



# OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

## BIANCA L. TIRADO, CITY CLERK

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### UTILITIES

FEBRUARY 26, 2024 5:09 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Sherry Bolden-Simpson, Dr. Oliver Davis, Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers, Troy Warner

Committee Members Absent: None

Other Council Present: Canneth Lee, Karen L. White, Rachel Tomas Morgan, Sheila Niezgodski

Other Council Absent: Sharon L. McBride

Others Present: Bianca L. Tirado, Elivet Quijada-Navarro, Danica Kulemeka, Victoria Stowell, Matthew Neal, Bob Palmer

Presenter(s): Eric Horvath

Agenda: Organizational Meeting

Update – Replacing of Lead Pipes | Utility Assistance Program | Status of City Water Treatment Plan Upgrades | Progress of CSO Issues

**Please note the attached link for the meeting recording:**

<http://docs.southbendin.gov/WebLink/browse.aspx?dbid=0&mediaid=380844>

Committee Chair Sherry Bolden-Simpson called to order the Utilities Committee meeting at 5:09 p.m.

Committee Chair Bolden-Simpson stated that the Utilities Committee has plans to swear in a citizen member soon, and stated that applications are still open for another citizen member.

Eric Horvath, Public Works Director, with offices on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of the County-City Building. New Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations require public water utilities to identify and map all drinking water service line materials connecting from City water mains to customers' homes by October 2024. The City owns and maintains water mains while

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Danica Kulemeka  
CHIEF DEPUTY/ CHIEF OF STAFF

Elivet Quijada-Navarro  
DEPUTY/ DIRECTOR OF POLICY

Matthew Neal  
DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL PROJECTS

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homeowners own and maintain water service lines as well as internal plumbing. The Water Service Line Material Inventory is built using the age of homes, existing information of types of materials, and reported information regarding types of materials. The predictive service model will give a percentage chance of how likely it is for a water line to contain lead. City Water customers can get their water tested for lead for free. The Utilities Assistance Program helps to reduce water and sewer bills by up to twenty-five dollars and fifty cents (\$25.50), and is open to homeowners and tenants. In 2022 a new Long Term Control Plan for sewer overflow was finalized and approved by the EPA and Department of Justice (DOJ) called S.A.G.E. (Smarter Alternative for Greener Environment). The new plan reduced the prospective costs from seven hundred million dollars (\$700,000,000) to two hundred and seventy-six million dollars (\$276,000,000). The timeline for S.A.G.E. spans from 2022 to 2038. The new sewer system smart sensors allow the City to model and better predict how the sewer system will handle stormwater during rain events. The current project funding has been approved by the state, and will be funded using Indiana's State Revolving Fund dollars. The first of four Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) storage tanks has already begun construction, there are Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades currently underway, and a second CSO storage tank project is to begin engineering soon. The Fellows Booster Station is in need of being replaced, and is set to undergo construction this year. This year the South Water Treatment Plant will see the installation of a new water main, the installation of new dry chlorine scrubbing equipment, and the replacement of piping. Beginning in 2025 the Edison Water Treatment Plant will see the rehabilitation of filters, fluoride system upgrades, and electrical upgrades.

Committee Vice Chair Dr. Oliver Davis asked how climate change affects the City's water systems, asked if Councilmembers would be able to attend seminars regarding water systems, and asked what needs to be done as the City grows.

Mr. Horvath stated that it is important that the City does not give up water capacity, and stated that South Bend has a great aquifer with great water quality. Mr. Horvath stated that the City will continue to monitor climate change so that they are prepared for future events.

Committee Member Ophelia Gooden-Rodgers asked who senior citizens should contact about the Utilities Assistance Program.

Mr. Horvath stated that if Committee member Gooden-Rodgers is able to get him the contact info of any senior citizen struggling with the Utility Assistance Program application process he will be happy to help them.

Committee Chair Bolden-Simpson asked what can be done to increase membership in the Utility Assistance Program.

Mr. Horvath stated that there have been door-knocking campaigns as well as the distribution of fliers.

Committee Vice Chair Dr. Davis asked if any of the outreach attempts have been inclusive to Spanish-speaking residents.



Mr. Horvath stated that the fliers that have been distributed are translated into Spanish on the back.

Committee Chair Bolden-Simpson opened the discussion to the public.

Sue Kesim, 4022 Kennedy Drive, South Bend IN 46614, requested the City look into work done in Tampa Florida regarding “forever chemicals”.

Mr. Horvath stated that forever chemicals are Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS). Polyfluorinated Substances are called “forever chemicals” due to having a lengthy half-life. There are steps to help eliminate Polyfluorinated Substances, but the first step is to identify them.

Councilmember Rachel Tomas Morgan stated that there is legislation currently in the short session regarding Polyfluorinated Substances.

Committee Chair Bolden-Simpson requested people having trouble with the pipe material survey QR code to call three-one-one (311) for assistance, and stated that there will be another Utilities Committee meeting to debrief this meeting.

Committee Chair Bolden-Simpson adjourned the Utilities Committee meeting at 5:44 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherry Bolden-Simpson, Committee Chair

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