trustees
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District