

**MANCHESTER WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION**  
**JULY 3, 2025**

The Manchester Water and Sewer Commission met on Thursday, July 3, 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, Mayor Hobbs, Alderman Julie Anderson, Director Jeff Perry, Assistant Director Lonnie Foley, and Billing Office Manager Jennifer Hall. A meeting quorum had been established.

Absent: None

Late Arrival: None

1) The agenda of the regular meeting on July 3, 2025, was approved upon a motion by Alderman Anderson, second by Vice-Chairman Watson. Director Perry asked to remove the four items under new business, pending this coming Tuesday's meeting. After a vote was taken, the motion passed. 5-0

2) **Citizen Comments:**

a) Sara Bradley's statement reflects gratitude, personal reflection, and a sense of accomplishment for all of the hard work (both the men and women) that has been put in, especially in the last year.

3) The minutes of the regular meeting on June 5, 2025, were approved upon a motion by Vice-Chairman Watson, second by Commissioner Terrance Hillsman. After a vote was taken, the motion passed. 5-0

4) **Mayor's Report:**

a) Mayor Hobbs addressed the board regarding the recent outcome of the proposed rate increases. He reported that the rate adjustments did not pass at the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA), which was unexpected and disappointing. The rate increases were included in the approved budget. All but one board member voted in favor of the overall budget. The proposal had already passed through the relevant committee and Budget & Finance. Despite this, BOMA did not approve the rate component. Mayor Hobbs acknowledged the setback, describing it as "a shocker," given the prior support from both committee and board members. The current plan is to adjust the proposed rate percentage slightly, initiate a revote, and resubmit the proposal. Mayor Hobbs apologized for the resulting delay in implementing the new rates and recognized the impact this may have on departmental planning and execution. Mayor Hobbs concluded by thanking the board and stated that no further discussion was needed on this item at the present time.

5) **Director's Report:**

5.1 Influent Flow and Rainfall Impact:

a) Director Perry presented a comparative analysis of influent flow data for May and June, with rainfall amounts considered:

- 1) From May 2024 to May 2025, there was a reduction of approximately 13 million gallons in influent flow treated at the plant.
- 2) Despite increased rainfall in May 2025 compared to May 2024, this reduction indicates a significant decrease in inflow and infiltration (I&I).

Comparing June 2024 to June 2025, there was an additional 2.5-million-gallon reduction in influent flow. In total, the plant treated 15.5 million gallons less influent

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flow when comparing year-over-year monthly data. This reduction equates to approximately 500,000 gallons per day, which is substantial for a plant that typically treats 2.7 million gallons daily. Director Perry highlighted that this improvement is evidence of the success of ongoing I&I mitigation efforts. Mayor Hobbs praised the team's efforts, stating: "That's big. Good job". Make sure everyone down there knows they're doing a great job." Chairman Anderson added that the data validates a key point made in previous meetings: "A capacity issue isn't really a capacity issue if we can handle I&I. Our current plant can meet long-term needs as long as I&I remains controlled." He also emphasized the importance of the efficiency-focused upgrades Director Perry is proposing: "These improvements help the plant operate more effectively. As we keep reducing pressure on the system and make those upgrades, we'll be in a much better position." The board acknowledged the positive results and the significant progress being made through I&I reduction efforts. There was consensus that continued focus on system efficiency and targeted improvements will yield long-term operational benefits.

#### 5.2 Garner's Furniture – Water Leak Repair and Paving Plan:

- a) Director Perry informed the board that the water leak at Garner's Furniture has been repaired. He had also previously discussed the issue with Secretary Hunt, particularly regarding the need for paving work at the site. Mayor Hobbs confirmed that she had received a note from Director Perry and had coordinated with George and the Rogers Group to proceed with paving work. The goal is to prevent water from running into nearby buildings by addressing drainage through proper grading and surfacing. Secretary Hunt noted that the gravel elevation at the site is currently higher than the adjacent old pavement, causing runoff toward the buildings. He emphasized the need to lower the gravel and redirect surface water flow toward the center, away from structures. Mayor Hobbs agreed and confirmed that adjustments would be made to ensure water is channeled properly. Secretary Hunt also mentioned that the water valve had been paved over, which will need to be corrected. Mayor Hobbs responded that this will be addressed and everything will be straightened out as part of the project. Secretary Hunt stated that timing isn't urgent as long as the work is on the books and committed to. Mayor Hobbs confirmed that the city is currently in its paving season, and the project will be completed while crews are active in the area. Secretary Hunt said he would inform the appropriate parties accordingly. The board acknowledged that the water leak has been fixed, and a paving and drainage solution is in motion. Necessary corrections, including gravel grading and water valve access, will be made during the scheduled paving work.

#### 5.3 Water Distribution:

- a) Director Perry reported on the Water Department's operations for the month of June, highlighting the following:
- o 9 service line repairs completed
  - o 1 water main break repaired
  - o 5 new water taps installed
  - o 2 fire hydrants repaired

#### 5.4 Wastewater Plant:

- a) Director Perry informed the board that the wastewater treatment plant currently has one vacant position. Applications have been received and are under review at this time.

5.5 Wastewater Collection System:

- a) Director Perry reported that during the month of June, the department repaired eight sewer lines that were either collapsed or broken.
- b) Director Perry reported that the televising van was out of service for over 20 days during the month of June, which significantly limited inspection operations. Despite the downtime, the team was able to televise for 7 days, during which they inspected 7,182 feet of sewer line.
- c) Director Perry reported that during smoke testing on June 24, the team discovered an abandoned 4-inch sewer line that had not been capped off. The line was connected to a 10-inch main sewer line and had the capacity to contribute an estimated 3,000 to 4,000 gallons per minute of inflow. This was identified as a major source of infiltration and has now been addressed. The uncapped line was located in the Skinner Flat area, which has historically experienced significant overflow issues, especially due to ground saturation. Director Perry noted that this fix will relieve pressure on the Skinner Flat system, which is a positive development for residents in the area — including himself.

5.6 Sewer Collection System (Grant) Projects:

- a) Norris Brothers Project (TDEC ARP Grant):
    - 1) Director Perry updated the board on progress made by the Norris Brothers on current sewer collection system projects. The following work has been completed:
      - o 1,006 linear feet of cured-in-place pipe (CIPP) installed
      - o 1,100 linear feet of 24-inch ductile iron pipe installed
      - o Three (3) new manholes constructed
      - o One (1) stream crossing completed
    - 2) Director Perry reported that Fisher Excavating has completed the following work:
      - o Installed 725 linear feet of 18-inch PVC pipe
      - o Constructed two (2) new manholes
- No additional comments on this project from Mr. Carter.

- 3) Director Perry and Mayor Hobbs informed the board about recent work on Sycamore Drive aimed at addressing chronic basement flooding issues experienced by Miss Mills and potentially other residents. Miss Mills had a history of basement flooding due to the layout of her sewer line, which previously ran out the front of her house and was connected uphill. The department installed approximately 600 feet of 6-inch sewer line running out the back of her property, connecting to the main sewer line, which successfully alleviated her flooding problem. Mayor Hobbs noted Miss Mills had suffered at least three or possibly four flooding events prior to the repair. The project was completed in-house by Director Perry's team, with the main cost being materials. The city is reaching out to other homeowners on Sycamore Drive who may have similar issues to address problems proactively while crews are in the area. Secretary Hunt pointed out that several homes in the area have faced sewer flow problems since the original installation due to the uphill flow challenge. Director Perry mentioned the presence of tree root intrusion into sewer lines, including Miss Mills' property. The conversation included discussion about grinder pumps some residents use, but roots and other issues beyond the pumps can still cause problems. Mayor Hobbs added that some homes had backflow issues and inadequate venting, which

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can fail over time. Overall, the repair work and planned outreach aim to improve sewer functionality and prevent basement flooding in this neighborhood.

b) Fisher Excavating Project (ARC Grant):

- 1) Director Perry praised Fisher Excavating for their excellent work and recommended involving them more in future projects. Fisher Excavating is based in Illinois but is planning to expand operations in Tennessee. They have completed several jobs locally, with this project possibly being their largest so far.

Mayor Hobbs contrasted Fisher Excavating's performance with ongoing issues related to Norris Brothers, the current contractor on some sewer projects. Norris Brothers have had persistent problems despite winning bids due to lowest bid requirements. The city is obligated to accept the lowest bidder, but concerns remain about Norris Brothers' quality and reliability.

Mayor Hobbs suggested having a serious discussion about potentially moving on to better contractors after the current Norris Brothers project concludes. Alderman Anderson inquired if the city's bidding policy requires selecting the "best and lowest" bid or just the lowest. Mayor Hobbs believed the policy states "best and lowest," which could allow removing contractors from the "best" list to prioritize quality. Secretary Hunt mentioned that some organizations average bids or select the middle bid to encourage tighter bids and better contractor performance. Mayor Hobbs noted concerns when awarding the bid to Norris Brothers, as their bid was about one million dollars cheaper than others. Despite the cost savings, additional investigation and rework costs could offset those savings. Some thought was given to bonding out Norris Brothers and awarding the project to a higher bidder, but that option was not viable.

Secretary Hunt asked Director Perry about the extent of CIPP work done by Norris Brothers. Director Perry confirmed approximately 1,006 linear feet of cured-in-place pipe installed at five sites, the first time the department has done CIPP. Secretary Hunt inquired about performance. Mr. Carter explained that older cured-in-place pipe installations (e.g., on Martin's Lake) have performed well, but service connections often remain problematic. Newer technology allows creating a monolithic lining that also seals service connections, improving durability and performance. The department is now using this newer technology, which was not available in earlier projects. Secretary Hunt expressed that the concept makes sense to him.

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

- 1) Director Perry informed the board that Dukes Root Control paused smoke testing during the week of Bonnaroo, although the event primarily impacted Monday. Despite the brief halt in testing, door tags were still distributed to residents during that time. To date, a total of 199,116 feet of smoke testing has been completed, with approximately 77,806 feet remaining. Dukes is scheduled to return the week of July 21st to complete the remaining smoke testing and clean the rest of the sewer system. The projected completion date for the entire project is between the end of July and the beginning of August.

In addition, Director Perry addressed the issue of several manholes that have been covered up for over 20 years. In these cases, the manhole rings were removed and plates were placed over the openings, potentially allowing groundwater infiltration. The locations of many of these manholes—such as intersections and along highways—make excavation particularly challenging. There may be a need to explore alternative solutions, including the possibility of eliminating some of these manholes altogether, depending on their current relevance and location. Secretary Hunt noted that a case-by-case approach would be appropriate, and Director Perry agreed, stating that some may indeed be candidates for removal if they are no longer necessary or accessible.

- 2) On the topic of flow monitoring, Director Perry reported that Dukes Root Control submitted a quote for flow metering in the sewer basins, with a total estimated cost of \$199,000 under the HAC contract. While flow metering is considered an important need for the system, the high cost prompted Director Perry to seek competitive quotes from additional vendors. One vendor based in Cleveland, Tennessee provided an initial estimate that was significantly lower, although it is not yet clear if the scope of that quote matches what Dukes proposed. Additional quotes are expected soon, and a full comparison will be presented at the next board meeting.

5.7 Wastewater Pretreatment:

None to report.

5.8 Water Billing Office:

None to report.

5.9 City Works:

- 1) Director Perry reported that ongoing training for the City Works system is progressing, with weekly sessions currently being held. In the near future, in-person training sessions will be conducted in Murfreesboro to supplement the virtual meetings held via Microsoft Teams. After approximately five in-person sessions, the city will move toward full implementation of the system. In response to Chairman Anderson's question, Director Perry confirmed that the training is intended for all department heads and assistant department heads within the sewer and stormwater departments, though it is unclear whether public works will be involved at this stage.

Mayor Hobbs provided additional context, explaining that City Works is a comprehensive asset management system and a key component of several grants the city has applied for. The system allows for GPS mapping of infrastructure such as manholes and enables efficient data integration and tracking. Director Perry added that one of the major benefits of City Works is its ability to replace paper-based processes. Once trained, field staff (including foremen) will be able to log parts usage, equipment hours, and labor time directly into the system. This information will be used to generate work orders for restocking inventory, schedule equipment servicing, and track depreciation. The system will greatly enhance operational efficiency and asset tracking.

Additionally, Director Perry noted that Assistant Director Lonnie Foley brings prior experience with City Works, which gives the department a valuable head start in the training and implementation process.

5.10 Staff Updates:

- 1) Director Perry informed the board that Emily Bull has successfully earned her Grade III Wastewater Treatment Certification. He praised her performance at the plant, noting that she has done an outstanding job since joining the team. Her strong work ethic was highlighted, with Assistant Director Foley also supporting that assessment. Mayor Hobbs added that following Austin's resignation to take a new position in Shelbyville, Emily is now stepping into a more prominent role. Her certification and readiness make her a natural fit to help fill the gap, demonstrating the value of having capable team members prepared to step up when needed.

Mayor Hobbs emphasized the importance of building internal capacity, referring to the concept as "bench strength". He noted that it is encouraging to see that the city is beginning to develop a pipeline of talent that allows for seamless transitions when unexpected staffing changes occur. He commended Director Perry and the leadership team for focusing on this kind of strategic workforce development.

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Director Perry further noted that the city has made several strong hires over the past year. Among them is Preston Hayter, who brings hands-on experience in water and sewer line installation. Perry mentioned that if a foreman position were to open in the future, Preston would be a strong candidate, given his background and work ethic. The overall message was one of optimism and confidence in the city's growing team and the depth of talent being developed internally.

6) Budget Review:

- a) Director Perry opened the budget discussion by acknowledging that the most recent meeting did not go as planned. He presented several key priorities that the budget was intended to support—most notably, the creation of a dedicated crew to follow the department's camera van and perform immediate sewer leak repairs and point repairs. Over the last four months, more than 30 such repairs have been completed, demonstrating a clear need for consistent resources and staffing. Unfortunately, the board's failure to pass the proposed rate increase has significantly limited the department's ability to act on these plans. Director Perry emphasized that this decision will negatively affect sewer infrastructure maintenance and workforce capacity.

In addition to repair needs, the department has made efforts to improve compliance and accountability through the creation of a pretreatment position. This role focuses on ensuring industries comply with environmental regulations, particularly concerning proper sampling and timely reporting. Non-compliance issues have resulted in fines, which will escalate, if necessary, although the goal remains compliance—not punishment. Director Perry also addressed the urgent need for reliable transportation and equipment, noting that many foreman trucks are over 30 years old, with some literally held together by duct tape. Assistant Director Foley added that the goal is not to become a “Cadillac” utility but simply to meet industry standards—something they are currently far behind on.

Director Perry and Assistant Director Foley both stressed that the department is struggling with outdated infrastructure and insufficient staffing while trying to keep up with a growing city. Mayor Hobbs clarified that the city's water and sewer issues are not caused by new growth, which typically involves new infrastructure, but rather by aging infrastructure in older neighborhoods dating back to the 1940s and 1950s. He warned that if the city fails to act on rate adjustments, the state may eventually intervene, potentially mandating higher rates without local input.

Mayor Hobbs and Director Perry outlined how the proposed budget included essential capital improvement items and how the rate increase was critical to funding them. The increase would have generated about \$3 million in additional revenue per year, funding items such as new equipment, more staff, and infrastructure repairs. Without it, the city faces a \$4 million deficit and would be forced to dip into its \$6 million fund balance—something that will catch the attention of the state and is unsustainable.

Vice-Chairman Watson and Secretary Hunt echoed concerns that many citizens do not understand that the water and sewer departments are self-funded and do not receive tax revenue. Mayor Hobbs noted that the city had already been supplementing water and sewer budgets with general fund transfers for the past two years—\$1.5 million last year and \$1 million the year before. That funding will not last indefinitely.

Chairman Anderson expressed full board support for the proposed rate increase, with the suggestion from Mayor Hobbs to slightly modify the proposal to reintroduce it. Mayor Hobbs recommended reducing the initial rate increase from 36% to 35% to allow it to return to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BOMA) with a revised proposal. The original plan included a 36% increase in year one, followed by 2% increases in each of the next two years, which would allow the city to avoid annual rate battles while planning for long-term improvements. The slightly reduced 35% proposal could help win broader support. Mayor Hobbs admitted that he may have miscalculated the process order by

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passing the budget before the rate increase and acknowledged it as a learning moment in his first year.

Director Perry also shared a 10-year historical rate analysis and pointed out how far behind current rates are compared to system needs. Mayor Hobbs concluded by highlighting a positive development: the city is moving forward with the construction of a new water tower. Thanks to grant support, the city's cost will only be about \$300,000 on a \$3.5 million project. Further, with existing water debt scheduled to drop off by 2028, the city is preparing to present a five-year capital improvement and financing plan to the board. This may include a proposal to borrow funds for system-wide upgrades without increasing the city's debt service, allowing them to reinvest in critical infrastructure.

The board agreed to revisit the rate proposal with possible adjustments and prepare to move it forward for consideration by the budget and finance committee and BOMA. The goal is to secure sustainable funding for the water and sewer departments before more drastic action is required by state oversight.

Alderman Anderson made a motion to amend the rates as the mayor suggested to an overall 35% two and two rate increases send to the Board of Mayor and Alderman (BOMA) for formal adoption, Chairman Anderson seconded. After a vote was taken, the motion passed. 5-0

7) **Discussion:**

a) Director Perry informed the board that the city's annual systemwide water line flushing will begin on July 20th and should be posted on the city's website shortly. The flushing will take place during overnight hours—from approximately 11:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., and is expected to last three to five nights to complete the entire system. Residents may notice discolored water during this process, which is not a health hazard, but rather a normal result of the flushing procedure. In such cases, it is recommended that residents run their outdoor spigots or bathtubs with cold water until the water clears. If discoloration persists for more than 24 hours, customers are encouraged to contact the department directly at 931-273-7017, the emergency contact number also listed in the public notice.

Additionally, residents should avoid doing laundry during this period until they are confident their water has cleared, as discolored water may stain clothing. Assistant Director Foley emphasized that residents should use cold water only when flushing their lines, noting that the city does not supply hot water, and any sediment in hot water likely originates from the customer's water heater.

8) **New Business:**

a) Director Perry reported on the current state of pre-treatment fees, water tap fees, and capacity fees. He noted that the current fee for a standard ¾-inch water tap is \$1,500, but in reality, the cost to the city for installation—especially when complications arise—can be as high as \$4,800, resulting in a loss of approximately \$3,300 per tap. This discrepancy highlights the need to adjust tap fees to better reflect actual costs. In addition, pre-treatment fees for industrial users are being reviewed and adjusted, with the proposed changes set to go before BOMA for approval. Director Perry and Emily Bull have calculated that the revised pre-treatment fee structure would generate approximately \$45,000–\$47,000 annually, enough to fully fund the dedicated pre-treatment position. Regarding capacity fees, Director Perry mentioned a productive discussion with Mr. Dellin and plans to consult with another city to explore how they implement similar charges. He emphasized that, while these adjustments are necessary, he does not want to overwhelm BOMA with too many changes at once. The immediate focus remains on securing approval for the rate adjustments, with further fee discussions to follow.

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- b) Mayor Hobbs informed the board that, as previously promised, monthly budget updates will begin next month. Although these updates were not fully implemented last year, largely due to catching up on overdue financial work, progress has been made. He noted that Director Burrows completed three audits within his first 14 months, helping to bring the city's financial reporting back on track. Moving forward, board members can expect clear and easily readable updates reflecting what was agreed upon in the budget versus what has been spent each month. Hobbs also mentioned that, while the water and sewer department's finances are managed separately, for the rest of the city, departmental accounts have now been properly broken out and funds distributed accordingly, improving the city's overall financial transparency and reporting. He concluded by noting that, although he gave Director Burrows some leeway in the first year due to the backlog, monthly updates will now be delivered regularly, starting with July's report in August, 2025.

9) **Commissioners Comments:**

- a) Chairman Anderson requested that Director Perry schedule a visit to the water treatment plant, ideally sometime in October, for the Water and Sewer Commission and any other interested parties. He emphasized the importance of seeing firsthand the improvements that have been made at the facility. While noting that a few similar visits have taken place in the past, he felt that another on-site tour is due, and asked Director Perry to determine a date that works well with his schedule.
- b) Chairman Anderson brought up the upcoming board members' training and asked if everyone planned to register or if Director Perry should go ahead and handle registrations for the group. Director Perry acknowledged that he wasn't sure where everyone stood on their required credit education units/hours (CEUs), but offered to assist with the process. Several members confirmed their interest. Chairman Anderson confirmed that all five members would be registered. Secretary Hunt added that regardless of credit requirements, the training is valuable, keeping members informed and offering a chance to network with peers facing similar issues. Members agreed it's helpful to hear other municipalities' challenges and approaches, sometimes finding reassurance in their own progress. Discussion also included lodging arrangements, with members preferring to stay at the same hotel as before, noting its reasonable cost and convenient location. As the training is in early August, the board agreed to consider rescheduling their August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to a later date to accommodate travel.
- c) Director Perry suggested skipping the August, 2025 meeting unless something urgent comes up. He proposed that, if everyone is comfortable with it, they could simply forgo the meeting and evaluate closer to the date. To keep the board informed and ensure they aren't behind, he offered to compile and email all relevant data, including the director's report and any important updates for the month of July, 2025. This way, board members would have the necessary information in hand, and any items from July, 2025 could still be discussed during the next scheduled meeting.

On a motion from Vice-Chairman Watson, seconded by Secretary Hunt, the meeting adjourned.  
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**Mike Anderson, Chairman**



**Gary Hunt, Recording Secretary**