



City of Charleston
Committee on Public Works & Utilities
August 18, 2025

A meeting of the Committee on Public Works & Utilities was held this date beginning at 5:07 p.m. over video conference call.

Notice of this meeting was sent to all local news media.

Present: Councilmember Waring, Chair, Councilmember Gregorie, Vice Chair (arrived 5:15pm), Mayor Cogswell (left 5:52pm), Councilmember Gregg, Councilmember Parker, and Councilmember Seekings.

Also Present: Matt Alltop, Ron Bucci, Jennifer Cook, Julia Copeland, Melissa Cruthirds, Elizabeth Dieck, Matthew Fountain, Steve Kirk, Kaylan Koszela, Deja Knight McMillan, Caroline Schnell, Sheila Smith, Robbie Somerville, and Amy Wharton.

Link to meeting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KswiWqNZYM&t=126s>

A. Invocation

The meeting was opened with a moment of silence provided by Chair Waring.

B. Approval of Public Works and Utilities Committee Minutes

1. July 14, 2025

On a motion by Councilmember Gregg, seconded by Councilmember Seekings, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item B1.

C. Request to Set a Public Hearing

None.

D. Old Business

None.

Chair Waring said with the pleasure of the Committee he would like to take agenda items K1-K5 Miscellaneous Business out of order. A motion would be needed to make the adjustment to the agenda.

On a motion by Mayor Cogswell, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to advance agenda items K1- K5.

K. Miscellaneous Business

1. Flooding and Resiliency Update:

(i). Water Plan and Basin Flood Action Program

(ii). Battery Extension Project and Lockwood Knee Wall

(iii). Tidal and Inland Flood Risk Management Study

(iv). **Discussion on short, mid, and long term budget needed to implement the Battery Extension Project and Tidal and Inland Flood Risk Management study**

2. **Authorization for the Mayor to execute Design Agreement Between the Department of the Army and City of Charleston, South Carolina for Design for the Charleston Peninsula, South Carolina Project (The Battery Extension Project). The execution of the Design Agreement will release \$13.325m in federal funding to go towards the progression of the design and engineering of The Battery Extension Project. (This item will be reported out and considered at the September 9th City Council meeting).**
3. **Authorization for the Mayor to execute Amendment No. 5 to the Water Plan contract in the amount not to exceed \$1,990,000, led by Black & Veatch to continue progressing design and engineering of The Battery Extension Project. The source of funds will be the \$3.25million for PED year one. (This item will be reported out and considered at the September 9th City Council meeting).**
4. **Authorization of funding in the amount of \$500,000 following execution of the Design Agreement Between the Department of the Army and City of Charleston, South Carolina for Design for the Charleston Peninsula, South Carolina Project (The Battery Extension Project), as initial funding provided to USACE and to initiate the formal federal funding partnership. The source of funds will be the \$3.25 million for PED year one. (This item will be reported out and considered at the September 9th City Council meeting).**
5. **Authorization of funding in the amount of \$1,100,000 to continue the USACE Tidal & Inland Flood Risk Management Study to address flooding solutions city-wide. The source of funding will be \$1,100,000 from Office of Resiliency FY2025 Operating Budget. (This item will be reported out and considered at the September 9th City Council meeting).**

Mayor Cogswell thanked Chair Waring for permitting him to move ahead on the agenda and said he would be leaving the meeting after his presentation to attend the Housing Authority's Board Meeting. He provided an update on the City's partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Mayor shared his screen while he spoke. *Refer to the meeting video starting at the 2:10-minute mark.*

Following the Mayor's presentation, Chair Waring said that he would like to attend the meeting in Washington with the Head of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He said there was talent around the Council table, and he would like to see Councilmember Gregg and Mr. Fountain attend. He was reminded of the time when Charleston was going to lose SPAWARS or the Naval Weapons Station and Councilmembers went to Washington to discuss the \$2B plus in economic impact to the area. In planning the trip, the delegation assembled an admiral, a 3-star general, and a group included by the Chamber. The delegation went to DC, met with the high brass at the Pentagon, and came up with Joint Base Charleston which saved the installations. The upcoming trip to meet with the Army Corps would also be very important for Charleston. It would be a good idea to include some of the City's engineers should questions arise.

Mayor Cogswell said the Head of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was excited to meet with the Charleston group that comprised of the Mayor, Ms. Koszela, Mr. Martin, and hopefully Councilmember Seekings. It would be helpful if other Councilmembers could attend. The Mayor noted that Chair Waring also suggested that staff from Stormwater and Capital Projects attend so the City could have as many minds in the room as possible.

Councilmember Gregg asked if the revised capital cost number had been updated. It was now \$1.3B and the Corps had given them a number of \$1.1B in 2022.

Mayor Cogswell said it had been updated and was from the original PED agreement. The number had moved around a little. The updated number of \$1.1B was given but for the purpose of the presentation and to manage expectations, the outside number of \$1.3B was used.

Councilmember Gregg said his hangup and where he wanted to start was with a number created in 2022 and never adjusted for inflation. The Committee had been shown a graph that displayed a 3-year precipitous rise in construction costs due to inflation. When the City gets ready to build around 2030, 2032, or whenever the year, the number could easily be \$1.7B or \$1.8B. He said that his problem with the Corps' number was that it was based in 2022.

Mayor Cogswell said he thought he could help with that concern. The City had really dug in with Black and Veatch and they had been asked to update and validate where the number might be because others had concerns about the increased cost of things. The Mayor said the City would end up saving by going offshore with gates and other expensive items. There was validation the numbers were in line with where they had been 3 or 4 years ago. He questioned whether the numbers could go up and said they could because of inflation, but not to what had been seen year after year. The Mayor said what they really needed to do was to get to the 30% set of drawings because he did not want to go all the way through with CDs. He would like to go through the design development drawings to know where the alignment was and what the design was, then get good pricing based on those and make the call. If it was \$1.7B, the Corps would pick up 65% of it but knows that \$595M was a daunting number and respected that.

Councilmember Gregg said when they talk about throwing good money after bad, if the number was \$1.7B the City would have to contribute \$595M without a solid plan in place. If the City had put a solid plan in place at \$595M, then the City had kind of thrown good money after bad. He asked if he could sit down with the Mayor soon and talk about the City's funding plan.

Mayor Cogswell said absolutely. If the plan was going to the State or was going to be part of TST, additional definition should be included to make it saleable. Instead of looking at a red line on a piece of paper or a picture of a concrete t-wall, people would need to perceive what the project could be. If it was a good marriage of form and function that could help with daily flooding and storm surge, then there could be a real path forward. The Mayor said he would be glad to sit down with Councilmember Gregg and anyone else to walk them through the details.

Councilmember Gregorie said that with all due respect, he probably would vote Nay until he received further information. He unfortunately was not privy of the presentation and would like to speak further with the Mayor.

Councilmember Seekings thanked Councilmember Gregg for asking the question because it was important to understand that it would be heading towards a large-scale project. To determine how much the project would cost, it would be necessary to start somewhere. To decide on an alignment and to agree on a design would be the place to start. Councilmember Seekings said that he had been somewhat of a skeptic in the way the Corps had approached things. The approach of having sussed out the alignment and design for about \$500k and having funded Black and Veatch to help show the Army Corps what was acceptable would help break the log jam the City had been in since well before 2021, maybe even 2019, or 2018. Councilmember Seekings said he would move to authorize the Mayor to go forward with this and bring it back to Council. The biggest enemy the City could face would be the log jam. The 3x3 study was originally for 3 years, \$3M, and 3 levels of review. They were now in year 6, with more than \$3M spent, and nowhere near a review because there was not a plan alignment. Eventually, the trigger would have to be pulled on perimeter protection whether it was with the Army Corps or not. The only way to find that out would be to sign the design agreement and have the off-ramp the Mayor pointed out which would be at the end of 2025 going into 2026. A project in the billions of dollars that the City could get out of at \$500k would be worth the move and he would support that.

Councilmember Seekings said he believed the alignment would dictate the design. Once the alignment was agreed upon, the City would know what it had, plus Black & Veatch would have been working on it. Holding the agreement up any longer would further any challenges this project would have of either moving forward or going in a different direction, looking for different funding. He said he would move for approval of all four and bring it to Council with the understanding that there would be a meeting with City engineers before it gets to Council. The message the Committee would put to the Corps would be heard loud and clear. The Corps would have reasons to partner with and listen to the City because this would fund them. The City would open a spigot for the Corps to do something that was to the City's advantage. If the Corps said no, it would be better to know it now rather than later.

Chair Waring said he would like to add a story about the half cent sales tax for Ravenel Bridge, that failed before it passed. The original design on the new bridge had four lanes coming down into two lanes entering Mount Pleasant. Mayor Hallman of Mount Pleasant said the plan would create havoc. He told his people they had a different plan, and it was the one we use today with Johnnie Dodds Boulevard expanded with frontage roads and a fly over at Bowman Road. The other plan did not include the flyover at Bowman Road. Mayor Hallman instructed his people not to vote for the original plan. So, the half-cent sales tax did not pass and a \$600M bridge did not get built until two years later when the people came to their thoughts and wisdom with the flyover at Bowman Road. When Mayor Hallman and his folks went back to the County with the half cents sales tax request after first having failed, they included the \$150M for the Bowman Road flyover which made a lot of sense. If they were to go to County Council for regional dollars to help, more definitions would be needed in the plan, and he requested that additional information be given to Councilmember Gregory. Without a plan, it would be very difficult to go regionally to get money.

On a motion by Councilmember Seekings, seconded by Mayor Cogswell, the Committee voted to approve Items K1-K5. The vote was not unanimous. Councilmember Gregorie voted Nay. Councilmember Parker abstained from the vote.

E. Acceptance and Dedication of Rights-of-Way and Easements

1. **Acceptance of a temporary construction easement at Herbert and Meeting Street.**
2. **Acceptance of easements for the MUSC Pump Station Upfit Project on portions of TMS 460-14-00-004, 460-14-00-024, and 460-14-00-025.**

Mr. Fountain explained the items.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregg, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Items E1-E2.

F. Temporary Encroachments Approved by The Department of Public Services (For information only)

1. **100 Oyster Point Row - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.**
2. **55 Romney St. - Installing irrigation encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
3. **111 E. Bay St. (Charleston Rings) - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
4. **19 Broad St. (Broad Street Cafe) - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**
5. **933 Ashley Ave. - Installing special finish brick path & garden encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.**

6. 342 King St. (Mugsy) - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
7. 603 Island Park Dr. - Installing masonry fence encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
8. 44 Romney St. (Dog Tired Pet Services) - Install 3X3 right angle sign into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
9. 73 Spring St. - Installing storm drain inlet encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
10. 311 Royal Palm Blvd. - Installing new stormwater gravity connection into existing stormwater main with new manhole encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
11. 66 Spring St. (The Greenery) - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
12. 691 Riverland Dr. - Installing storm drain pipe encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
13. 195 East Bay St. - Installing awning encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
14. 3215 Safe Harber Way - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
15. 6173 Fieldstone Circle - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
16. 60 Calhoun St. - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
17. 29 E Battery St. - Installing brick pavers encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
18. 144 Falaise St. - Installing irrigation into City maintained right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
19. 2052 Ten Point- Installing irrigation into City maintained right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
20. 132 Falaise St. - Installing irrigation into City maintained right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
21. 2335 Marsh Lake Court - Installing fence encroaching into City maintained drainage easement. This encroachment is temporary.
22. 9 State St. - Installing right angle sign encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.
23. 529 King St. - Installing two flag poles encroaching into City right of way. This encroachment is temporary.

Mr. Bucci explained the items and noted that the Department of Public Service was now known as the Department of Development Services. All the items presented were for information only.

G. Request for Permanent Encroachments

1. 113 Etta Way - Installing roof overhang encroaching into City maintained drainage easement by 18". This encroachment is permanent.
2. 109 Etta Way- Installing roof overhang encroaching into City maintained drainage easement by 18". This encroachment is permanent.
3. 128 Etta Way - Installing roof overhang encroaching into City maintained drainage easement by 18". This encroachment is permanent.
4. 132 Etta Way - Installing roof overhang encroaching into City maintained drainage easement by 18". This encroachment is permanent.

Mr. Bucci explained the items.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregg, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Items G1-G4.

H. Public Service Department Update

1. Director Updates

None.

I. Department of Development Services Update

1. Approval to accept the FEMA FMA grant award for the elevation of 3 historic properties and execute the subrecipient agreement for the FY2019 FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) grant award in the amount of \$871,819.98 with a required local match of \$49,119.02, to be covered by the property owner, for a total project budget of \$921,019.00.

Mr. Bucci explained the item and introduced Ms. Caroline Schnell, the Flood Plan Manager.

Chair Waring said when he read about the good news of the cost share in the agenda, it was one of the first times the match came from a property owner.

Mr. Bucci said yes, the approval of the grant was without any cost being associated with the City. Ms. Schnell could help answer any questions.

Ms. Schnell said that the local cost share, if there were any, would be coming from the property owner. So, the City would not be contributing financially to the elevation of the private homes.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregg, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item I1.

J. Stormwater Management Department Update

1. Approval of a construction contract for the drainage outfall improvements at Sandcroft Drive with ES Integrated in the amount of \$163,398.66. Approval of the contract will authorize the \$163,398.66 construction contract. Funding is allocated for this item within the Stormwater Operations Small Project Allocation.

Mr. Fountain explained the item.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregg, seconded by Councilmember Gregorie, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item J1.

2. Approval of Huger Street Drainage Improvements Change Order #2 with S.J. Hamill Construction Company, LLC, in the amount of \$106,004.37 for work resolving underground utility conflicts with brick arch culverts in the project area. Additionally, the contract time for the construction portion of this project will

increase by twenty-two days. Approval of Change Order #2 will increase the construction contract by \$106,004.37 (from \$19,648,602.91 to \$19,754,607.28). The funding sources for this project are: Drainage Fund (\$15,206,655.54), SCRIA-IIP Grant (\$10,000,000.00), CWS Contribution (\$1,627,809.61), Cooper River Bridge TIF (\$1,157,141.00), and SCRIA Grant (\$499,292.00).

Mr. Fountain explained the item.

Chair Waring said that it was a good find.

Councilmember Gregg asked about there being a brick arch tunnel that was not on any survey.

Mr. Fountain said it was not likely a public brick arch system and was probably built as private drainage for the property. It was not shown on any of the as-builts for the property. There was not any record of it in the public system and DOT did not have any record of it under the interstate, probably because it preceded the interstate.

Councilmember Gregg asked how big it was.

Mr. Fountain said it was a smaller arch, probably 2x3 instead of one of the larger arches and it was almost completely sedimented in. When the end was found it was completely buried in the marsh. It was not working very well from a drainage perspective which might explain some of the flooding seen on the site.

On a motion by Councilmember Gregorie, seconded by Councilmember Gregg, the Committee voted unanimously to approve Item J2.

3. Concord/Cumberland Project – Update on Project Progress

Mr. Fountain explained the item.

Councilmember Seekings asked who the contractor on the project was.

Mr. Fountain said it was Truluck.

4. Sweetgrass Creek Road Outfall/Drainage Project Update (Requested by Councilmember Caroline Parker)

Mr. Fountain explained the item.

Councilmember Parker thanked Mr. Fountain and her fellow colleagues for getting the outfall permit. It had been eight long years in the process. This was very typical and like other James Island projects, these multi-jurisdictional pitfalls that were hit, no pun intended. When an outfall was cleared, some of the jurisdictional reactions included it was not their ditch, or the road belonged to someone else. These cross-jurisdictional projects could be frustrating and even more so from the citizens' perspective. If there was just another set of eyes, or any other way because it was worth it when these projects were funded. She asked when cleaning an outfall, if only one project was completed and not the entire problem, should the money be spent on the project if the entire problem was not solved.

Mr. Fountain said yes, using that project for an example would be correct. There would be improvement of the drainage on the road because it would drain quicker. It would not prevent any potential for tidal flooding. That would be a potential follow-on project, but the drainage improvements would not work against future title improvements, so they would work in either situation. Consideration should be given for the potential of what future projects would be and how to coordinate them with other entities making sure to get the maximum leverage possible which was something that had value for every project.

Councilmember Parker said that Mr. Fountain had answered her question. It was her fear hearing from constituents that it was great work, but it might not have brought a resolution that was hoped. But given

what Mr. Fountain said, it would help with the drainage. It was time to lean on our state legislative body and SC DOT. It would be a great time for reps and others involved to speed up the process. She appreciated the explanation and if constituents had further questions, Mr. Fountain would be able to provide outreach.

Chair Waring asked Mr. Fountain if there were any updates on Montclair Drive.

Mr. Fountain said Montclair was another area that was being looked at for drainage improvement. The lake was sort of U-shaped and sat by Ashley Hall Road, Woodmere and Montclair. Field ops were used to restore a maintenance access road from Woodmere into that lake. Quite a bit of blockage and debris was removed that had accumulated along a utility line that sat in that lake so the entire lake could be used for storage by the stormwater flowing into it. There was a potential Small Project for next year's funding to improve the outfall structure that sat next to and flowed under a roadway into the Martin River.

Chair Waring said there had been quite a bit of silt on, primarily, the Montclair side. Some years ago, it used to be 4 or 5 feet deep and now it was just 15 in. He asked what that could be about.

Mr. Fountain said from a pure stormwater perspective, anything excavated below the water elevation did not add any storage. There was an ecological benefit perspective. If it gets deeper, there are fewer mosquitoes, or better avoidance of vegetation growth, but not much improvement in the stormwater storage. The City's Parks Department was acquiring some of the property in that area. Nothing was looked at for a dredging type of project because there was ecological permitting associated with that and not a direct stormwater benefit. They were leaning more towards the outfall structure, but that was something the City could look at.

Chair Waring said he thought there was an inlet from Wallenberg. Coming from Route 61 onto Wallenberg, it was just as you arrived at South Pine Point. There was an inlet that caused water to come off Wallenberg into that lake and eventually continued behind the yards off Montclair and eventually underneath Ashley Hall Road and out to, hopefully, the Ashley. Some of that silting came in from there decades ago. Some of the water channeled off Highway 61, down Wallenberg, eventually out to the Ashley River.

Mr. Fountain said that was right. There was a riser structure in that outfall that he thought was meant to keep the level of water in the lake structure. That was something being looked at to see if it could be modified. Another issue was if the lake could start draining to the lower elevation without much back up onto Wallenberg and some of the upstream areas. That would have opportunity for improvement.

Chair Waring said when he got the chance some of that could be looked at and reported later.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m.

Sheila Smith
Clerk of Council's Office