

Lewes Board of Public Works and City of Lewes
Joint Meeting
July 28, 2025
1:00pm
Margaret Rollins Center

A. Call to order:

Mayor Amy Marasco called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

City of Lewes

Amy Marasco, Mayor
Timothy Ritzert, Councilperson
Joe Elder, Councilperson
Khalil Saliba, Councilperson- ABSENT
Trina Brown-Hicks, Councilperson

Lewes BPW

Thomas Panetta, President
Barbara Curtis, Vice President
D. Preston Lee, P.E., Secretary
Richard Nichols, Treasurer
Bob Heffernan, Assistant Treasurer

Ex-Officio Members

Alex Burns, legal counsel
Ellen Lorraine, City Manager
Janet Reeves, Assistant City Manager

Ex-Officio Members

Michael Hoffman, Legal Council
Robin Davis, General Manager
Sharon Sexton, Assistant General Manager

President Panetta apologized that he misspoke at the last Board meeting regarding a hack to the city's servers. This was incorrect, and the issue was related to an email account.

B. Meeting Items:

1. Update and discussion on June power outages.

President Panetta provided an incident overview: T1 transformer lockout occurred around 09:00pm affecting circuits one and two, followed by a secondary event hours later. Circuits were switched to limit relay issues. A full review and testing by Potomac showed a relay lockout reading of 4,300 amps, well above normal 60-100 amps range. New relays are on order. Mr. Ritzert question the maintenance schedule of infrastructure. President Panetta confirmed the BPW is planning a routine maintenance schedule.

Ms. Sexton, provided an update on call center issues. The current after-hours call center is small and undergoing a system changeover, experienced dropped calls

and issues with the goodbye message during high call volumes. Lewes BPW is assessing a new answering service and is being demoed to improve call retention and handling. Councilman Ritzert questioned who responsibility it is to provide messaging and response to the after-hours service provider. Ms. Sexton stated that the call center dispatches on-call employees, and those employees relay the issue. A predetermined dialogue, in most cases, is already set up. Ms. Sexton noted after the first outage, the BPW added messaging to BPW line that there is high call volume, to alert customers that BPW was aware of the issue. The city does not use a similar service.

2. Update and discussion on the City/BPW resiliency vision, goals and projects.

Mayor Marasco stated that resiliency efforts progressing with the integration of the environmental and resiliency subcommittee into a new resiliency structure. Lewes BPW will have a representative on the subcommittee. The city's Fiscal Year 9FY) 2026 budget includes a resiliency fund; key leaders assigned to scope recommendations. The city would like to welcome public input with expertise in nature-based solutions and engineering solutions.

University of Delaware will lead a resiliency study on stormwater and drainage; kickoff workshop scheduled for September 5, 2025, 9am to 12pm, at the Lewes library. Needs at least 50 citizens to participate in the survey.

3. Update and discussion on the City/BPW Burton Subdivision projects.

President Panetta provided statement on Burton Subdivision water quality:

The BPW understands that there have been some concerns about discolored water in the Burton Subdivision.

Based on these concerns, the BPW has:

(1) Installed an automatic flusher to flush the BPW water lines in the Burton Subdivision back in early 2024 and has been flushing the lines intermittently during non-freezing conditions. A permanent flusher, that will flush year-round, will be installed next month;

(2) And in addition to the testing required by the regulatory agencies, the BPW tested additional water samples May 9, 2024. This test revealed no water quality concerns;

(3) We understand that some in the Burton Subdivision questioned the BPW's additional testing given the samples' proximity to time the lines were flushed, so the

BPW has scheduled quarterly testing going forward and will time that testing so it is separate from the flushing. The next scheduled testing is scheduled for later this week. Mr. Davis noted that the sample is taken from the meter pit. The round will be at the same sites as previous round of testing to determine a baseline due to the concern of testing after a hydrant flushing. Hydrant Flushing is done in April and October.

President Panetta stated that it is very important that customers report specific events to the Lewes BPW so staff can investigate. If you do not report your specific concerns and allow the BPW to investigate, the BPW is unable to substantiate the issue. Mayor Marasco asked for clarification when to call the BPW about discoloration. President Panetta stated that customers should call if they experience change in frequency of color.

Councilman Elder referred to a study conducted by GMB #210129 (Water Main Assessment) and noted the old age of pipes within the system. Councilman Elder has concerns about couponing older pipes that could be destructive. Councilman Elder feels that the whole Burton subdivision should be replaced due to age of pipe. President Panetta stated that taking a coupon is no more destructive than tying in a new service. President Panetta stated that the BPW is couponing to help prioritize as there is a lot of old pipes within the city. BPW owns to the curb stop and the customer owns from the curb stop to the home. Mr. Hoffman clarified that a utility easement is needed for BPW to be on private property. If there is not an easement, then the service lateral is privately owned.

Councilman Elder has a concern with galvanized pipes and the potential for lead contamination. Mr. Davis stated that there is not any galvanized main pipe in the BPW system. Mayor Marasco questioned if it is the intent during the Burton Subdivision project to correct historical oversight, such obtaining easements where necessary. Mr. Hoffman stated that during projects, plans are checked for work on private property and if there is not an easement, then the BPW approaches property owner.

Mayor Marasco encourages a public workshop to provide education on public and BPW responsibility.

Councilman Ritzert questioned the automatic flusher on Rodney Avenue and if it was still in use. Mr. Davis stated the flusher is no longer active, as the improvements have been completed and is now a looped system. Councilman Ritzert questioned if Burton Subdivision is a looped system. Mr. Davis stated that Burton Subdivision is

looped, but there are additional streets that are a part of the system. The flusher circulates the water to keep water from settling.

Councilwoman Brown-Hicks stated she received a survey about water service material and was curious about the result. Ms. Sexton stated that this is part of the EPA's lead and Copper Rule. There was not an abundance of response from the public. BPW is still in the inventory process and has until 2027 to complete the inventory. Survey is still available on the BPW website.

Councilman Ritzert questioned the rate structure of the utilities and the ability to fund capital projects. President Panetta stated that rates are set with capital projects in mind and keeping them reasonable. Ms. Sexton stated that the capital project plan was used in the rate study to determine current rates. Mr. Heffernan stated that the current capital projects plan for all utilities is at 48 million dollars and of those projects about 18 million is funded.

President Panetta stated that the BPW will continue to monitor discolored water and continue to prioritize the water replacement program for the entire BPW territory.

Councilmen Elder and Ritzert questioned reporting the discolored water. Ms. Sexton stated that the purpose of reporting the incidents is for tracking purposes. Tracking will help the BPW to determine if multiple incidents happen in an particular area and would prompt further investigation as opposed to an isolated occurrence.

Mr. Lee left the meeting.

4. Discussion on City/BPW State Revolving Loan/Grant funding strategy.

Emphasized that the SRF (State Revolving Fund) is a key funding mechanism, with applications normally due in February, and suggested that public health data from reports and water sampling bolster the grant proposals.

Discussed the need for coordinated asset management plans and capital improvement plans between the city and BPW to inform future pipe replacements and infrastructure updates, particularly in Burton Subdivision. Proposed a joint working session with GMB to reassess priorities and possibly reallocate funds to ensure high-priority areas such as the Burton Subdivision are addressed promptly.

5. Update and discussion on Dark Sky Friendly lighting.

Councilman Ritzert provided an update on Dark Sky Friendly lighting. The program is dependent upon a pilot program aimed at reducing light pollution. The project

includes collaboration with BPW to ensure effective implementation. To measure performance, baseline lighting data will be collected during both summer and winter seasons.

6. Update and discussion on the BPW Wastewater Treatment Facility Long-Range Planning project.

President Panetta provided an update on ongoing negotiations with the county to finalize a baseline agreement for wastewater treatment. Indicated that the agreement is near completion with about 99% of work done, with the final 1% taking considerable time. Noted that a public workshop will be scheduled once the draft is available.

7. Update and discussion on GMB's review of City/BPW joint CIP projects.

GMB provided a review of joint capital improvement projects including:

- Fourth Street & Park Avenue (water/sewer mains replacement, streetscape improvements, ADA compliance) – total estimated cost ~\$8.5M. The conceptual design phase is almost complete.
- Hoornkill Avenue project – water/sewer upgrades, pump station replacement, reconstruction of porous pavement – total estimated cost ~\$3M.
- Alaska Avenue Improvements – street reconstruction with porous pavement, utility upgrades- estimated cost ~\$438,000. Mid-July meeting with developer to discuss cost sharing responsibilities.
- Monroe Railroad/Adams Avenue project improvements also discussed, including cost estimates. With the loss funding, project is on hold.
- Marina Drive Improvements- Not currently on BPW Capital Plan. Mill and Overlay on the street and a catch basin top unit replacement on the city portion of the project. City requested work to be completed in 2025 or early 2026.

8. Update regarding the municipal complex at the Army Reserve Center.

Mayor Marasco provided an overview of the Army Reserve project, with the stipulation that land will only be accepted if it is environmentally clean, as determined by upcoming reviews. Explained the intent to pursue a Brownfields grant for phase two. Addressed public concerns regarding alternative uses, reaffirming

that the designated purpose is for municipal campus, BPW, and police, not for affordable housing.

C. Public Comment

Keri Tripp, 400 Park Avenue, emphasized the non PVC and PVS pipe in the BPW system. MS. Tripp stated according to a 2024 GMB report there are 148,000+ non PVC pipes versus 169,000 PVC pipes. Ms. Tripp stated that replacing the water lines is all the community (Burton Subdivision) wants and the cost would be \$1280 times the length of pipe. Ms. Tripp urges the Board to consider the impact of the residents as stronger criteria. Ms. Tripp stated that lived experiences help to empower disempowered marginalized communities and tackles injustices these individuals have faced. Ms. Tripp read a statement from Mark Gooch.

Elaine Simmerman, 418 W. Fourth Street, stated she is unclear if her home is considered part of the subdivision and clarified that none of these houses being discussed are an actual subdivision. Ms. Simmerman stated that her community is one of the oldest and most deprived in the city of Lewes. Ms. Simmerman stated that in 1988 the BPW replaced the water pipe from the house to the road because the pipe was connected to the neighbors. Ms. Simmerman stated the community was forgotten because of race. Ms. Simmerman questioned if the sidewalks will be repaired due to tree root damage. Ms. Simmerman would like to see surveys available other than online. Ms. Simmerman feels there is an issue with water quality.

Brenda Azful, 418 Park Avenue, showed a clean filter(white) and used filter (brown). Ms. Azful stated everyone knows iron is not health regulatory issue, except two people in the community who have hemochromatosis. It is about dirty water. Ms. Azful has \$5,000 plus cost with replacing filters on a regular basis. Many people are using bottled water. Ms. Azful stated that there is a splash page on the BPW website for the Fourth Street Project but suggested a place for public comment. Ms. Azful stated there is no record of people calling the BPW because they have given up and would be an everyday occurrence. Ms. Azful stated that a health component is not needed to apply for the SRF and should be applied for every single year.

Don Ernakovich, 422 W. Fourth Street, stated that he has a jacuzzi bathtub and he took his first bath with brown bubbles. He stated that he has appealed to BPW over several years with a number of responses:

1. The issue is on the customer side of the curb.
2. The line from main line the house is cast iron. Mr. Ernakovich stated that this line is actually PVC.
3. There must be a hole in the water line.

Mr. Ernakovich stated that he has now installed a second filtration system and paid to replace the lateral line in his crawl space because of the buildup of settlement. Mr. Ernakovich questioned why customers have to pay for water they cannot drink.

Julie Spetz, 417 Dupont Avenue, stated that she had her water tested professionally and the results revealed lead, copper, sulfates, and nitrates in the water. Results submitted for record. Ms. Spetz read a letter from neighbor George Cole.

Pat Farina, 418 Johnson Avenue, stated the monthly flushing cannot be normal and questioned what would happen if the flushing was not done. This means there is an issue. Mr. Farina stated that streets in Buron need to be repaved. Mr. Farina would like confirmation that this project is in a plan.

Tracy Toscano, 407 Burton Avenue, stated she has lived on Burton Avenue for seven years and last year installed a reverse osmosis system because the water is undrinkable. Ms. Toscano is concerned with wasting water 10-15 minutes to clear the discoloration. Ms. Toscano requested that the city and the BPW make this project a priority.

Taylor Cameron, 512 Dupont Avenue, stated that he has been a Lewes resident about a year and in that time the bathtub has been ruined, his dog will not drink the water, installed a filtration system and lives right next to the automatic flusher. Mr. Cameron stated that the BPW is emptying the water tower three times a month to solve the issue.

Mardi Thompson, 3 Flamingo Court, is the tree commissioner on Lewes Parks and Recreation Committee. Ms. Thompson would like to input on where the trees are placed on Park Avenue and Fourth Street during the project. Ms. Thompson would also like input on the Railroad Avenue/Monroe project.

Betty Kratt, 410 W. Fourth Street, agrees with her neighbors as well as her husband. Ms. Kratt said the roads have not been touched in 20 years that she has lived here.

President Panetta stated that the BPW is paying for the sins of the past. The capital project plan is the path to try and bring infrastructure up to where it should be.

President Panetta stated that he has heard the concerns and understands.

Councilman Elder stated that the BPW and the City needs to have the attitude that “we can do this”, even if it seems impossible. Communication is key in making these plans.

Councilwoman Brown-Hicks stated that she appreciates the comments and the feedback from the community today. Councilman Ritzert agreed.

Mayor Marasco stated that she loves to write grants and personally commits to work with BPW and city colleagues to write an SRF grant. Mayor Marasco asks the public to keep good records. Mayor Marasco stated that there has been deferred maintenance on the city side that has been rectified in the FY26 budget to start on roads.

D. Adjournment

Next quarterly meeting scheduled for October 28, 2025.

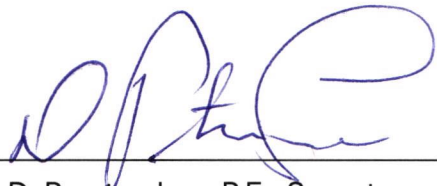
ACTION: Mr. Heffernan motioned to adjourn. Mr. Nichols seconded the motion, which passed 4-0. (Mr. Lee absent)

Respectfully Submitted

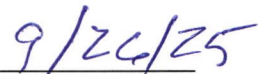
Sharon Sexton

Assistant General Manager

Lewes Board of Public Works



D. Preston Lee, P.E., Secretary



Date

Read into the record by Julie Spetz 417 Dupont Ave.

My name is George Cole. I am a resident of the Burton's Subdivision in Lewes. Being unable to attend this meeting, I've asked a neighbor to present my thoughts. Very sorry that I cannot be here to answer questions.

It is commendable that the City of Lewes and the BPW are jointly working to resolve an issue that presents something of a hidden health problem.

Iron in drinking water is classified as being a secondary contaminant.

When there is too much iron in the human body, the iron is labeled as being a poison.

In various tests, the Veterans Administration found that I have a genetic health condition known as hemochromatosis. Other DNA tests have confirmed the finding of the VA.

Essentially, my body retains too much iron which has an adverse affect on various organs, in particular the tissues of the heart, the liver, the kidneys, and the pancreas.

Thus, I have to monitor both the food that I eat and the water that I drink!

A person cannot be cured of hemochromatosis; they can only be treated for it.

For those who live in the Burton's subdivision of Lewes, the best treatment is iron-free water delivery pipes.

People should not have to pay for iron-contaminated water to be delivered to their homes, in addition to paying for filters to remove contaminants from the water.

Looking forward to seeing the water pipes replaced in the Burton Subdivision.

George Cole
405 Johnson Avenue
Lewes



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Rec'd 7/28/25
2:50pm
Joint Mtg City + BAW
mtg held
7/28/25
EOM
Kerry
Jnpp
read

I declare that this is true and correct to the best of my knowledge:

My name is Mark Gooch, but many of you might know me as Froggie. I was born in Lewes and lived on 311 Chestnut Street until I left to serve in the Vietnam war. After I returned from the war in 1977, I was the second African American person hired by the city of Lewes in 1979.

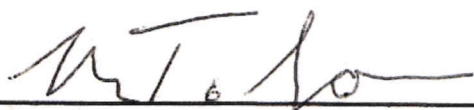
I was assigned to the city's water and sewer department. At that time, the Lewes Board of Public Works just did electricity. My project was to help the city tear up all the streets on the town side to inspect and replace the old metal water pipes and install water meters.

As the smallest person in my unit, I was assigned to go into the Park Avenue trench to walk and inspect the pipes. I still recall that, facing from HP Smith Park to 4th street and beyond to the canal, the layout of the pipes was the city water line on the far right. Next to it, on to the left was the city's sewer line. Next to that was the storm drain which ran down to the canal. Park Avenue was unusual because it also had a pipe for the water overflow from the pond in the park down to the canal.

This can be confirmed today by looking at the manhole covers at the end of the street on 4th Street. I remember that all of the pipes were given metal colored tape to make them easy to find with a metal detector.

I was surprised to learn this week that Park Avenue's pipes were not plastic and had not been replaced at that time, when so many other streets had their metal pipes replaced with plastic, state-of-the-art pipes.

Maybe it was because all 18 homes on Park Avenue were owned by Black people and the area of Ship Carpenter had my aunt and no other homes but just swampy land. But given all the development on Park Avenue and in Ship Carpenter Square since then, certainly those pipes are obsolete and long in need of replacement.



Mark Gooch
Gregg (Froggie) Gooch

7/23/25

Dated:

From: Nicole Walsh beyond.aerus.de@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Copy of testing results
Date: July 21, 2025 at 1:49 PM
To: Nicole Walsh beyond.aerus.de@gmail.com
Cc: Julie Spetz tonyaviii@msn.com



Hi Julie!

I did save your original test sheet with your order packet!

It's ugly though and the email breakdown of the results below would present better.

I hope this helps! Let me know what happens! Good luck!

AERUS Water Analysis

CUSTOMER: Julie Spetz PHONE: 998-1001 DATE: 7/21/25 TECH: AW
ADDRESS: 1234 St CITY: Anytown STATE: CA ZIP: 90210

Every one deserves a Healthy Home. Our mission at Aerus is to help you remove harmful and unwanted contaminants from the water you drink, the air you breathe, and the surfaces you touch. Our aerators, siphonless, and siphonless are environmentally friendly, protecting our planet as well.

Your Healthy Home Experts

☒ **WATER SOURCE**
Well: Municipal
Enter from: Garage Basement Drinking
Water: Hard Soft Drinking Other

☒ **WATER USAGE**
How many residents: 2
How many bedrooms: 3
How many bathrooms: 2
How many showers: 2
How many tubs: 1
How many hot water heaters: 1
How many water heaters: 1

☐ **Home**
Age of home: 20
Years of residence: 15
Frequency of use: 100% 75% 50% 25% 10%

☐ **Current Filtration Methods**
Frequency of filter change: None

☐ **Drinking Water**
Bottled: Yes No Other
How often: None 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Would you like to be able to drink the water in your home?

QUALITY CONCERNS
Drinking: None Some Often
Concerned about drinking water?

TEST RESULTS
NITRATES: None IRON: 0 0000 Grams
HYDROGEN SULFIDE PRESENT: None

RECOMMENDATIONS
Aerator: Yes No Other
Siphonless: Yes No Other

In Good Health,
Nicole Walsh
Franchise Owner
Aerus | Beyond by Aerus
(302) 241-9593 cell
(302) 998-1001 store

[illegible]

From: Nicole Walsh beyond.aerus.de@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Copy of testing results
Date: May 17, 2024 at 3:55 PM
To: Julie Spetz tonyaviii@msn.com



Hi Julie,

I am so Sorry I grabbed your test result sheet! That wasn't supposed to come with me. Here are the results and the information sheets on the two whole home units you are getting:

- Total Dissolved Solids (TDS): 127 from the sink and 139 from the Berkey
- pH: 7.0 (neutral)
- Hardness: 4 gpg
- Nitrates: 9 ppm
- Iron: None
- Odor: Chlorine
- Chlorine: 6+ ppm
 - Chloramines present
- Soap Test: No Bubbles
- Hydrogen Sulfide: No
- Sulfates: present 400 ppm- not federally regulated though the EPA set a standard of no more than 250 ppm
- Lead: 3 ppb - any level is not good- 15 ppb is illegal level
- Copper: 0.2 ppm- this converts to 200 micrograms/liter - illegal level is 1300 micrograms/liter

The Systems you are getting for your whole home will:

1. Reduce TDS and catch all sediment and debris
2. Remove Hardness
3. Remove Chlorine- Chloramines- Chlorine By-products
4. Remove lead
5. remove copper

Drinking Water System:

Removes EVERYTHING including Nitrates, PFA's, sulfates, pharmaceuticals, and more

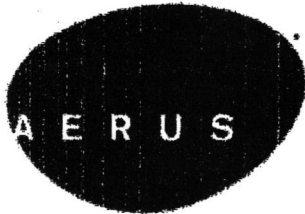
I hope this helps! Thank you again!

In Good Health,

Nicole Walsh

Aerus Delaware
Environmental Health Consultant
Franchise Owner

(302) 241-9593 cell
(302) 998-1001 office
www.AerusDE.com



BEYOND

BY AERUS
DELAWARE

ActivePur
TECHNOLOG

From: Julie Spetz <tonyaviii@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, May 17, 2024 8:33 AM
To: Nicole Walsh <beyond.aerus.de@gmail.com>
Subject: Copy of testing results

Good morning,

Could you provide a copy of the results of our water testing? I know you mentioned positive for nitrates, chloramine, copper and lead; negative for mercury and iron. The neighbors were surprised that we didn't test positive for iron because others have iron in their water.

Thanks - looking for the parts per million/billion that you referenced for all chemicals.

Julie

F100V



Treat