

**BUREAU OF PUBLIC WORKS
SPECIAL MEETING**

555 Main Street, Hartford
Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Present: Commissioners John Avedisian, John Bazzano, William A DiBella, David Drake, Joan Gentile, Allen Hoffman, Georgiana Holloway, Gary Johnson, Byron Lester, Bhupen Patel, Alvin Taylor, James Woulfe and District Chairman Donald M Currey (13)

Remote

Attendance: Commissioners James Healy and David Steuber (2)

Absent: Commissioners Richard Bush, John Gale, Maureen Magnan, Pasquale J. Salemi and Calixto Torres (5)

Also

Present: Commissioner Jackie Gorsky Mandyck (Remote Attendance)
Commissioner Dominic Pane
Scott W. Jellison, Chief Executive Officer
Christopher Stone, District Counsel
John S. Mirtle, District Clerk (Remote Attendance)
Christopher Levesque, Chief Operating Officer
Robert Barron, Chief Financial Officer / Director of Finance
Susan Negrelli, Director of Engineering
Tom Tyler, Director of Facilities
David Ruty, Director of Operations
Robert Schwarm, Director of Information Technology
Michael Curley, Manager of Technical Services
Jennifer Ottalagana, Senior Project Manager
Carrie Blardo, Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer
Victoria Escoriza, Executive Assistant
Jacob Aviles, IT Consultant (Remote Attendance)
Dylan Pecego, IT Consultant (Remote Attendance)

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Hoffman at 4:00 PM

PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS

Elizabeth Bryden, of West Hartford, spoke on agenda item #6 “Retroactive Reimbursement for Customer Sewer Repairs,” summarizing from her submitted written public comments:

Good afternoon,

My name is Elizabeth Bryden and I am an MDC customer and home owner in West Hartford.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment on agenda item #6 regarding retroactive reimbursement for customer sewer repairs. I have shared my comments in support of allowing retroactive reimbursement as part of the House Sewer Connection program at several meetings already so I will keep my comments today brief.

As you are aware, I had a sewage back-up into my home in January 2023 and, after a lengthy and complicated process that involved the MDC from the beginning, the situation was resolved at a cost of over \$12,000.

Several months later, the new sewer ordinances were approved, allowing financial relief to homeowners who need to make repairs to the sewer laterals on their property. However, they do not currently address the issue of retroactive reimbursement for repairs that have already been made out of necessity. In my case, had the sewage back up in our house happened just a few months later, it likely would have been covered.

Given that the Sewer House Connection program now provides homeowners with financial support for repairs to their laterals, I believe retroactive reimbursements for repairs should also be allowed for a reasonable time period prior to the implementation of the new program.

In support of this, I would also reference the new Hartford Sewerage System Repair and Improvement Fund which, as I understand it, allows homeowners who have been impacted by damage on or after January 1, 2021 to apply for reimbursement. It is not clear to me why this program allows for reimbursement for some MDC customers and the Sewer House Connection program currently does not. Given that there is precedence for the MDC paying for repairs to homeowners' laterals as well as precedence for retroactive reimbursement for homeowners affected by sewer issues and repairs, I would again advocate that retroactive reimbursement for repairs be allowed under the Sewer House Connection program as well.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts today and hope you take them into consideration.

Thank you for your time.

Elizabeth Bryden

120 Sunny Reach Drive

West Hartford, CT

Brad Secord, of Hartford spoke on agenda item #6 "Retroactive Reimbursement for Customer Sewer Repairs," summarizing from his submitted written public comments:

To Whom it May Concern:

Much of 2022 and early 2023 we were having chronic problem with our sewer lateral being block by tree roots. The issue required us to have the lateral rooted several times a year. It was recommended by the sewer lateral cleaning company that we replace the lateral.

I approached MDC asking for guidance on lateral replacement and a permit. They offered the possibility of proving a short-term loan to cover the expense of a contractor to complete the sewer lateral replacement. I was also vaguely aware that MDC was going to be doing major infrastructure work on Columbia Street. I was told the plan, scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2023. The stated work included replacing our water main, installing a new fire hydrant and cleaning, and lining the main sewer line. I asked if there was any plan to clean and line the laterals. I was told that they do not provide

upgrades to individual property laterals. Based on what we were told we were left with no option but to move forward and contract with a private contractor to replace our sewer lateral. After soliciting three bids and submitting them to MDC for review we selected a private contractor who quoted us a project price of \$4,785.73. MDC at that time initiated a "Voluntary Sewer Lien" for participation in the District's Sewer Lateral Installation Program. A Lien and contract were signed by us and MDC on February 14, 2023 for a 15 year loan for \$4,785.73 plus interest at 6% annum.

As the Secretary of our Columbia Street Special Services Taxing District, I volunteered to serve as the neighborhood liaison for the Sewer/Water infrastructure project as I had access to an email list for the whole neighborhood. In that capacity I learned that MDC had planned on cleaning and lining all the individual laterals on the street at no cost to the property owners. That disclosure was shocking considering I had asked the question about lateral lining a few months before and told that was not being considered. Obviously if I had known that fact when I contracted for our lateral to be replaced and signed a Voluntary Sewer Lien with MDC I would have waited a few months and had MDC correct my lateral issue at no cost to Judy and me.

At that time, I requested a cancellation and reimbursement for our contract with MDC. It has been almost a year and there has never been a resolution on my request in spite of my regular follow ups on the request. Please note that we have been paying on our commitment for the past 11 months (approximately \$40.00/month). It is now my understanding that the issue of Retroactive Reimbursement is on the agenda for the Bureau of Public Works meeting on February 21 to discuss. I respectfully request that our request for cancelation and reimbursement be considered.

Greg & Judy Secord

Judy Allen, of West Hartford, stated that she has missed out on being able to make comments in the past because she has not been able to unmute herself fast enough. She requested that sufficient time be given to allow people attending remotely to speak up.

Commissioner Woulfe entered the meeting at 4:02 PM

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

On motion made by Commissioner Drake and duly seconded, the meeting minutes of February 21, 2024 were approved. Commissioner Avedisian abstained.

Commissioner Steuber entered the meeting remotely at 4:28 PM

**BUREAU OF PUBLIC WORKS
1700 ASYLUM AVENUE WEST HARTFORD**

To: Bureau of Public Works

April 10, 2024

It is RECOMMENDED that it be:

VOTED: That the Bureau of Public Works recommends to the District Board passage of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: In accordance with the Metropolitan District Sewer Ordinances Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the District Clerk to enter into an Agreement, as approved by District Counsel, by and between The Metropolitan District and Property Owner and/or the Developer of 1700 Asylum Avenue in West Hartford ("Property"), to allow connection to the District's sewer system to allow for mixed use development ("Development"), subject to: 1) the Property Owner and/or Developer reimbursing the District for costs associated with metering various points in and around the Development; and 2) the Property Owner and/or Developer bearing the financial responsibility for any work that may be necessary to remove approximately 67,000 gpd of inflow/infiltration from the area's sewer system by the District or its contractor(s) ("Work"), said Work to include private property separation of sanitary and storm- and groundwater, and if necessary, improvements to increase the capacity of the Town's stormwater system. Costs for the Work will be secured by the Property Owner and/or Developer depositing with the District funds in an amount sufficient to pay the costs for the Work.

Respectfully submitted,



John S. Mirtle, Esq.
District Clerk

On motion made by Commissioner Patel and duly seconded, the report was received and resolution adopted by unanimous vote of those present.

ARROWHEAD GATEWAY IN HARTFORD

Chief Executive Officer Scott Jellison discussed the Arrowhead Gateway development in Hartford and a potential cost sharing agreement for sewer separation that will be brought to the Bureau at a future meeting.

RETROACTIVE REIMBURSEMENT FOR CUSTOMER SEWER REPAIRS

Commissioner DiBella made motion to refer the agenda item to the District Board. The motion was duly seconded and the item was referred to the District Board by unanimous vote of those present.

OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Judy Allen, of West Hartford, questioned that if the property in West Hartford (1700 Asylum Ave) does not get approved by the town, are the residents out of luck.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:44 PM

ATTEST:

John S. Mirtle
District Clerk

Date of Approval