

MANCHESTER WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION
JUNE 5, 2025

The Manchester Water and Sewer Commission met on Thursday, June 5, 2025 for a regularly scheduled meeting.

Director Perry made an announcement that this meeting will be live streaming.

Chairman/Commissioner Anderson called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

Roll taken by Director Jeff Perry and present were: Chairman Mike Anderson, Vice-Chairman Nelson Watson, Secretary Gary Hunt, Commissioner Terrance Hillsman, Alderman Julie Anderson, Director Jeff Perry, and Assistant Director Lonnie Foley. A meeting quorum had been established.

Absent: Mayor Hobbs and Billing Office Manager Jennifer Hall

Late Arrival: None

- 1) The agenda of the regular meeting on June 5, 2025, was approved upon a motion by Vice-Chairman Watson, second by Commissioner Terrance Hillsman. Chairman Mike Anderson proposed an addendum to the agenda to include Commissioner Comments at the end of the meeting. He suggested going around the room to allow each commissioner and opportunity to share final thoughts or updates. A motion was made to amend the agenda accordingly. After a vote was taken, the motion passed. 5-0

2) **Citizen Comments:**

- a) Miranda Riley appeared before the commission for the third time to discuss her ongoing request for city water service. She originally began this process in Spring, 2023 under the previous director, receiving state approval and initial commission approval by August, 2023. Despite follow-ups, she received no progress updates and returned in August, 2024, at which time it was reaffirmed that a second vote was unnecessary since prior approval had been granted.

Ms. Riley resides in Bedford County, approximately 600 feet from the nearest city water tap, and stated that an agreement was previously made that she would cover the cost of supplies and tap fee, while the city would provide labor. Director Jeff Perry noted that two employees, Kevin Condra and Dana Douglas, visited Wartrace Mayor Brian Ross about two months ago to reconfirm approval due to the time lapse.

Ms. Riley expressed frustration with the lack of communication and rising supply costs, which have impacted her ability to finalize financing for her new home. She also noted that her neighbor, who had initially agreed to split the supply costs, has now opted to drill a well instead, increasing her financial burden. Ms. Riley emphasized the urgent need for clarity, stating she is trying to decide whether to invest in a well or continue pursuing city water access. She pointed out the poor water quality in the area, citing sediment issues and insufficient water supply from existing wells.

Chairman Anderson acknowledged the delays and affirmed that the commission had previously approved the request. He directed that Mayor Hobbs be consulted to help resolve the matter swiftly and indicated that it was time to move forward with implementation.

- 3) The minutes of the regular meeting on May 8, 2025, were approved after a vote was taken, the motion passed. 5-0

4) **Mayor's Report:**

None to report.

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5) **Director's Report:**

5.1 Equipment & Vehicle Sales, Insituform, Storm Mode, and Sycamore Drive Sewer Line Updates:



a) Director Jeff Perry provided an update on surplus equipment and vehicle sales. He stated that the department has begun listing items on GovDeals, an online auction platform for government surplus. To date, five vehicles and pieces of equipment have been sold, generating a little over \$10,000 in revenue. These funds will be deposited into the department's account and could potentially be used toward the future purchase of a new truck or other necessary equipment.



b) Director Jeff Perry reported ongoing issues with Insituform, the contractor responsible for the cleaning and televising of sewer interceptor lines last year. He explained that the project was significantly delayed due to difficulties in obtaining usable data from the contractor. There were major compatibility issues between Insituform's data and the department's existing systems, which created extended communication and technical challenges. Recently, progress was made when the representative from True North and the firm handling future asset management facilitated a joint meeting with Insituform. Together, they were able to retrieve and reconcile the necessary data. Director Perry noted that while this brings some closure to the issue, there will likely be further discussions involving Attorney Craig Johnson regarding potential liquidated damages due to the extended delays.



c) Director Jeff Perry shared that having Dana Douglas back on staff has brought valuable institutional knowledge regarding the history and operations of the wastewater treatment plant. Dana was able to connect with a former plant operator, believed to be named Paul, to gain insight into how heavy rain inflow was managed in the past. Historically, the method involved splitting the ditch to manage excess flow during storm events. Based on this historical knowledge, a revised operational approach will be implemented during the next significant rainfall. Rather than allowing all stormwater inflow to pass directly to the clarifiers, the adjusted method will redirect the flow so that solids settle in the middle rings, while the outer rings manage overflow, minimizing solids washing into the clarifiers. This trial aims to improve solids handling and plant efficiency during peak inflow events.

d) The Water & Sewer Department has addressed a longstanding sewer issue on Sycamore Drive, particularly affecting resident Ms. Mills, who experienced recurring sewer backups in her basement. To resolve the issue, the department ran a new sewer line, and the replacement work is being completed in-house by our team. This project represents a significant improvement for the customer and reflects our continued efforts to address infrastructure issues efficiently and proactively.

5.2 Water Distribution:



- a) During the month of May, the Water Department completed the following work:
- o Repaired 14 water leaks
 - o Installed 6 new water taps
 - o Repaired 7 fire hydrants
 - o Replaced 2 fire hydrants that were damaged in vehicle accidents

These efforts are part of our continued commitment to maintaining reliable water service and infrastructure for our community.

5.3 Wastewater Plant:

- a) Director Jeff Perry reported that Cody Stephens has been undergoing cross-training in the press room for the past month. Director Perry noted that Cody is progressing well, gaining hands-on experience and building his knowledge of the belt press and wastewater collection system operations. Director Perry also shared that he personally observed Cody at work recently and was pleased with his performance and growth. Having an additional trained operator enhances operational flexibility and coverage within the department.

5.3 Wastewater Collection System:

- a) Our in-house televising crew successfully televised 16,077 feet of sewer line during the month of May. We also completed 10 sewer line repairs where the lines were collapsed, pulled apart, or broken. Over the past two and a half months, we've made a total of 22 in-house sewer line repairs addressing similar issues. A spreadsheet detailing these repairs was previously provided. With the next significant rain event, we're hopeful to observe measurable improvements in flow reduction into the plant due to these recent repairs.

5.4 Sewer Collection System (Grant) Projects:

- a) Norris Brothers Project (TDEC ARP Grant):

- 1) Director Jeff Perry provided an update on the Norris Brothers project, stating that progress is moving along well. Adam Carter with St. John Engineering, LLC added that the 220 crossing has been completed, which is located behind his property. He also noted that materials have been delivered for that section of the project. Mr. Carter mentioned that his wife observed what appeared to be a temporary road constructed across Willis Farm, likely to provide equipment access through the muddy bottomland. Riprap and other materials have been brought in to stabilize the access and avoid damaging the farmer's crops.

- b) Fisher Excavating Project (ARC Grant):

- 1) A pre-construction meeting was held on May 12, 2025, with Fisher Excavating regarding the upcoming sewer interceptor upsizing project from Willis Farms to Skinner Flat. Adam Carter with St. John Engineering, LLC stated that Fisher Excavating is the contractor for the project. He confirmed that a job trailer has been delivered and set up on-site, and approximately 20 loads of rock have already been brought in, indicating that site preparations are actively underway. While a tentative start date for construction was not provided during the meeting, the ongoing mobilization efforts suggest that work is expected to begin soon. The scope of the project includes the upsizing of the sewer interceptor from the Willis Farm area to Skinner Flat Road.

- c) Duke's Root Control Project (Federal ARP Grant):

Director Jeff Perry provided an update on ongoing system-wide efforts involving smoke testing, cleaning, and televising of sewer lines across multiple basins in collaboration with Duke's Root Control.

- 1) Smoke Testing Progress -
 - o Smoke testing began: May 12, 2025
 - o Completed Basin: K
 - o Basins in progress: J and I (both approximately 50% complete)
 - o Total Basins to be tested: 7 (K, J, I, H, M, A, E)

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- Footage completed: 95,000 feet
- Footage remaining: 191,000 feet

Door hangers are being placed in affected neighborhoods ahead of testing to notify residents and reduce concerns about indoor smoke visibility. Director Perry reminded residents to remain mindful and aware of posted notices if smoke enters homes.

2) Televising & Data Review -

A significant portion of televising data has been received and is being reviewed to identify problem areas. Follow-up in-house camera inspections are being conducted to verify issues and make point repairs when feasible. Problem areas that cannot be handled in-house will be compiled into future project scopes.

3) Clay Line Replacement Discussions -

Many older clay sewer lines are still in use across the system. Perry noted internal discussions about replacing entire street segments of clay lines in-house. This potential strategy will be discussed further with Adam Carter of St. John Engineering to develop a broader approach.

4) Manhole Inspections & Marking -

Chairman Mike Anderson asked how manholes are being marked during smoke testing. Perry stated that while methods vary, markings may include full white paint, a green X with a circle, or marks on the ring. These help differentiate manholes with or without leaks. Assistant Lonnie Foley added that manhole lids with open holes pose both smoke escape and inflow risks; replacement options (like sealed lids) are being considered.

5) Manhole Accessibility -

Approximately 50 manholes remain buried under pavement and still need to be located and raised. However, covered manholes may act as a seal against water intrusion and may be lower priority for repair unless access is essential.

5.5 Wastewater Pretreatment:

The pretreatment audit is almost complete and should be finalized soon.

5.6 Water Billing Office:

The Water Billing Office has implemented new credit card machines and is currently conducting an audit of the fire protection program with its customers.

5.7 City Works:

City Works work order training, originally scheduled for May 20th, was postponed due to delays from True North in processing the provided data. The data has now been submitted, and training is being rescheduled to take place this month at their office in Murfreesboro.

5.8 Manhole Overflows:

There were no manhole overflows reported during the month of May.

6) **Budget Review – As of May 31, 2025:**

a) Budget Review Summary – Current Fiscal Year:

A brief overview of our current financial standing:

- o Revenue: As of May 31st, we have \$522,000 remaining to collect for the fiscal year.
- o May Collections: During the month of May, we collected \$734,669.92 in revenue.
- o We are on track to meet our revenue goals for the year.

If you refer to the final page of the report, you'll find a budget balance overview that outlines what funds remain available for expenditure through year-end. At this point, it appears we are on pace to come in under budget. This has been a deliberate effort, aiming to limit large expenditures—particularly on vehicles and other major items—unless absolutely necessary, given the budget constraints.

7) **New Business:**

7.1 **Tap Fee Discussion Summary:**

Director Jeff Perry presented an analysis of the current tap fees versus actual installation costs:

- a) A ¾-inch water taps currently costs:
 - o \$1,500 inside city limits
 - o \$2,250 outside city limits

However, the actual cost to the department for each ¾-inch tap is approximately \$4,800, resulting in a loss of roughly \$3,300 per tap.

b) Tap Installation Costs include:

- o Labor
- o Equipment (dump truck, excavator, etc.)
- o Materials and parts

Director Perry noted that not every tap requires every listed item, but most installations generally use the full range of equipment and materials included in the cost breakdown. Chairman Mike Anderson and Alderman Julie Anderson both expressed support for adjusting the rates, stating that:

- o The current rates are outdated and unsustainable.
- o Taxpayers should not be subsidizing developer infrastructure.

The utility must recoup costs on the front end, rather than relying on monthly water bills which only cover consumption—not capital costs. Director Perry clarified:

- o Tap fees are one-time charges.
- o Monthly utility bills do not recover the cost of the initial tap installation.
- o Other utilities often use a “system improvement fee” or capacity fee to help cover system-wide infrastructure needs related to growth.

Some equipment costs are considered sunk costs (e.g., depreciation on machinery), but, direct costs like fuel, labor, and materials are not. Secretary Gary Hunt noted that

higher equipment usage helps dilute depreciation costs, but the direct losses per tap are still significant. Director Perry is researching:

- Comparative rates across other utilities.
 - The feasibility of including a system improvement fee or capacity fee.
 - How to structure tap fees to be fair, transparent, and cost-recovering.
- c) Next Steps -
- Director Perry indicated he will present a formal tap fee proposal at next month's meeting, after refining the cost estimates and completing remaining research.
 - A rate disclaimer may be proposed to allow future adjustments based on inflation or cost volatility.
 - Potential structure for fee adjustment:
 - A fixed maximum tap fee could be approved.
 - Actual charges could be lowered if fewer resources are used for a particular tap.

7.2 Valve Tapping Machine Discussion:

Director Jeff Perry provided an update on the ongoing effort to obtain quotes for a valve tapping machine. Although he expected to have all quotes ready by this meeting, he stated that they are still pending and will be revisited at the next meeting.

- a) The valve tapping machine would:
- Allow the Water Department to install valves in-house without relying on outside contractors.
 - Enable “hot taps” (installing valves without shutting off water), significantly improving system maintenance and emergency response.
 - Address ongoing problems where multiple valves must be shut off—and hydrants opened—just to isolate a break, which often results in crew members working under live water conditions.
- Director Perry emphasized the urgency: “We’ve had main breaks where we’ve had to shut off 10 to 15 valves and still couldn’t stop water flow—this is unacceptable.”
- b) Estimated Cost and Return on Investment:
- Estimated cost: \$30,000–\$50,000, including equipment and crew training.
 - A recent emergency hot valve installation by a contractor cost approximately \$30,000 for a single valve.
 - In-house capability would pay for itself almost immediately and provide long-term savings.

The process is similar to a pressure tap but adapted for valve installation. The tool clamps onto the pipe, cuts into it under pressure, and inserts a valve assembly that becomes part of the live system. Once installed, the valve operates like any standard valve and allows targeted shutoffs in the future. There are numerous areas in the water system lacking sufficient valve isolation points. The current condition often requires wide area shutdowns, affecting multiple streets or neighborhoods for a single repair.

- c) The new equipment would allow for:
 - o Efficient sectional shutdowns (e.g., one end of a street to another).
 - o Minimized service interruptions for customers.
 - o Improved control during emergencies or routine maintenance.

For new subdivisions and water lines, Director Perry stated they are now requiring strategic valve placements to avoid these issues in the future. In response, board members discussed formalizing design standards that mandate sufficient valve placement to allow better control and service continuity.

7.3 Contractor Requirements & System Standardization Discussion:

Director Jeff Perry discussed ongoing efforts to establish departmental standards for equipment and installations performed by developers and contractors. The objective is to standardize infrastructure, reduce future maintenance costs, and avoid inheriting poorly designed systems.

a) The department is actively working on creating internal requirements for:

- o Pumps,
- o Electrical panels,
- o Valves, and other system components.

The goal is to finalize these requirements before major new developments begin, ensuring the Water Department maintains oversight and control. “We’ve had developments that weren’t overseen the way we wanted—now we’re making sure we set those expectations up front.”

b) Oversight of Developer Infrastructure:

Developers often hire engineers who design to minimum state standards and lowest cost. However, the city has the authority to set higher standards, even beyond the state’s baseline, through departmental policy. Once a development is complete, the infrastructure is turned over to the city, meaning all future maintenance costs fall on the department. “You inherit whatever their design flaw is—intentionally or not—and then it becomes our problem.”

c) Director Perry emphasized the operational value of standardizing equipment across pumping stations:

- o Reduces inventory needs (e.g., stocking only one type of pump),
- o Simplifies training and repairs,
- o Lowers long-term costs.

Without standardization, the city ends up with a patchwork of mismatched systems with ten stations, ten different pumps, and ten different panels. The department is preparing to implement stricter and more uniform construction and equipment standards to protect city assets and reduce future liabilities. These measures are seen as critical ahead of expected growth and development, ensuring the Water Department doesn’t inherit poorly designed infrastructure.

7.3 Sewer Repair Tracking Update:

- a) Director Jeff Perry presented a Sewer Repair Tracking Form documenting repairs completed since March, noting that additional repairs have been made since the last update. The form categorizes each repair by severity—high, major, medium, and low—with a significant number falling into the high and major categories. Perry emphasized that these issues had been confirmed through televising and inspection prior to repairs. Although he had prepared a slideshow with visuals of the work completed, he was unable to present it due to not having his laptop and the Mayor being absent. He plans to bring the slideshow, with additional updates, to the next meeting. Chairman Mike Anderson clarified that the recent repair on Sherwood Drive involved a 4-inch service line and was not related to the larger sewer line project extending from Sherwood across Willis Farm.

8) Commissioners Comments:

During commissioner comments, Alderman Julie Anderson expressed appreciation for the team's hard work and noted that she valued receiving the change estimates in advance, allowing time for proper review and research. Chairman Mike Anderson inquired about the ordinance change related to board membership, noting that no progress had been made. He asked to inform Attorney Craig Johnson of his frustration and emphasized wanting to see the issue resolved before her term ends. Commissioner Hunt agreed that the matter needed to be addressed.

On a motion from Vice-Chairman/Commissioner Watson, seconded by Commissioner Hillsman, the meeting adjourned. 5-0


Mike Anderson, Chairman


Gary Hunt, Recording Secretary

LIVE STREAMING <https://www.youtube.com/@CityOfManchesterTennessee>

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