

MINUTES  
NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MARCH 19, 2026

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  
Timothy DeGeeter  
Ronald Sulik  
Jack Bacci  
Sharon Dumas  
Marjorie Chambers

Absent: Samuel Alai

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 March 5, 2026 Board Meeting. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

I. Public Session

There were no items.

II. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Chief Executive Officer, advised the Board of Trustees that Ohio EPA has finalized its Program Management Plan for the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) Program for 2026, and several NEORS service area communities have been awarded funding. The WPCLF makes funding available to local governments through a competitive process and the funding includes both traditional and principal forgiveness loan funding.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021 increased available funding for principal forgiveness loans and NEORS has worked with interested member communities since then to try to capture as much of that funding as possible for local projects. This year the City of Parma Heights was selected for a \$2.5 million principal forgiveness loan for the Blossom and Sutherland Avenue Sewer Improvements Phase 1 project, and the City of Parma was selected for a \$2.5 million

principal forgiveness loan for their Craigeigh Drive Septic Abatement project. The Cities of East Cleveland and Cleveland Heights were offered the traditional loan approach for their projects, but both opted not to pursue that funding. NEORSD will continue working with the Cities to try to get their projects funded for 2027.

Since the passage of IJA, NEORSD has worked with member communities to receive over \$15 million in principal forgiveness funding and assisted them in applying for a total of \$35 million in project funding. The year 2027 will be the last for principal forgiveness funding. NEORSD feels strongly that engaging member communities in the WPCLF funding process can direct more funding into Northeast Ohio going forward. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells thanked Donna Friedman, Manager of Community Watershed Coordination, Danielle Giannantonio, Senior Manager for State and Federal Legislative Affairs, Christine Umerly, Project Manager Engineering and Construction, and Watershed Team Leaders Anne Schilling, Francisco Rivera, and Nicole Velez for their efforts in assisting member communities throughout the process.

Congress approved the Fiscal Year 2026 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill, which includes \$1.092 million in grant funding to NEORSD for the Big Creek West Branch Repair project. The project has an estimated total cost of \$6.5 million and will include the rehabilitation of a double barrel arch corrugated metal culvert that runs under an elementary school, a church, and the backyards of many homes in the City of Cleveland. The culvert conveys the Big Creek West Branch and serves as a CSO outlet; and the western barrel of it will convey CSO flows to the future Big Creek Storage Tunnel.

Since the earmarks returned in 2021, NEORSD has received over \$10 million in funding for various sanitary sewer and stormwater projects. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells thanked the entire congressional delegation for their assistance, and specifically for the Big Creek West Branch project, Congresswoman Brown moved it forward.

NEORSD has continued its new year meetings with new mayors and trustees. On March 12<sup>th</sup> NEORSD met with Mayor Erica Nikolic of Oakwood Village and on March 13<sup>th</sup> with Mayor Chad Gluss and his staff in the City of Olmsted Falls, as well as new Township Trustee of Olmsted Township Bob Perez and his staff. NEORSD has remaining upcoming meetings with the Cities of University Heights and Mayfield Heights.

### Action Items

#### Amending Resolution and Adopting Budget

Resolution No. 36-26                      Amending Resolution No. 127-25 to adopt the District's operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2026, as presented.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 36-26. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown provided a summary of the actions that took place during the Finance Committee meeting for the record, explaining that Mayor Alai served as Committee Chair and Mayor Bacci was in attendance as a Committee member. Ms. Dumas was also in attendance. The meeting was held on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>, to discuss the proposed 2026 budget. A detailed presentation was provided, outlining the proposed operating and capital budgets for sanitary sewer and Stormwater Programs.

Key expense categories were discussed in detail. The operating revenue projections were presented that support the proposed 1.7% increase in sewer operating expenses; \$156.8 million for 2026 and 22.8% decrease in stormwater operating expense, \$27.9 million for 2026 compared to the 2025 budget. These projections are also in line with the 2022 through 2026 rate study projections.

The capital budgets for 2026 are \$293.7 million for sanitary sewer and \$19.6 million for Stormwater Programs. Debt service payments for 2026 will be \$122.8 million. The meeting also included a discussion of the current ten-year long-term financial plan and the components of the comprehensive capital plan of finance the Finance Department developed to utilize cash for \$764 million of the \$1.2 billion sewer capital program for 2026 through 2030. Projected future rates and typical customer bills were also presented.

#### Authorization to Enter Into Agreement

Resolution No. 37-26                      Authorization to enter into professional services agreement with Jacobs Associates dba Delve Underground, for design and construction administration/resident project representation services, for the Edgewater Beach Surge Tunnel project, in an amount not-to-exceed \$3,996,002.95.

**MOTION** – Ms. Chambers moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 37-26. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown requested an explanation of what services would be provided under the contract and what future expenses may be. Robin Rupe, Director of Engineering and Construction, explained that this Resolution will award nearly \$4 million for consulting services spanning from predesign to closing out of the project, with an estimated span of 44 months to complete the project. The construction contract for the project is currently estimated at \$18.5 million. The project will include approximately 1,350 linear feet of 10 to 12-foot diameter tunnels in hopes of eliminating CSO outfall 069 at Edgewater Beach.

President Brown clarified that this is the same CSO that was discussed recently and received media attention. Ms. Rupe answered affirmatively and explained that it has taken several years to identify the current planned approach, which will offer the best opportunity to reduce pollution abatement and optimize the Westerly Chemically Enhanced High-Rate Treatment operations.

Authorization to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)

Resolution No. 38-26                      Authorization to issue an RFP for design and construction administration/resident project representation services for the Southerly Generator #5A project.

**MOTION** – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacchi seconded to adopt Resolution No. 38-26. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown noted that this project is related to the generator fire, which is still under investigation, and requested an explanation as to the status of finding a suitable replacement and the insurance aspect of the event. Ms. Rupe explained that NEORSD secured a temporary generator for \$728,000, and by the end of the month, will be under contract with Kokosing for the installation at a cost of approximately \$1.1 million. There may be additional equipment to be purchased to complete the installation. It is expected to be installed and operational within three months.

Regarding the investigation and insurance claim, there was a site visit with the insurance carrier on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, wherein samples were collected and sent to their lab, in hopes of identifying the source of the fire. Insurance Company, Caterpillar, Ohio CAT and District staff have supported this initiative.

This Resolution Request is for the permanent installation of the replacement generator. Ms. Rupe provided photos of the project area and explained that there will be additional work to determine what to do with the existing generator under this contract, which is going to go from design through the installation of the permanent generator. This project will also help in evaluating how the Southerly WWTC can participate in curtailment programs going forward.

President Brown asked how this will impact the curtailment programs. Ms. Rupe explained that NEORSD is working to obtain permits to allow the temporary generator to be used for the program this season and evaluations will occur under this project that allow the District the ability to participate with the new generator in the years to come.

Authorization to Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 39-26                      Authorization to enter into a public improvement contract with Synergy, LLC, for the Districtwide HVAC Equipment and Systems Upgrades Phase 5 project, in an amount not-to-exceed \$11,515,377.20.

Resolution No. 40-26                      Authorization to enter into a public improvement contract with Marra Services, Inc., for the Renewal of Culverted Streams IIA project, in an amount not-to-exceed \$13,914,337.68.

**MOTION** –Mayor Bacci moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 39-26 through 40-26. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown requested additional information regarding Resolution No. 39-26. Ms. Rupe explained that there are several locations throughout the WWTPs and EMSC that have defective or outdated HVAC equipment or increased needs in some areas since the HVAC equipment’s installation. Additionally, there is potential for code improvements and increased energy efficiency.

President Brown requested an explanation as to what the project associated with Resolution No. 40-26 will accomplish. Matt Scharver, Director of Watershed Programs, explained that this is a needed renewal of culverted streams, all of which are corrugated metal culverts. Mr. Scharver provided photos of a culvert at West 130<sup>th</sup> Street where the culverted section of the West Branch of Big Creek runs beneath a property, including a culverted area where a bend is also made of corrugated metal and causing significant problems. The other part of the project is in Garfield Heights where Mill Creek runs near Marymount Hospital. Mr. Scharver provided photos demonstrating the damaged corrugated pipe and an example of the replacement with custom slip line and grouting. These are significant repairs and will be the largest Stormwater Construction Plan culverted stream rehabilitation projects awarded to date.

There is another project nearby in Garfield Heights where a local sanitary sewer was receiving inflow from Mill Creek, that NEORSD previously identified and Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works and City of Garfield Heights temporarily rectified, but the sewer itself needs to be moved farther from the stream and into the public right-of-way. NEORSD is working with the City of Garfield Heights, which has secured significant Member Community Infrastructure Program funding to relocate the sewer.

President Brown asked if a photo was depicting the shape of the culvert. Mr. Scharver explained that it is a deformity in the culvert that will be repaired and it will improve the loadbearing capacity and optimize the flow through the culvert.

There was additional discussion regarding the amount of corrugated pipe in the service area, which is significant, and will require repairs for several years to come; the assessment and monitoring of these areas which were identified under the Stormwater Master Plan and assessed regularly; and the problem areas are monitored and ordered for repair based on criticality.

#### Authorization to Close Out Public Improvement Contract

Resolution No. 41-26                      Authorizing the Final Adjusting Change Order to close out Public Improvement Contract No. 23004791 with Cold Harbor Building Company for the Easterly Stockroom Relocation project, to decrease the contract amount by \$493,628.38, thereby bringing the total contract amount to \$12,280,371.62.

**MOTION** –Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution No. 41-26. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

#### Information Items

Ms. Rupe provided the Capital Improvement Program update for February 2026, beginning with cashflow. Ms. Rupe provided a slide listing the seven largest projects in the program, which account for 77% of the estimated cashflow. The Easterly Chemically Enhanced High-Rate Treatment project and the Big Creek Tunnel project are entering the construction phase, whereas the other five projects are well underway.

In terms of key performance indicators (KPIs) at the project level, the Southerly Tunnel Dewatering Pump Station and the District-wide Space Improvements project both achieved completion of design within 60 days of planned, meeting that KPI. The construction of the Kinsman and East 149<sup>th</sup> Street Regulators and Relief Sewers project did not obtain substantial completion within 90 days of the original contract date, due to an issue in a shaft causing a delay.

Ms. Rupe invited Doug Lopata, Program Manager of Planning and Design, to discuss the Relocation of the Stones Levee Pump Station (SLPS) project and NEORSD's agreement with Bedrock. Mr. Lopata reminded the Board that NEORSD entered into an agreement with Bedrock in the fall of 2023. Bedrock is looking to put significant development into the area of the Cuyahoga River along collision bend near Tower City and West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

Mr. Lopata provided a graphic produced by Bedrock, demonstrating the future Cleveland Clinic Global Peak Performance Center, and explained that the old SLPS was located in the way of the kayak launch ramp at the end of West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The new location of the SLPS is underneath the Lorain Carnegie Bridge. Mr. Lopata provided a map of the project area demonstrating where the various components are, including the SLPS, the force main, and the new Eagle Avenue Bridge.

Under this agreement, the Bedrock team completed the design efforts with Osborne under NEORSD oversight. The construction was performed by Great Lakes Construction with support from NEORSD's Engineering and Construction, Operation and Maintenance, and Sewer System Maintenance and Operation staff.

Bedrock acquired the necessary properties and permits and removed the old pump station last week. Additionally, Bedrock paid for all of the costs related to relocating SLPS, including NEORSD's external legal fees, a spare pump and a 10-year newer pump station for NEORSD.

The new pump station has been appropriately sized to meet the needs of the new development in the area. Future phases of the project will result in sewer separation which will improve the downstream sewer system and improve the level of control at the Superior Pump Station that discharges into the Cuyahoga River.

Earlier in the course of the project, Bedrock intended to move a 60-inch sewer on Canal Road, which is included in Control Measure 11 of the Consent Decree. NEORSD made provisions to the agreement that if Bedrock moved the sewer, they would be required to provide a new sewer of the same size and function. Bedrock decided against moving the sewer and now plans to tie into the existing sewer with coordination from NEORSD.

President Brown summarized that this large area is being redeveloped, capacity has been increased to reduce discharge into the environment, a larger pump station was installed to manage that capacity, and the pump station controls flow using gravity. Mr. Lopata answered affirmatively and explained that the SLPS lifts the flow to the 60-inch sewer on Canal Road, flows by gravity to the Superior Pump Station, and is lifted into the Easterly Interceptor in the downtown area.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells acknowledged the efforts of Ms. Rupe, Mr. Lopata, the Legal Department, and all of the NEORSD staff that participated in this project. Staff ensured that the public's interest was paramount and worked very closely with Bedrock to complete the project and protect the interest going forward.

### III. Open Session

There were no items.

IV. Public Session (any subject matter)

There were no items.

V. Executive Session

Mayor Bacci, pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 121.22 (G)(3), moved, and Mayor DeGeeter seconded, to enter into executive session to discuss details related to consult with the District's legal counsel concerning disputes involving the District that are subject of pending or imminent court action. By roll call vote, the Board voted unanimously to enter into executive session at 1:11 p.m.


The Board returned to open session at 1:44 p.m.

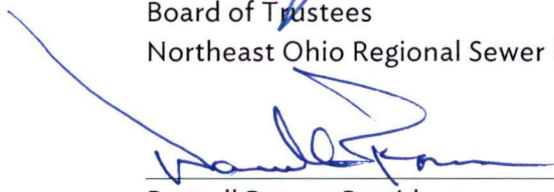
VI. Approval of Items from Executive Session

There were no items.

VII. 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 1:45 p.m. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

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

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