

WSSC WATER COMMISSION HEARING

FISCAL YEAR 2027 PRELIMINARY PROPOSED BUDGET HEARING

January 28, 2026, 7:00 p.m.

Prince George's County Council Hearing Room, Laurel, MD

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Mark J. Smith, Chair

Regina Speed-Bost, Commissioner

Kishia L. Powell, General Manager/CEO

SPEAKERS: Munetsi Timothy Musara, Alan Wong, Veny
DeOliveira, Paul Gentile, Robert Lovisa, Mary A.
Lehman, Fariha Babar

REPORTED BY: KOREE KING, Notary Public

* * * * *



1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. SMITH: -- relations to me, and in fact
3 all of team H2O, for your leadership, sound financial
4 planning, fiduciary excellence, and the execution of
5 our mission. With that being said, I'd like to
6 introduce. I'd like to introduce my fellow
7 commissioners. I see Commissioner Regina Speed-Bost,
8 also representing Prince George's County on the line.
9 I am not certain if there are additional. I see also
10 Commissioner Espy-Williams. Lynnette Espy-Williams,
11 also representing Prince George's County. If I am
12 missing our Montgomery County colleagues -- I don't
13 see -- so I don't see any. So I will -- I will
14 proceed. I do, of course, see GM and CEO Kishia
15 Powell, deputy general manager for external affairs
16 Christi Bickham, deputy general manager of operations
17 Aklile Tesfaye. Deputy general manager of mission
18 support David McDonough. Chief financial officer
19 Timothy Munetsi, I believe you're on as well. Timothy
20 Musara. Sorry, I want to do that correctly. Chief
21 Financial Officer Munetsi Timothy Musara; chief



1 engineer Alan Wong. Chief of staff Nina Hickson;
2 deputy chief of staff Justin DeVantier; director of
3 customer service John Curry, director of government
4 affairs Monica Marquina, chief procurement officer,
5 Caprecia Poole-Williams, chief of health and safety
6 David Gill, general services director Allison Wilson,
7 communications director Mr. Chuck Brown, budget
8 division manager Letitia Carolina-Powell, and
9 operations budget section manager Fariha Babar. Madam
10 general manager, did I miss anybody on your leadership
11 team?

12 MS. POWELL: I don't think so Mr. Chair, but
13 we're all here and accounted for. We also have other
14 members of Team H2O as well. And so thank you for the
15 introductions.

16 MR. SMITH: Absolutely. So we will proceed.
17 Tonight's hearing gives citizens an opportunity to
18 comment on the agency's proposed capital and operating
19 budget and revenue requirements for fiscal year 2027.
20 These hearings continue WSSC Water's commitment to
21 transparency and follow extensive public outreach



1 efforts. Please note that this public hearing is only
2 for the 2027 preliminary proposed budget. The
3 highlights of the budget have been prepared in summary
4 form and included in preliminary proposed budget --
5 included in the preliminary proposed budget distributed
6 for public review in January. The FY 2027 estimated
7 expenditures for all funds total \$1.9 billion. The FY
8 27 operating budget is \$108 million greater than the FY
9 26 approved operating budget, and the FY 27 capital
10 budget is \$45 million over FY 26. The FY 27 budget is
11 supported by a five percent average rate revenue
12 enhancement, supplemented by a one percent in one-time
13 revenue, from our -- from our interest in fund balance,
14 I now will ask the team to brief us on the preliminary
15 proposed budget. Mr. Musara.

16 MR. MUSARA: Good evening, Chair Smith.
17 Commissioners Speed-Bost and Espy-Williams, general
18 manager Powell, customers, and Team H2O. I am Munetsi
19 Timothy Musara, Chief Financial Officer, and I, along
20 with our Chief Engineer, will be presenting the Fiscal
21 Year 2027 Preliminary Proposed Operating and Capital



1 budget. Here is our agenda for the evening, and I'll
2 jump right into the Commission overview.

3 WSSC Water is the largest water -- wastewater
4 utility in Maryland. Our service area spans
5 approximately 1,000 square miles across Prince George's
6 and Montgomery counties. The location of our water
7 filtration plants and water resource recovery
8 facilities are marked on the map. We proudly serve 1.9
9 million customers and have never had a drinking water
10 quality violation in our 107 years.

11 We want you, our stakeholders, to know that
12 WSSC Water is an anchor institution, and as we present
13 ourselves as an anchor institution, it is important to
14 note that our values are not changing. Instead, our
15 impact is being amplified. WSSC Water is a regional
16 economic development anchor, having contributed 634.5
17 million to businesses in Prince George's and Montgomery
18 counties over the past five years. We've been
19 expanding the financial assistance provided to our
20 customers, holding hundreds of community events each
21 year, all while delivering the infrastructure



1 excellence our communities deserve.

2 This is the budgeting process and statutory
3 milestone timeline that the Commission follows, and as
4 the slide suggests, it is an extensive and public
5 facing process. The capital budget formulation starts
6 in April, and the operating budget preparation kicks
7 off in May. These early starts allow us to be prepared
8 for the spending affordability process, and to meet the
9 statutory milestones. The Red star shows where we
10 currently are in the process.

11 The outreach efforts that have been performed
12 in communicating the public hearings are social media
13 postings, direct mailings, notification on our website,
14 and via email. Notification was also provided in
15 newspaper notices and releases. And again, as the
16 Chair said, we appreciate your adaptability in
17 transitioning to a virtual hearing, given the
18 challenges with all the weather and our wanting to
19 ensure the safety of all attendees.

20 Here, we have definitions of some budget
21 terms that you will hear mentioned in today's



1 presentation. We have a preliminary budget of \$1.94
2 billion for FY 2027. The operating sources are
3 customer rate revenue, the largest source, which
4 accounts for approximately 92 percent of the operating
5 budget funding. Other revenue is comprised of items
6 like plumbing and inspection fees, miscellaneous fees
7 and charges, interest income, renewable energy sales,
8 and external funding, which is the MDE Bay Restoration
9 O&M grant. These funds are used to pay for operating
10 expenses and debt service, and they fund PayGo, which
11 offsets debt funding for the capital budget.

12 For the capital budget sources, we have debt,
13 state revolving funds, PayGo, and system development
14 charges, and other contributions, and these are used to
15 pay for WSSC water infrastructure programs and
16 interjurisdictional investments. The capital budget
17 excludes developer funded projects; that's why it has
18 been backed out here. So in total, the FY 2027
19 preliminary proposed budget of \$1.197 billion is \$108.3
20 million, or 5.9 percent greater than that of FY 2026,
21 the operating budget increasing by \$63.5 million, and



1 capital by \$44.8 million.

2 So for our bottom line up front, as we
3 formulated the FY 2027 budget, cost containment was the
4 headline message shared with departments. We gave
5 departments a target of cutting five percent of their
6 discretionary budget, and they came back with 27
7 million, or eight percent, worth of cuts, which
8 translated into a rate enhancement savings for our
9 customers.

10 This supports our standing as an anchor
11 institution, because we illustrated our willingness to
12 make tough decisions in these challenging times, and
13 that we are cognizant of what our customers are going
14 through as well. The budget does not include any new
15 headcount, and it prioritized capital budget programs
16 to maximize the outcomes and use of the available
17 funding.

18 When we look at the budget drivers, debt
19 service is the largest single line item in the budget,
20 and that is at \$388.4 million. It's up by 14 million
21 from FY 2026, and this is required to make payments on



1 borrowed money for the capital budget; PayGo, which are
2 operating dollars that are used to supplement the
3 capital program, and the use of this reduces the
4 reliance on bonds and saves on the long-term debt
5 service costs, and this increased by \$7 million.

6 The budget continues to provide competitive
7 salaries and benefits to Team H2O. The budget also
8 provides a livable minimum and competitive pay to
9 attract and retain skilled staff, and it carries
10 forward raises from the collective bargaining
11 agreement. It also absorbs rising costs in various
12 areas over the FY 2026 budget. Regional sewage
13 disposal is going up by seven percent, and this
14 together with the related Capital Improvement Program
15 costs are items that continue to increase, due to the
16 increases in the DC water budget. Heat, light, and
17 power is up nine percent, and health insurance by 22
18 percent. We anticipate further operational cost
19 increases that may cause future budget pressures
20 resulting from inflation and tariffs.

21 The clawing back of federal awards and the



1 ending of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act
2 has led to constraints on available federal funding to
3 supplement our budget. When it comes to how the funds
4 are spent, it is important to first note that 56
5 percent of our costs are nondiscretionary, and this
6 category includes capital project funding, chemicals,
7 biosolids hauling, regional sewage, and heat, light,
8 and power.

9 The allocation of each dollar that we spend
10 is as follows. \$0.41 goes to capital improvements, and
11 that covers debt service and PayGo. \$0.33 to
12 operations and maintenance, which includes facilities,
13 pipe repair and replacement, road repair, customer
14 assistance program funding, customer service, corporate
15 finance, and IT services. And the remaining \$0.26 to
16 Team H2O for competitive salaries and wages, employee
17 benefits, training, and workforce development. The FY
18 2027 budget continues our commitment to affordability
19 with a 1.8 million, or 20 percent increase to the
20 customer assistance programs from FY 2026 levels.

21 The various programs and funding allocations



1 are listed here, and specific increases are the
2 doubling of the funding for the CAP leak repayment --
3 repair program, and this is an increase of \$350,000,
4 and an additional \$1.4 million will be made available
5 for additional programs. I would like to note that the
6 commission is offering an emergency customer relief
7 program over and above the customer assistance budget
8 in FY 2026, and the program details would be provided
9 in later slides. I'll now turn it over to our Chief
10 engineer to present the Capital Improvements Program.

11 MR. WONG: Thank you CFO Musara. Good
12 evening, Chair Smith, GM Powell, and my WSSC Water H2O
13 colleagues. I'm here to present the FY 27 Capital
14 Improvements Program, which you can see that the
15 program for FY 27 is 749 million, almost 750, and the
16 six-year budget of 4.8 billion. We have currently 219
17 projects in progress, totaling 213 million, and we will
18 be launching 88 new projects in 2027, totaling an
19 additional 202 million. Next slide, please.

20 This next slide compares the proposed FY 2027
21 capital budget, which is shown in blue, with the FY



1 2026 capital budget in green. And you can see in -- as
2 we go down from the top to the bottom of this chart,
3 there are programs that are decreasing in budget for FY
4 27, and there are those that are increasing in FY 27.
5 This next slide highlights a few of these main
6 programs.

7 The water distribution program, while it's
8 going to be reduced for FY 27, the main driver for that
9 is that we've been optimizing our water reconstruction
10 program. So we'll be able to deliver the services with
11 a lower budget in FY 27. Likewise, on the water
12 treatment and storage program, we have a major consent
13 decree program winding down, the Potomac consent
14 decree, and that will also allow us to reduce our water
15 treatment and storage budget in 2027.

16 On the upside, we have an increase in the
17 wastewater collection program, and -- for two reasons.
18 Number one, we also have been optimizing that
19 reconstruction program. But we also understand, and
20 have data that demonstrates that we continue to have
21 increased infiltration inflow into our system, and so



1 we're going to earmark some additional funds to get a
2 better reduction of II in the wastewater program. Also
3 on interjurisdictional agreements, CFO Musara mentioned
4 Blue Plains. And so we expect to have an increase in
5 the cost of the Blue Plains interregional agreement for
6 FY 27. Next slide, please.

7 We all -- we have, every year, a number of
8 capital priorities. And this particular -- first
9 priority, power, is going to be -- remain a priority
10 for several years out. We're looking at a budget of
11 4.5 million, and the main reason for this is that we've
12 had the Potomac plant as a -- as an indicator that we
13 have some major risk in terms of having continuous
14 power to support our -- our water treatment and storage
15 facilities, so we're earmarking some additional funds
16 there. On the -- next slide, please.

17 On the water main side, we've had some major
18 breaks in the system, including the 54-inch main break.
19 And so as our system continues to age, we know we have
20 to prioritize funding, especially for those larger
21 mains. Next slide, please.



1 Again on the topic of linear infrastructure,
2 our wastewater infrastructure linear is also many
3 decades behind in terms of repair or replacement. And
4 we have a significant example here, in terms of the --
5 this corrosion that's being identified by TV
6 inspection, and manual inspection, actually, in one of
7 our major interceptors. Next slide, please.

8 On the water quality side, we are continuing
9 to look forward to emerging regulations, and one of the
10 programs that we've prioritized is our PFAS program.
11 This is a photo of our lab, an updated lab, with all
12 new analytical facilities and staff to support that
13 program. Next slide, please.

14 Again, this is a slide that demonstrates the
15 results of basement backups. And again, I mentioned
16 earlier that we're seeing a significant -- continued
17 significant amount of basement backups in our system,
18 but we have done a lot of analysis of our system, and
19 we've -- we've honed in to some of the -- the hot --
20 hotspots, including North Takoma Park. So we're going
21 to continue to -- to do that focus and reduce the



1 number of backups across the system. Next slide,
2 please.

3 On the capital budget side, in general, we do
4 have some significant, let's say, good news. While we
5 have \$140 million wastewater capital program, we're
6 receiving 124 million of funding from MDE. So that's a
7 major percentage of that -- that program. We also are
8 in the process of modernizing our other facilities,
9 like the maintenance depots. And we're doing well in
10 terms of our AMI program for automated meter reading.
11 And so I think these other projects on this highlight
12 list are, again, ones that are going to allow us to
13 move forward with increasing our service levels, and at
14 a reasonable cost. Next slide, please.

15 (Indiscernible) So I'll turn it back to CFO Musara.

16 MR. MUSARA: Thanks, chief engineer Wong.
17 I'll now go over the revenue enhancement
18 recommendation.

19 So as part of the spending affordability
20 process, the commission presented a six percent base
21 case revenue enhancement, with a seven percent



1 alternate scenario. Montgomery County Executive
2 supported an up to seven percent enhancement, and the
3 Montgomery County counsel passed a resolution
4 supporting a six percent revenue enhancement. Prince
5 George's County counsel passed a resolution supporting
6 a five percent revenue enhancement, which was the same
7 as what the Prince George's County executive supported.

8 The FY 2027 preliminary proposed budget is
9 supported by a six percent enhancement. It is
10 comprised of a five percent average water and sewer
11 volumetric and fixed fee rate, supplemented by one
12 percent from non-rate revenue, and a temporary rate
13 stabilization fund to limit the impact on our
14 customers. Again, the budget does not include any new
15 headcount, and it includes prioritized capital budget
16 programs to maximize the outcomes and the use of the
17 available funding.

18 Here we have the sources and uses of the FY
19 2027 \$1.194 billion operating budget by major
20 categories, with increases and decreases between FY 24,
21 25, and 26, illustrated in the graphs on the right-hand



1 side of the slide. And here, this shows the sources
2 and uses of the FY 2027 budget by major category.

3 The impact of the revenue enhancement on our
4 customer bill is displayed in this slide. The table
5 highlights the bill impact to an average three-person
6 household, with three quarter inch meters. The five
7 percent average water and sewer volumetric and fixed
8 fee rate will result in a monthly charge of \$4.92 -- or
9 a monthly change, sorry, of \$4.92, or quarterly change
10 of \$14.75, and an annual change of \$59. The average
11 residential bill is approximately one percent of the
12 median household income, and the proposed five percent
13 rate enhancements will allow the commission to continue
14 making the required capital investments to the system,
15 as well as to invest in Team H2O.

16 Over the last 26 years, our cumulative bill
17 impact has been below that of our regional peers. The
18 amount only reached the point of being higher than the
19 CPI index in 2025.

20 Our final slide highlights five water bill
21 assistance programs available to our customers.



1 Promise Pay allows customers to sign up for affordable
2 and flexible interest-free payment plans. Our customer
3 assistance program waives fixed fees and provides free
4 annual plumbing inspections for water leaks and other
5 benefits to approved residential customers.

6 The Water Fund allows eligible customers to
7 receive up to \$500 per year to apply toward their
8 bills. The Pipe Emergency Repair Program provides a
9 loan of up to \$10,000 to finance the repair,
10 replacement, or diagnosis of water or sewer, on
11 property service lines, and a new program for FY 2026
12 over and above the budgets of the assistance program is
13 the Emergency Customer Relief Fund that provides up to
14 \$750 to customers past due water and sewer bills, and
15 it was funded at a level of \$2.4 million, and is
16 available until all funds are dispersed. This
17 concludes the FY 2027 Preliminary Proposed Operating
18 and Capital budget presentation, and we'll turn it back
19 to our commission chair.

20 MR. SMITH: Thank you, CFO Musara. Before we
21 get into public comments, my first statement is I see



1 that councilmember Kyla Clark has joined us as well. I
2 want to take a moment to acknowledge not only
3 Councilmember Clark, but all dignitaries on the call
4 today. Councilmember Clark, if you'd like to come off
5 mute and just say a few words, we'd be pleased to hear
6 from you. I'm not sure if we're able to unmute her
7 line or if she, maybe. Maybe she's not hearing me.
8 We -- we will come back to Councilmember Clark. Let me
9 just also say if there are any other dignitaries on the
10 line, please. I guess the best way we all do this in
11 this virtual world now is by pushing the raise hand
12 button, and we will make sure we acknowledge you as
13 well. The next piece, I'll just ask my fellow
14 commissioners if they have any comments? Okay.

15 MS. POWELL: No comments. Thank you, Chair
16 Smith.

17 MR. SMITH: Thank you. So now we will move
18 to our public comments. And please note that your
19 feedback is very important to us. This hearing record
20 will be kept open through close of business on Tuesday,
21 February 17th, and we will consider all public comments



1 by that date. So if there are folks online today who
2 maybe want to comment in private, that can happen as
3 well. But those online can also please let our
4 constituents and customers, know that we -- this will
5 be open, the comment period will be open until the 17th
6 of February.

7 A couple brief statements from me, Madam GM
8 Powell, CFO -- CFO Musara, and Chief Engineer Wong. I
9 would like to, really, just highlight a couple pieces
10 that I heard in the presentation. First and foremost,
11 we know that 2025, and as we move into 2026, that, you
12 know, it's a difficult year for us, or for our
13 customers and our constituents. We know, whether it's
14 the government shutdown, layoffs, et cetera, have been
15 very significant to -- or significant impact on those
16 who we serve. So I would like to commend the three of
17 you for doing a couple of things.

18 One, increasing the investment in our
19 customer service programs. I think that is critical,
20 as it acknowledges the difficult time. And we're not,
21 you know, blind eye, or deaf ear, to the situation that



1 we're all living through. Two, equally important, the
2 ability to find additional resources to invest in our
3 infrastructure. CFO Musara kicked this off, saying we
4 have not had a water violation in our entire history.
5 I think that is commendable, and the only way that
6 works is we continue to invest in infrastructure and
7 that our customers, constituents, and the like, can go
8 with confidence to, whether it's their -- to get clean
9 drinking water, or when they flush their toilets, and
10 know that we are being responsible in the maintenance
11 of -- of sewer water as well.

12 And finally, I think we should note that, not
13 only have -- did folks, did the team, mentioned that
14 there's no additional headcount, but the increase
15 that's requested here will only -- will be, I'm not --
16 I'm not going to say only, will be. The impact will
17 only -- will be \$5 per month. So I think that is also
18 commendable, the team has done a lot to constrain
19 rising costs, and especially those costs that we do not
20 control, like our agreement with DC water. So with
21 that, I will now turn it over for public comments.



1 THE REPORTER: Thank you, Chair Smith. If
2 anybody wants to have a comment or ask questions,
3 please raise your hand. We'll call on customers in the
4 order that the hands are up. And then if anybody is
5 calling in, we will go back to phone callers after
6 customers who have raised their hands. So the first I
7 see is Councilwoman Kyla Clark.

8 MS. CLARK: Good evening everyone. I just
9 wanted to say thank you so much, just for being so
10 transparent, and all the work that you're doing on
11 behalf of, you know, Maryland, and especially our
12 residents. This was really helpful for me to
13 understand what direction that you're going in. I try
14 to share, especially the information that you put out,
15 and you keeping us up to date. So I just wanted to
16 stop by, listen to what you have planned, and just to
17 say thank you so much.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Councilmember, for
19 joining us.

20 MS. CLARK: Absolutely.

21 MS. POWELL: Thank you, Councilwoman.



1 MS. CLARK: Thank you. And we're saying
2 hello from the City of Laurel. Have a great evening.

3 THE REPORTER: All right. Veny, with XTT
4 Life?

5 MR. DEOLIVEIRA: Yes, yes. Peace and
6 blessings, Commissioner and team. I wanted to start
7 out with something simple. In 2022, WSSC water spent
8 \$1,287,000 on diesel fuel for your fleet. That's real
9 money, and it shows an opportunity to reclaim part of
10 that budget with a local solution that already exists
11 today.

12 For those who don't know, my name is Veny
13 DeOliveira and I represent XTT Life, a Prince George
14 County based, MBE certified business. And here's the
15 deal, our XTT burn rate modifier can save WSSC water
16 over \$187,000, for just \$27,000. And again, that's
17 based on a \$1.2 million diesel fuel bill. And that's
18 only with diesel fuel savings, reduced maintenance and
19 less downtime. That's millions more in potential
20 savings.

21 Prince George County has a documented -- it



1 has -- is documented with an F rating for air quality,
2 a rated F rating for air quality. That's in Prince
3 George County. Our burn rate modifier doesn't just
4 save money. It can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by
5 up to 40 percent. That's cleaner air, healthier
6 communities, and results today, not years from now.
7 Now, I know a transition is coming for electric powered
8 vehicles, and we support that transition. But let's be
9 honest. Why wait?

10 XTT Life could be the bridge for the
11 solution, with something that works right now while
12 this transition happens. And it's important to note,
13 while I use diesel fuel in numbers today, the burn rate
14 modifier also works for unleaded fuel, making it
15 flexible across your fleet, and this requires no
16 modification to WSSC's current operation. I would like
17 to propose a pilot program, specifically for WSSC
18 Water's fleet. So the bottom line is we can save
19 money, reduce emissions, prevent downtime, and produce
20 measurable results today. All we need is a chance to
21 show you. So thank you, and I look forward to your



1 guidance on the next steps.

2 MR. SMITH: Thank you sir. I will -- I'll
3 ask GM Powell to curate the response. I believe
4 probably several members of her team will respond to
5 you, sir. GM Powell?

6 MS. POWELL: Yes, sir. As you know, Chair
7 Smith, we have a new Director of General Services who
8 is responsible for our fleet. So we'll make sure that
9 this -- that there is a connection there to follow up.

10 MR. DEOLIVEIRA: Thank you so much. Thank
11 you, Ms. Powell.

12 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

13 MR. SMITH: Thank you. Thank you, sir, for
14 your question. And I'll just say that you heard me in
15 my opening statements. And I know that the GM will
16 make sure this happens, but just so you're aware,
17 general services director is Alison Wilson. Thank you.
18 Can we go to the next question? Mr. Chuck?

19 THE REPORTER: Yes. Thank you, Chair Smith.
20 Next we have Mr. Gentile, and reminder, if you are
21 asking questions, please state your name and the county



1 that you reside in, and you will have three minutes to
2 ask your question or to make statements. Thank you,
3 Mr. Gentile.

4 MR. GENTILE: \$1.9 billion in three minutes.
5 Okay. Very good. I heard a lot about -- my name is
6 Paul Gentile, and I live at 16409 Bond Mill Road, and
7 been a long advocate and a commenter on the WSSC's 48-
8 inch prototypes and raw water main. Mr. Wong and Mr.
9 Musara, I direct you to the 90 pages of excellence
10 reported by WSP, the independent auditor, who scathing
11 report 19 recommendations in four major system
12 management improvements, an indictment of WSSC's
13 processes, management, and governance; and each of
14 their recommendations should be incorporated into the
15 budget proposals, and I don't see how they were.

16 These recommendations point to the lack of
17 leadership and ineptness that requires replacement of
18 the current business practices. The report affirms and
19 confirms the allegations, and identifies additional
20 issues that were reported by residents and other major
21 concerns. Again, all these issues must be addressed,



1 and planned, and budgeted, and -- and the budgets need
2 to be adjusted to implement these recommendations.

3 All these issues point to a lack of senior
4 leadership, and -- and a system that has little, if
5 any, accountability to other government entities and
6 the public at large. WSSC Water will need to institute
7 all the changes that are recommended, and to achieve
8 these ends, will require a fundamental reorganization
9 and reshaping of WSSC. Since I only have three
10 minutes, I'll just get to what I think should happen.

11 Number one, we need a written apology to the
12 community for the devastating impact on the community
13 based on the report, and also recent findings of
14 putting non-potable water under potable water for our
15 community. We need a plan to identify and remedy all
16 pipe locations where non-potable water is over
17 unprotected potable water sources along the project.
18 We had a water main, and your -- and your crews didn't
19 even know where the potable water -- the -- the main
20 water main was and took two days to fix it and put
21 another hole in our street.



1 We need a plan with a budget to institute all
2 the issues and recommendations in the report that I
3 just said. I'm also calling on state legislators to
4 propose legislation to transfer the governance from the
5 counties to a more responsible public entity to oversee
6 and direct WSSC. We also need to bar and suspend Allan
7 Meyer, the contractor, from any WSSC contracts based on
8 WSSC's water procurement regulations, and --

9 MR. BROWN: Mr. Gentile, that's the end of
10 three minutes. Do you want to wrap it up really quick?

11 MR. GENTILE: -- and finally.

12 MR. BROWN: Your three minutes is over.

13 MR. GENTILE: Sure. And finally --

14 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Brown.

15 MR. GENTILE: -- the problems keeps -- keep
16 on happening. I'm calling for the resignation of the
17 current general manager. Thank you very much.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Gentile, for your
19 comments. We -- we hear your comments and concern.
20 And as we always do, we will respond in kind to make
21 sure that we not only fully understand, but I know that



1 the GM has worked extremely hard, her and her team, to
2 meet your needs. So I would ask also that we would
3 keep -- this is a budget hearing, or a budget meeting,
4 so that we would keep the comments focused on the
5 budget moving forward. So thank you very much, sir.
6 Mr. Brown, who do we have up next?

7 MR. BROWN: Sorry about that. We have R.
8 Lovisa. Please state your name, your county of
9 residence, and a reminder, you have three minutes.
10 Thank you. And R. Lovisa, if you're speaking, you are
11 on mute. And if you can hear me, if you want to try to
12 unmute your mic one more time?

13 MR. LOVISA: How about soundcheck?

14 MR. BROWN: Yep, I can hear you.

15 MR. LOVISA: All right. Thank you. I
16 appreciate the opportunity to provide some feedback and
17 some comments. Let me start off by saying my name is
18 Robert Lovisa. I've lived in Montgomery County, in the
19 Dumont Oaks section, for the last 40 years. And I want
20 to talk specifically about the ready-to-serve items,
21 the AMF and IIF charges. For those who recall, I paid



1 my front foot benefit charges way back, about 30 years
2 ago. I don't know if that's germane to the discussion
3 or not. But my property, in the 40 years that I've
4 lived here, I've never needed any WSSC infrastructure
5 services except for one time, that was a -- my
6 neighbors had a shut off notice that was incorrectly
7 performed on my property. But that's a separate issue.

8 So the -- the point was that I've never had
9 to had [sic] any services rendered. In the last year,
10 from January of 2025 through January of this year, 54
11 percent of my total WSSC bill goes to pay for the
12 ready-to-serve items, the AMF and the IIF. In calendar
13 year 2023, it was 53 percent. So my statement is that
14 I want to be on record, and to communicate to the
15 individuals who are doing the budget that those
16 charges, to me, seem to be rather high.

17 I'll have to be honest that I'm not too sure
18 I received the value for those fees. That stated, I'm
19 trying to learn what those services are, and how they
20 do serve me. But I've had these feelings that I've
21 been -- these charges have been pretty high for the



1 last three years, but I haven't had the initiative to
2 call in and provide comments until I received my bill,
3 literally this afternoon. So that's where I'm at. On
4 slide 13 of the presentation of CFO Masara, there was a
5 comment related to affordability. I just don't seem to
6 be feeling it. My charges are going up, and up, and up
7 each year. I can relate them to the ready-to-serve
8 items. And now I'm learning today that it's going to
9 go up another \$14.75 for the next -- per quarter for
10 the next year, so that's where I'm at. I just want to
11 provide some comments for you to consider, and it's not
12 a complaint. It's a point of education for everybody
13 concerned.

14 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Lovisa, we
15 absolutely appreciate your comments. I'll again ask
16 Commissioner -- sorry, GM Powell to curate the response
17 with her team.

18 MS. POWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If it's
19 possible to get Mr. Lovisa's contact information, we
20 can review his bill with him and also explain those
21 charges. We have, on our website, a new document that



1 was prepared that explains those two fees. However, we
2 can share more details about what those fees are used
3 for, or where that -- where that funding goes that are
4 collected from those two fees. In part, it helps to
5 support the capital program, which continues to
6 increase, not just for the work that we're doing, but
7 also the work that DC water is doing on Blue Plains,
8 and there is a lot of infrastructure issues that we
9 have to catch up on, but happy to have the team connect
10 to go into more detail.

11 MR. LOVISA: Yes. Ms. Powell, thank you for
12 that. I had an hour's conversation with one of your
13 service providers, or service center persons, who
14 provided me a lot of valuable information today. And I
15 did go look at those websites, and I did go look at
16 that information. But of course, time was of the
17 essence before this meeting, and I wasn't able to
18 digest all that information.

19 MS. POWELL: No worries.

20 MR. LOVISA: Thank you.

21 MS. POWELL: Thank you.



1 MR. SMITH: Mr. Lovisa, if you want to -- if
2 you want to put your contact information in the chat,
3 we can capture that there, if you are able to do that.

4 MR. LOVISA: All right. Thank you. I
5 presume that's not public, correct?

6 MR. SMITH: Well, let's -- I was going to
7 say, Mr. Chuck, why don't -- why don't you add your
8 contact information, and then Mr. Lovisa can email you
9 directly?

10 MR. BROWN: Great idea, doing that now.

11 MR. SMITH: Thank you sir. I also want to
12 make sure we recognize Delegate Mary Lehman who's also
13 on the call. Delegate Lehman if you'd like to come off
14 mute and say a few words as well. We want to make sure
15 we recognize you.

16 MS. LEHMAN: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Smith. And
17 thank you, Ms. Powell, and I want to do a shout out to
18 my constituent, Mr. Gentile, a longtime neighbor in
19 West Laurel who, you know, I know has been critical at
20 times of WSSC, and I think many of his concerns are
21 well founded. I have shared some of my own concerns,



1 and on behalf of the 21st district delegation, I did
2 respond in writing, on behalf of my team here. Well,
3 we're here in Annapolis now for the 90-day session, but
4 we served West Laurel and the surrounding areas of
5 northern Prince George's County, including my
6 neighborhood of West Laurel, where I've lived since
7 1992.

8 And I would just, to add briefly to what Mr.
9 Gentile said. I think, you know, he had expressed
10 concern to me about the WSP audits of, not just the
11 Bond Mill Road pipeline project, but two other projects
12 in southern Prince George's County that went
13 significantly beyond the, you know, the expected
14 timelines for those projects, ran into a number of
15 difficulties, which is what triggered the audit. The
16 audit, I think, was excellent, and candid, and pretty
17 hard hitting, but it also had some really good,
18 constructive recommendations. And I would like to say,
19 I have not -- I missed if there was an overview of the
20 budget at the beginning of the meeting. I joined a
21 little bit late. But I would like to see some of those



1 recommendations reflected in your budget, and I can
2 follow up offline with some comments in writing. I
3 don't know if there was an attempt to do that, or you
4 know, if you -- if you want to comment, or can refer me
5 to something in the proposed budget that might reflect
6 some of those WSP recommendations, but I thought that
7 they were very much on point, and pretty specific in
8 what they were recommending.

9 And I would say generally, without singling
10 out the contractor on the Bond Mill Road pipeline
11 project, that I would hope there would be some lessons
12 learned going forward for WSSC in the procurement
13 process, whatever that might look like, whether there
14 were things that were not considered with respect to
15 that specific contractor, and its -- you know, its
16 history of either working, you know, in Maryland
17 generally, because I believe it's a Pennsylvania based
18 company, or more specifically in Prince George's
19 County, because there were issues there around, you
20 know, I'm not going to go into great detail. You all
21 know what some of the problems were, but for example,



1 not understanding clearly what kind of soil that they
2 were going to be dealing with, things that one would
3 think a contractor would, even if they hadn't worked in
4 a certain geographic area, would know in advance.

5 So I hope you will take those recommendations
6 to heart, and figure out ways to, you know, include
7 some of those recommendations in your -- in your
8 budget. Thank you.

9 MR. SMITH: Thank you. Thank you, Delegate
10 Lehman. We are -- we are graced with your presence.
11 We know that during the session, you have quite a --
12 quite a bit on your plate, so we thank you for joining.
13 I will again ask GM Powell to curate the response
14 with -- between her and her team.

15 MS. POWELL: Yes. Good evening, Delegate
16 Lehman. Thank you for joining us and thank you for the
17 comments that you shared. If you -- in case you did
18 not receive the update that we gave at the last
19 commission meeting, I'll make sure that Monica sends
20 that over to you, and we will update, in our updates
21 going forward to the commissioners, the relationship to



1 the budget, in terms of what is being implemented to
2 address the recommendations. As we shared during the
3 commission meeting, there were some improvements that
4 we had already gotten underway, and there are some
5 things that are related to process changes that are not
6 necessarily tied to one specific part of the budget,
7 but we will try to point that out to you. The
8 presentation does provide an update on where we are
9 with implementing recommendations.

10 MS. LEHMAN: Great. Thank you. And I
11 appreciate that. You know, whatever kind of tutorial
12 you can -- you can provide to direct me within the
13 budget, and that I could, you know, maybe do a follow
14 up in writing to you, about what, you know, kind of
15 what I see, and where are you right now in terms of
16 your budget process? Have you been before the two
17 county councils, or where are we right now, you know,
18 as we were speaking this evening?

19 MS. POWELL: This is the first of the two
20 hearings that we have. The proposed budget has been
21 sent to the counties. We're having these two public



1 hearings. It will go, then, after comments are
2 received, the -- will have approval from the commission
3 to transmit the final proposed budget, and then it
4 continues through the process to be heard by the
5 counties. I believe we still have to appear before the
6 two committees before it goes for approval in May, and
7 then adoption by the commission in June. And the team
8 has pulled up the process that we follow with the
9 statutory milestones there.

10 MS. LEHMAN: Got it. Great. Thank you,
11 thank you for that reminder. And then the -- tonight's
12 the first hearing. The second hearing is tomorrow
13 night; is that correct?

14 MS. POWELL: Tomorrow night is for Montgomery
15 County.

16 MS. LEHMAN: Right, right.

17 MS. POWELL: We made these virtual. Yes,
18 ma'am.

19 MS. LEHMAN: And it's virtual again tomorrow
20 night. But anyone can listen, I assume. Right?

21 MS. POWELL: Yes.



1 MS. LEHMAN: Okay. All right. Thank you.
2 Thank you for that. I appreciate it, and I will follow
3 up. Thanks.

4 MS. POWELL: Thank you.

5 MR. SMITH: Again, thank you, Delegate
6 Lehman, we -- we know how busy you are at the current
7 time. I will refer back to Mr. Brown. Any additional
8 questions or comments?

9 THE REPORTER: I do not see any additional
10 hands. If anybody else has a comment or question,
11 please feel free to raise your hand right now. And not
12 seeing any hands, Chair Smith, I'll turn it back to
13 you.

14 MR. SMITH: Thank you, sir. For the record,
15 I'll -- I'll ask Ms. Babar to report on any written
16 correspondence received.

17 MS. BABAR: Thank you, Chair Smith. Good
18 evening. For the record, my name is Fariha Babar. I'm
19 the operating budget section manager at WSSC Water. As
20 of today, no public comments have been received on the
21 FY 27 preliminary proposed budget for this public



1 hearing. If any comments are received by February
2 17th, 2026, they will be included in the February
3 Commission Meeting packet. They will become part of
4 the official public hearing record and will be shared
5 with both Montgomery and Prince George's counties. A
6 transcript of this public hearing will also be sent to
7 both the counties.

8 If you would like to submit any written
9 comments, you may do so by emailing
10 budgetgroup@WSSCwater.com. Or you can mail your
11 comments to WSSC Water Division, Budget Division
12 Manager, at 14501 Sweitzer Lane, Laurel, Maryland. The
13 ZIP code is 20707. You may also call us. The phone
14 number is (301) 206-8110. Thank you.

15 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Babar. I
16 appreciate all the different opportunities for our
17 constituents and customers to reach out to WSSC Water.
18 And with that, I want to thank -- thank all of you for
19 joining us tonight to participate in our budget
20 process. This concludes this public hearing. Thank
21 you, and good night.



1 MS. POWELL: Thank you, Chair Smith, for
2 hosting this evening.

3 (Off the record)

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

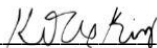


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY

I, Koree King, Notary Public, before whom the foregoing testimony was taken, do hereby certify that the witness was duly sworn by me; that said testimony is a true record of the testimony given by said witness; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this action, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of the action; and that the testimony was reduced to typewriting by me or under my direction.

This certification is expressly withdrawn upon the disassembly or photocopying of the foregoing transcript, including exhibits, unless disassembly or photocopying is done under the auspices of eScribers, LLC, and the signature and original seal is attached thereto.


KOREE KING, Notary Public
in and for the State of
Maryland

