

MINUTES  
NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
MARCH 20, 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  
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 6, 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 March 5<sup>th</sup> NEORS hosted two open house sessions regarding the upcoming Veterans Stormwater Basin Improvements project in the City of Parma. This \$3.5 million project will expand the stormwater basin in Veterans Memorial Park to hold over 15 million gallons of stormwater during wet weather. This will assist in addressing both basement backups and flooding across the area and include the installation of a multiuse path around the basin, signage, benches, and lighting. Construction will take more than one year to complete. The open houses were held to inform the community of the project and answer their questions. Both the morning and evening sessions were well attended and residents provided positive feedback. Staff from the Customer Relations and Watershed Programs Departments were onsite to discuss the project and NEORS's cost savings programs.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells thanked the Cuyahoga County Library Parma Snow Road Branch for hosting the event and thanked the NEORSD staff that participated in the event.

On March 7<sup>th</sup> NEORSD's Women's Employee Resource Group hosted a celebration in honor of International Women's Day. The theme was "Accelerate Action" and Constance Haqq, Chief Administrative Officer, provided remarks to the group on the theme, followed by small group conversations. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells thanked Women's Employee Resource Group leadership team Cathy Glisic, Assistant Superintendent of Plants, Heba Abuzahieh, Talent Acquisition Administrator, and Tanisha Crockett, Maintenance Worker for organizing the event, as well as the 51 employees from across the District who participated in the celebration.

On March 12<sup>th</sup> Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells and Crystal Davis, Government Affairs Program Manager, met with Cuyahoga County Council President Dale Miller to discuss the projects in his district as well as coordination with the County on NEORSD's Project Clean Lake and the Regional Stormwater Management Program. Additionally, Council President Miller was informed about NEORSD's cost savings programs and Utility Assistance Resource Fairs.

V. Action Items

Authorization to Advertise

Resolution No. 54-25                      Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 6119.10, for a public improvement contract for the Westerly Administration Building Elevator Modernization project with an estimated probable cost of \$846,000.00.

Resolution No. 55-25                      Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 6119.10, for a two-year public improvement requirement contract for Eastside Stream Sediment and Debris Removal services located east of the Cuyahoga River with an estimated probable cost of \$1,500,000.00.

**MOTION** – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 54-25 through 55-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Reject and Re-Bid

Resolution No. 56-25                      Authorization to reject all bids and re-bid, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 6119.10, for a public improvement contract for the Westerly Headworks Grit Diverter project with an estimated probable construction cost of \$300,000.00.

**MOTION** – Ms. Chambers moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 56-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Agreement

Resolution No. 57-25            Authorization to enter into a professional services agreement with Wade Trim, for the CSO Consent Decree and NPDES Performance Compliance Project Phase 3 in an amount not-to-exceed \$8,500,000.00.

Resolution No. 58-25            Authorization to enter into professional services agreements with Staffing Solutions Enterprises, Inc. and Robert Half, Inc. for temporary staffing support for various District departments in a total amount not-to-exceed \$200,000.00 to be allocated between the agreements according to Sewer District needs.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 57-25 through 58-25. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown requested additional information regarding Resolution No. 57-25. Robin Rupe, Director of Engineering and Construction, explained that this is the third of four projects planned to provide necessary support for the CSO Consent Decree and NPDES permit compliance activities. The project is anticipated to last for a five-year period of 2025 through 2029 and will primarily focus on the post-construction performance demonstration and reporting for the nine Control Measures to achieve completion during the time period, annual CSO and NPDES permit compliance and reporting, and maintenance and management of the master hydraulic models.

Authorization to Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 59-25            Authorization to enter into a public improvement contract with Shook Construction Co. for construction of the Westerly Sludge Handling Improvements project in an amount not-to-exceed \$17,697,400.30.

Resolution No. 60-25            Authorization to enter into a contract with Metrohm USA, Inc. for the purchase of a Combustion Ion Chromatograph to perform laboratory analyses of domestic and industrial wastewater samples, in an amount not-to-exceed \$171,601.36, using Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act principal forgiveness funding from Ohio EPA, resulting in no cost to the District.

Resolution No. 61-25 Authorization to enter into a public improvement contract with Independence Excavating, Inc. for construction of the Flood Reduction at Riverview Road in Brecksville project in an amount not-to-exceed \$4,969,142.60.

**MOTION** – Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 59-25 through 61-25. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown noted, regarding Resolution No. 59-25, that NEORS D has been evaluating long-term options for solids management at the Westerly Wastewater Treatment Center (WWTC) and asked if that is still ongoing. Ms. Rupe explained that there were two bids received on the project to improve the existing solid waste equipment. There is a long-term plan currently undergoing evaluation to determine how to best manage solids, whether that is hauling or pumping it to the Southery WWTC, which will lead to an eventual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) project.

President Brown asked how long the equipment should be in service following this project. Ms. Rupe explained that the equipment should last 20 to 25 years, as is the case with most similar equipment; however, this is just one part of the equation, depending on what path is chosen for the long-term solution.

President Brown requested additional information regarding the project associated with Resolution No. 61-25. Matt Scharver, Director of Watershed Programs, explained that this is a road raising project with several elements. Mr. Scharver provided photos of the project area and explained that it is at the intersection of Riverview Road and Greenhaven, in the City of Brecksville. This intersection floods at approximately a one-year storm frequency and has sediment vaults on a private residential property. Mr. Scharver provided additional photos of a vault cleaning in process, demonstrating that it is a large undertaking to happen on private property. Accordingly, NEORS D is going to remove the sediment vaults and install new culvert crossings to convey the regional system through the intersection.

When the area floods, it cuts off access to the residential properties in the area. Upstream of the intersection, there is significant topography that brings eroded stream channels down to the intersection and delivers sediment to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park property to the east of Riverview Road. Also upstream is Picha Lake, an area where NEORS D upgraded a regional stormwater detention basin to capture sediment keeping it out of the lower regional stream system area.

Mr. Scharver explained that NEORS D worked with residents to purchase the property in order to obtain a permanent stormwater easement. The residence did not need to be demolished, and it will be resold at a later date.

Mayor DeGeeter asked if there are gates activated during a flood event to close the road. Mr. Scharver answered affirmatively.

Authorization to Close Out Public Improvement Contract

Resolution No. 62-25            Authorizing the Final Adjusting Change Order to close out Public Improvement Contract No. 23004503 with Tucson, Inc. for the Chippewa Creek Flood Reduction Project near Echo Lane, to decrease the contract amount by \$746,143.37, thereby bringing the total contract amount to \$7,513,563.63.

**MOTION** – Ms. Chambers moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 62-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Amend Resolution

Resolution No. 63-25            Authorization to Amend Resolution No. 169-24 to approve the District’s operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2025, as presented.

**MOTION** – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution No. 63-25. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown advised that the Finance Committee, chaired by Mayor Alai, with President Brown and Mayor Bacci serving on the Committee, met on March 10, 2025 and discussed the proposed 2025 budget. Ms. Dumas and Ms. Chambers were also in attendance.

A detailed presentation was given, outlining proposed operating and capital budget for sewer and stormwater. Key expense categories were discussed in detail. Operating revenue projections were presented that supported the proposed 2.5% increase in sewer operating expenses of \$154.2 million for 2025 and an 18% decrease in stormwater operating expenses, \$36.1 million for 2025 compared to the 2024 budget. These projections are also in line with the 2022 through 2026 rate study projections.

NEORSD’s total budget for full-time staff is 832 for 2025. The proposed budget includes the addition of five full-time employees for sanitary sewer with four of those new positions in Operations and Maintenance bringing that total to 797. Stormwater staffing decreased by 4 to 35 full-time employees for 2025.

The capital budgets for 2025 are \$264.1 million for sanitary sewer and \$11.7 million for stormwater. Debt service payments for 2025 will be \$114.7 million.

The meeting also included a discussion of the current 10-year long-term financial plan and the components of a comprehensive capital plan of finance developed by NEORS. The plan to utilize cash to fund over \$432 million of the sanitary sewer capital program for 2025 to 2026 was discussed in detail. Projected future rates and typical customer bills were also presented for the record.

President Brown thanked Ken Duplay, Chief Financial Officer, and his team for the presentation.

Authorization to Approve and Adopt

Resolution No. 64-25                      Authorization to approve and adopt the amended Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Finance Committee Charter, as presented.

**MOTION** – Ms. Chambers moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution No. 64-25. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown invited Mr. Duplay to discuss the changes to the Finance Committee Charter. Mr. Duplay explained that there are two primary administrative updates to the Charter. The prior Charter referenced newspapers as a method of public notice. The new language simply states that the meeting would be noticed in accordance with the Board Bylaws.

Additionally, the Charter previously referenced the \$50,000 prior Board authorization limit for the Committee's ability to procure outside services if desired. As that limit now changes every year, the language was updated to match NEORS's competitive bidding threshold per the Bylaws. There were other minor administrative updates.

Property Related Transaction

Resolution No. 65-25                      Authorization to enter into an appropriation settlement and to acquire one parcel in fee simple, one permanent sewer easement, and six temporary easements at the property known as PPN 131-16-030, located at 3595 East 49<sup>th</sup> Street, in the City of Cleveland, owned by Morabito Enterprises, Inc., necessary for the construction and maintenance of the Southerly Tunnel and Consolidation project, and to allow for the entirety of the payment plus closing costs to be disbursed to Ohio Real Title Agency, LLC, with authorization of \$208,500.00 in addition to the \$291,500.00 previously authorized and paid, for total consideration of \$500,000.00 plus closing costs.

Resolution No. 66-25                      Authorization to acquire one parcel in fee simple known as PPN 263-24-019, located at 9334 Usher Road, in Olmsted Township, owned by James R. and Kimberly R. Katitus, necessary for the

Rocky River SWMP Plum Creek Problem Area 03 project, and to enter into a six-month no cost lease agreement with Mr. and Mrs. Katitus, and to allow for the entirety of the payment to be disbursed to Black Tie Title, LLC. with total consideration of \$390,000.00 plus closing costs.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 65-25. Without objection, by roll-call vote, with all present members voting yes, and recusal from discussion and abstention from voting by Mayor Bacci, the motion carried.

**MOTION** – Ms. Chambers moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 66-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Approve and Adopt

Resolution No. 67-25                      Authorization to approve and adopt the amended Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District Audit Committee Charter, as presented.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded to adopt Resolution No. 67-25. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously. Item 67-25 appeared on the Action Item Agenda following executive session, but executive session was not needed.

VI.    Information Items

Ms. Rupe provided the Capital Improvement Plan Monthly Update for February 2025, beginning with cashflow. Ms. Rupe provided a graphic demonstrating the seven largest cashflow projects for 2025 which include: the Southerly Tunnel and Consolidation; Southerly Second Stage Aeration Improvements; Westerly Chemically Enhanced High-Rate Treatment Facility; Shoreline Storage Tunnel; Southerly PLC Replacement; Kingsbury Run Consolidation Sewer; and the Big Creek Tunnel. Six of the projects are construction projects and one project, the Big Creek Tunnel, is a design project. Ms. Rupe will provide regular updates on these seven projects as they represent approximately 70% of the cashflow anticipated this year.

As for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the Westerly Administration Building Elevator Modernization project achieved designed within 60 days of planned, meeting that KPI.

The Westerly Tunnel Dewatering Pump Station project did not achieve the KPI to close the construction contract within 95% of the original contract amount, due in part to supply chain delays for electrical equipment. Additionally, although the Business Opportunity Program (BOP) goal of 15.13% was surpassed in total with an actual of 16.44% for MBE/WBE, the SBE portion of the goal fell short. The KPI as it relates to change orders by categories as a percentage of construction was

met, with the primary categories being design errors and omissions, differing or unforeseen site conditions, and owner requested changes.

The West Park CSO Improvements project achieved the KPI for closing the construction contracts within 95% of the original contract amount. The BOP KPI for SBE was met at 74.66%, however, the MBE/WBE goal was missed by a few percentage points. The KPI for change orders by categories as a percentage of construction was met, with the primary category being differing or unforeseen site conditions.

Ms. Rupe invited Rick Vincent, Engineering and Construction Manager of Design, to provide an update regarding the Kingsbury Branch A Repair project.

Mr. Vincent provided a map of the project area, which is between Broadway Avenue, East 34<sup>th</sup> Street, and East 37<sup>th</sup> Street. As with many culverts, it used to be a stream. There are two branches of the Kingsbury Run Culvert that come into this location, where it is a 15-foot wide by 9-foot box culvert, which runs all the way to Shaker Heights. There is significant flow coming through the conduit.

Mr. Vincent provided photos of the culvert demonstrating increased deterioration from 2015 to 2022. The culvert was designed and built in the 1940s, with the intent of withstanding approximately 10 feet of fill; the culvert currently has seven times that much fill on top of it, causing failures.

The original design plan was to reline the culvert with 20-inch-thick Shotcrete and build an additional 7-foot diameter tunnel alongside it. This tunnel included in the original design plan would cost \$8 million. Hydraulic modeling demonstrated that on day one, without making any changes to the culvert, the hydraulic grade line during a five-year level storm, surcharge level of the water is five feet below the ground. When adding the Shotcrete lining to the tunnel, it increases to be 1.3 feet below the ground surface, but still below. When adding the additional tunnel, hydraulic modeling demonstrated that this would only achieve an additional 0.6 feet of surcharge relief but at an additional \$8 million in costs. Once the Southerly Tunnel is online in 2029, the hydraulic grade line of water level will go from the current 1.3 feet to 9 feet below the ground surface. It was determined that it is not fiscally prudent to install an additional tunnel, especially because this is a low-lying area of the city without basements in the immediate area, and no real flooding risk, so the District is saving the \$8 million cost.

The culvert was repaired and reinforced with Shotcrete. This was the best option for a number of reasons, including that it does not require the ground to be opened along the culvert, reducing disruptions in the area; the equipment can be moved in and out each day; it meets the structural requirements; and it meets the hydraulic requirements.



Steel ribs were installed every three feet in the tunnel to ensure safety to the workers while installing the Shotcrete. There was rebar added to the tunnel along with the Shotcrete to reinforce the structure. Mr. Vincent provided photographs of the project while ongoing and after completion.

President Brown asked how long the section of tunnel is that required repair. Mr. Vincent explained that it was approximately 350 feet. Upstream and downstream of the repair area is in good condition and it transitions to a round pipe downstream.

President Brown inquired as to whether other parts of the system have similar load and potential failure challenges. Mr. Vincent explained that there are not at this time; this project stemmed from video inspections performed in association with the Kingsbury Asset Renewal project, and there were no areas demonstrating this level of stress on the linings. There are still repairs to be completed, but not to this level of distress.

VII. Open Session

There were no items.

VIII. Public Session (any subject matter)

There were no items.

IX. Executive Session

There were no items.

X. Approval of Items from Executive Session


There were no items.

XI. Adjournment

**MOTION** – President Brown stated business having been concluded, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Chambers seconded the motion to adjourn at 1:11 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