OCEAN PINES SERVICE AREA
WATER AND WASTEWATER
Advisory Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 10, 2026

Present **Water and Wastewater Advisory Board**
Fred Stiehl, Jim Spicknall, Will Gabeler, Bob Kane
Worcester County Public Works
Dallas Baker
Worcester County Public Works - Water and Wastewater Division
Lee Beauchamp, Meg Etzler
Worcester County Treasurer
Quinn Dittrich, Steven Doutt

Fred Stiehl called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Approval of Minutes

Fred asked if there were any additions and/or corrections to the January 23, 2026, meeting minutes. Jim referenced the issue of streamlining the meetings and Dallas suggested that we begin the meetings with questions from the Board and not what was already on the agenda. Jim made a motion to approve the minutes, Fred seconded. The minutes were accepted as written.

Water Production

- The well resiliency evaluation is almost complete. We are waiting on input from the electrical contractor.

Water Distribution

Fred asked about the water leak repairs and if they are getting better, getting worse, etc. Lee stated that it will be like this for the foreseeable future due to the aging process of the facilities. Lee shared that we have approximately 10 to 15 per week and most of them are small. Fred asked if they were mostly from tree roots and Lee shared that they are a little bit of everything. We had problems with the storm and tree limbs damaging meter pits. Fred shared that Ocean Pines is reluctant to cut trees and if damage is being done by the trees, should we reach out to Ocean Pines to investigate the matter.

Lee shared an update on the radio reads. We have approximately 30 completed in the last few days. Radio reads will be our focus for the next few weeks until we get into flushing. Dallas stated that we will be done in this fiscal year. Lee shared that the ¾ meters should be done this year, but the 1-inch and 2-inch larger meters may be delayed if we don't have the parts in stock.

Wastewater Treatment Plant

Fred questioned the storage lagoon project viability being evaluated and what does that mean. Dallas shared that we are thinking do we need to do this right now. It is a ½ million dollars which is more than we have budgeted. We are looking at potentially having to pay a Bay Restoration Fee, so do we expand the Plant, or do we wait until we need to expand. We are taking a hard look at what we can possibly cut out of this year's budget to offset this.

Fred asked about the Bay Restoration Fee Criteria not being met for this year. Dallas stated there are several municipal and county public works groups who share a number of permits have a 12° Celsius limit listed in their permits. The 12° Celsius limit is a regulatory trigger for nutrient removal standards, not a direct fee rate, and their recommendation is to apply for a permit revision to include the 12° Celsius because, in their words, that is MDE's acceptance of an upset condition. Dallas shared the history of his correspondence with MDE regarding this issue. We are looking at a study on how to make the Plant more cold-weather hardy and how do we want to proceed should the suggested changes/additions cost more than the Bay Restoration Fee. Discussion was held.

Construction Projects

We did get $118K from Windmill Creek. They are disputing some of the payment, claiming that some of our inspectors' hours don't match their contractor hours. Dallas explained the issues.

Jim asked if we have any other outstanding fees owed us. Dallas stated that AGH owes us $22K. This is the same group that is building the new property just north of them on Route 589. We told AGH we are not approving their plans until we are paid the money owed. `

Dallas shared that well #5 is down. It went down during the storm, and we thought it was an electrical issue. We pulled the pumps, but it is not an electrical problem. The pumps have stopped working. They have not been pulled in about 10 years with no maintenance. We have included in the budget to provide maintenance for all wells over a period.

Financial Update

Fred asked about the final 2026 budget. Quinn referenced the Budget Performance Report. Explanation of the figures ensued and discussion was held.

Quinn shared the Budget Performance Report for fiscal year to date 02/28/26, the Balance Sheet through 02/28/26, the Budget Worksheet Report for budget year 2027, the Ocean Pines Service Area Net Position, excluding capital assets, updated 1/7/26, the Water and Wastewater Services Enterprise Fund by service area, the Ocean Pines Proposed Quarterly Rates for FY27, and the Allocation of Sewer EDU's in Ocean Pines Sanitary Service area as of 01/07/26. Questions were addressed and additional discussion was held.

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, May 12th at 9:00 a.m.

With no further business Bob made the motion to adjourn. Will seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Meg Etzler
Administrative Assistant