

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

February 27, 2025

**LOCATION:** Headquarters/Video Call

**TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

**DIRECTORS  
PRESENT:** Shelley Heller, Chair (video)  
Judge Frederic Smalkin, Secretary (video)  
Robert Witt, II (video)  
Brendon Baatz, Treasurer (video)  
Moalie Jose, P.E. (video)  
James H. Johnson Jr., Ph.D., P.E.  
Joanna Kille for Dereck Davis (video)  
Charles Glass, Ph.D., P.E.

**DIRECTORS  
ABSENT:** None

<b>OTHERS PRESENT:</b>	Priscilla N. Carroll, Esq.	Luke Page, Technical &
	Ellen Frketic, Deputy Director	Environmental Services (TES)
	Winsome Condra, Procurement	Pamela Fuller, Board Clerk
	Marni Dolinar, Env. Dredging &	Casey Powers, IT (video)
	Restoration (EDR)	Jennifer Wijetunga, WWW
	Tim Ford, Environmental	Tiff Bradshaw, WWW
	Operations (EO)	Joseph Wright, WWW
	Ramona Jones, Human Resources	Danielle Wilson, EO
	Matt Lapinsky, Water/Wastewater	Lisa Barry, EDR
	Hament Patel, Finance	Alex Hancock, TES
	Kanishk Sharma, Administration	Janani Ravi (video)

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Heller called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Some Board members and staff were present at Maryland Environmental Service (MES) Headquarters, and other Board members participated via Zoom video call. The meeting was streamed live to the public on YouTube.

## **MINUTES**

Ms. Heller requested a discussion or motion to approve the minutes from the Board meeting on January 23, 2025. The minutes were approved by consent.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

The Executive Director's and Deputy Director's expense reports for the last month were reviewed. Dr. Glass had no expenses, and Ms. Frketic had one expense.

Dr. Glass reported on external engagements with governmental and private entities over the last month.

Dr. Glass reported on invoice processing performance which is a key performance indicator (KPI) being monitored by agency staff. While the processing time has improved, it is not yet at goal. Efforts are being made to improve the processing of purchase orders (POs). A Project Improvement Team (PIT) has been established to provide rules for procurement card purchasing and PO processing.

At a recent budget hearing, Dr. Glass was asked about the agency's use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Microsoft Copilot is being explored among the executive staff, and the AI Help Assistant feature has been utilized in Workday. MES is also developing an in-house chatbot to address frequently asked questions and provide templates for routine tasks.

Dr. Glass reviewed an updated list of long-term projects he will focus on in the coming months. Several items have already been completed. Dr. Glass reported to the Maryland General Assembly's Transportation and the Environment Subcommittee Chair that MES has finalized agreements with all but two State partners for reimbursable projects. The remaining two agencies are currently reviewing the contracts. The committee seemed satisfied. Dr. Glass is also currently reviewing the numerous applications to MES' new fellowship program.

## **BEST 2025 UPDATE**

Ms. Frketic provided an update on the status of the Building Excellence and Success Together (BEST) FY2025 goals. Most items are in progress, on track, or already completed. Goal 6 (Administrative Enhancements) contains several sub-goals requiring close monitoring. Meeting the goal of increasing revenue through billable labor sales by 4% may be difficult, but

everyone is working hard. Another goal that may be challenging to achieve is the objective to meet or exceed the State's Small Business Reserve (SBR) goal. Last year, MES was very close to the State-set goal. This year, the State changed the guidelines for calculating SBR rates. The new rates are based on the dollar value of SBR contracts awarded rather than as the percentage of SBR contracts. There are very few SBR contractors available for major engineering and construction projects. The BEST SBR goal was set for 20%, which may not be within the agency's control. A realistic expectation would now be 12-15%.

## **NEW BUSINESS REPORT**

Ms. Heller presented the New Business Report and asked if there were any questions.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Mr. Patel reported on the agency's preliminary financial performance as of January 2025. Total billable labor in FY25 is higher than in FY24 but lower than budgeted. Billable labor is lower in Technical and Environmental Services and Water/Wastewater and higher in the other two groups, Environmental Operations and Environmental Dredging and Restoration. Billable hours were lower this January than last, but holidays and inclement weather may have played a role. Overhead expenses have also been lower, due primarily to overhead vacancies.

Overall, the agency is doing well. State clients make up the majority of MES customers. Seventy to eighty percent of the work is to ensure required permit compliance. Prospective new Geographic Information Systems (GIS) work, as well as additional distribution and collection systems work for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS), should lead to increased labor figures.

Municipal securities firm DAC Bond recently awarded MES a Certificate of Excellence for its outstanding commitment to continuing disclosure of its bonds. Maria Bowman has ensured the required monthly reporting is completed for MES and the four Midshore partner counties for the last five years. DAC's recognition will be very beneficial as MES moves forward with its next bond sale for the Midshore II Landfill.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT**

Ms. Jones presented the Human Resources report. As of February 19, 2025, the agency vacancy rate was 3.10%. Spring recruitment events are currently being scheduled.

## **PROCUREMENT ITEMS**

Procurement Item 1 was withdrawn prior to the meeting.

Ms. Condra presented Item 2. The procurement is for the purchase of a Vermeer Trommel TR626 with Vermeer Vector VacStack for the Montgomery County Yard Trim Compost Facility. Vermeer All Roads will provide the equipment at a cost of \$654,161. There is a 0% minority business enterprise (MBE) goal. Mr. Witt made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Baatz seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Condra presented Item 3. The procurement is for marine delivery and supply of ultra-low-sulfur diesel fuel to Hart-Miller and Poplar Islands. Vane Brothers Company will provide the fuel and delivery at a cost of \$617,500. There is a 0% MBE goal. Dr. Johnson made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Baatz seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Condra presented Item 4. The procurement is a change order with Geosyntec Consultants, Inc. for \$244,033.56. It is for contract design and permitting services, bid document preparation, and bid support for the new enclosed flare system at the Sandy Hill Landfill, necessitated by recent Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) requirements. There is a 19% MBE goal for the change order. Mr. Baatz made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Witt seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Condra presented Item 5. The procurement is a change order with EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. for \$137,431.87. It is for facility upgrades at the Brown Station Road Leachate Pre-Treatment facility. There is a 32.2% MBE goal, and the contractor is currently achieving 37.48%. Mr. Witt made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Baatz seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously with the exception of Ms. Jose, who abstained from the discussion, consideration, and vote.

Ms. Condra presented Item 6. The procurement is a pre-solicitation approval for \$225,600 for the purchase of 50% sodium hydroxide for the Brown Station Road Landfill leachate pre-treatment facility. There is a 0% MBE goal. Dr. Johnson made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Witt seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Condra presented Item 7. The procurement is for upgrades to the baler feed conveyor at the Prince George's County Materials Recycling Facility. Van Dyke Baler Corp. will provide the parts and services at a cost of \$372,114.75. There is a 0% MBE goal. Judge Smalkin made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Baatz seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Condra presented Item 8. The procurement is for planning and mapping support services for the 2026 State of Maryland Hazard Mitigation Plan. AECOM will provide the services at a cost of \$214,802.85. There is an 81.7% MBE goal. Mr. Baatz made a motion to approve the item; Ms. Jose seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Condra presented Item 9. The procurement is a pre-solicitation approval for \$14,340,000 for dredging, transport, unloading, and dewatering of dredged material from Colgate Creek into geotextile tubes. Work on the project must begin soon after solicitation in order to be completed within the spring dredging season. There is a 10% MBE goal. Dr. Johnson made a motion to approve the item; Mr. Witt seconded. No members were opposed. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board notifications for contracts, purchase orders, amendments, and change orders between \$25,000 and \$200,000 were reviewed.

## **LEGAL REPORT**

Ms. Carroll thanked Eric Hartlaub and Pam Fuller for their work in completing the agreements with MES' State reimbursable clients. Whiteford, Taylor & Preston, private bond counsel, and PFM, financial advisors, have both been retained for the Midshore II bond transaction. They were both part of the team that worked on the 2018 bond transaction.

A new Assistant Attorney General has been selected and should be appointed before the next Board meeting.

Ms. Carroll reported that the filing period has opened with the State Ethics Commission for the filing of financial disclosures, which are due April 30, 2025.

## **GROUP UPDATES**

Danielle Wilson, Deputy Division Chief, Solid Waste, presented on a conveyor repair at the Montgomery County Material Recovery Facility. The current commingle plant is over 30 years old. Conveyor downtime became a significant issue in 2023, and a total rebuild of conveyor #2 was required. Materials were fabricated remotely and arrived on-site on January 6, 2025. The demolition and replacement of the equipment occurred over two weeks, and the conveyor is now back in service.

Tiff Bradshaw and Joe Wright, Managers of Water/Wastewater (WWW) Operations, and Jen Wijetunga, Division Chief, WWW, presented on the Operator in Training (OIT) program. Mr. Bradshaw discussed efforts to attract and retain qualified operators, including a recent meeting and tour with the Anne Arundel County Public School's Career and Technical Education program. He also detailed efforts to establish a Youth OIT Apprenticeship position, allowing high school students to start the program prior to graduation. Ms. Wijetunga described a plan to broaden the OIT classification's education requirements to allow the substitution of educational courses for up to one year of the program. This would match the Maryland Board of Waterworks and Waste System Operators' licensing requirements. Mr. Wright then detailed an effort to retain current OITs between steps in the program by adding an "OIT Pending" classification to the OIT career ladder for staff until they can pass the required tests. Changes to

the program and the career ladder will be brought to the Board of Directors' Human Resources Committee in March or April 2025.

Lisa Barry, Senior Environmental Specialist, discussed harmful algal blooms and wildlife disease response at dredged material containment facilities and restoration projects. A number of collaboration partners work together in response to harmful algal blooms and wildlife disease outbreaks. Once identified, standard operating procedures are implemented to stop the spread, monitor conditions, and treat.

Alex Hancock, Assistant Environmental Section Chief, discussed the Maryland Quality Initiative (MdQI) Conference hosted by the Maryland Transportation Builders and Materials Association. This was MES' first year as an exhibitor and sponsor. In addition to engaging in networking opportunities, staff had the opportunity to attend a variety of information sessions.

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

The next meeting of the Board is Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. Dr. Glass informed the Board that he would be in Michigan on a family matter that week and would either participate remotely or that Deputy Frketic would represent him at the meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Dr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Baatz, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.



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**HONORABLE FREDERIC SMALKIN**  
**SECRETARY**



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**SHELLEY HELLER**  
**CHAIR**