

**DOWNRIVER UTILITY WASTEWATER AUTHORITY  
MARCH 12, 2026 MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF TAYLOR COUNCIL CHAMBERS**

**1. Roll Call and Introductions**

Chairperson McLeod (Allen Park) called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM and asked for a roll call to be taken. At the time of roll call, voting representatives were in attendance from 11 communities: Allen Park, Dearborn Heights, Belleville, Brownstown, Riverview, Romulus, Southgate, River Rouge, Taylor, Van Buren, Wyandotte. A quorum (at least 7 members) were present. Absent: Ecorse, Lincoln Park.

**a. DUWA Commissioners**

The DUWA Board Commissioners present at the time of roll call introduced themselves as follows: Mayor Gail McLeod (Allen Park), Nathan Johnson (Belleville), Roxie Fairchild (Brownstown), Mayor Tim Wooley (Taylor), Jeff Dobek (Riverview), Roberto Scappaticci (Romulus), Mayor Joseph Kuspa (Southgate), Kevin Lawrence (Van Buren), Mellissa Collins (River Rouge), Greg Mayhew (Wyandotte), Rachel Lapointe (Dearborn Heights).

Dearborn Heights will be a non-voting representative at this time.

**b. Other Meeting Attendees**

Board meeting attendees present in the audience at the time of roll call introduced themselves as follows: Chris Frescoln (Fausone & Gysko), Kerry Morgan (Riverview), Jim Taylor (DUWA), David Greko (Romulus, Taylor, Van Buren), Dan Marsh (Southgate), Doug Drysdale (Southgate/DNS Financial), Jason Couture (DUWA Treasurer), Rumzei Abdallah (Plante Moran), Jerry Barr (Allen Park), Travis Tuma (Veolia O&M), Jason Tapp (Veolia O&M), Sarah Rutkowski (Fishbeck), Lauren Fath-Azam (Secretary), and Dan Alford (Fishbeck).

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Copies of the agenda were made available prior to the meeting. Motion by Riverview, supported by Southgate to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously by all attending members.

**3. Approval of Minutes from February 12, 2026 Board Meeting**

Copies of the meeting minutes from the February 12, 2026 Board meeting were included in the pre-meeting Board packet. Motion by Taylor, supported by Belleville to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously by all attending members.

#### **4. Legal Update**

Attorney Chris Frescoln of Fausone & Grysko, provided the Legal Update.

##### **a. General Counsel Monthly Report**

A legal committee meeting took place last week to discuss a variety of updates, including the Part 41 rule changes, the dryer project litigation, PFAS litigation, and the UV project. In relation to the dryer project litigation, a conference will be held next month before the judge.

#### **5. Contract Operator Update**

##### **a. Monthly Operating Report**

Jason Tapp announced that Veolia has included several sets of site maps throughout the executive summary for better understanding of the system locations.

Travis Tuma reported that the facility processed a total of 911,360,000 gallons of wastewater, with an average daily flow of 29.40 million gallons per day (MGD). The plant handled the heavy rainfall well and remained in compliance. Mr. Tapp noted that Veolia's only challenge was maintaining the UV system, as they are still operating the old unit while awaiting the transition to the new system. Veolia is eager to get the bleach temporary disinfection system going. All annual PM's were completed on the primary sludge pumps. Final clarifier tanks were taken out of service, drained, and inspected. Mr. Tapp added that a seal leak was found on one of the pumps after an alarm went off. Since the pump is still under warranty it is currently with the manufacturer to be repaired. Mr. Tuma continued to report that Veolia is doing everything they can do to get things ready for when the dryers are ready to start back up. Mr. Tapp shared that since the State labeled both thermal oil system units as boilers they are still currently not in use. Modifications will need to be made so that they can be turned on. Mr. Tuma announced the two recently hired Electronic Techs getting great experience. As it relates to environmental health and safety, training was conducted last week with much of it being hands-on. A total of 206 Miss Dig tickets were completed this past month, with 47 of them being emergency related. Routine maintenance continues on the collection system. EGLE recently issued the draft NPDES permit for the wastewater treatment plant. EGLE is still encouraging DUWA to increase the size of the secondary treatment capacity. Veolia believes that the

plant is too big for the new daily average flow rates that are seen on a year to year basis.

**b. Chemical and Sludge Price - Monthly Updates**

Mr. Tuma reported that while commodity costs are steady, sludge disposal costs have increased due to the lack of dried sludge hauling to Canada. Veolia has confirmed that the LaSalle hauler is ready to begin transporting fertilizer across the border.

Mr. Tuma noted that Veolia has been covering all bases as it relates to the UV system. The contractor is ready to start temporary disinfection bypass. During that time two channels would be taken away. Once those channels get isolated the O&M team will be there to take all the parts out of the channels and put it in inventory. Mr. Tapp added that the contractor has completed testing the new temporary disinfection system, which has passed with no leaks.

Roberto Scappaticci inquired if Woodland Meadows has set a maximum load quantity from the plant? Mr. Tapp explained that they do not have a ceiling but have rejected loads due to strong smells. After a load is brought back Veolia will deodorize it and send it back to be accepted. Veolia makes sure that Woodland Meadows knows when our product is coming so that they can prepare for it. Five loads are being taken on Saturday to help buffer over the weekend.

Nathan Johnson inquired if we are the only treatment facility that is being pushed back from EGLE. Mr. Tapp noted that we are one of two that have blending in the permit.

**6. System Manager Update**

Dan Alford provided a verbal summary of activities since the last meeting. A written summary was provided in the pre-meeting Board packet for the System Manager Report (Pages 21-31).

**a. System Manager Report**

The draft NPDES permit limit has been received. Mr. Alford reported he gave an in depth summary at the last technical committee meeting but wanted to provide a summary to the Board as well. The permit mercury limit was raised from 3.0 to 4.0 ng/L, which will give us the flexibility to handle dental office compliance. Any support the communities can provide to ensure dentists stay current with filter maintenance would be greatly appreciated. Mr. Alford will continue to negotiate phosphorus levels as he feels DUWA has done our share to help reduce

phosphorus to Lake Erie. EGLE is providing 18 months to develop a work plan to lower DWTF blending events. He believes that a fair compromise would be to give two to four blending events a year in our next permit cycle. Mr. Alford continued to say EGLE also proposes some other methods to minimize blending events. Mayor Kuspa inquired how long the negotiating could last and how long the permit limit would be. Mr. Alford noted that there is no formal timeline. Also the State has the ability to issue a permit for five years and DUWA will be requesting a five year permit.

The System Manager discussed the Technical Committee recommended inspection of the Riverdrive Interceptor in 2026. This interceptor was selected because it is the oldest in the system and root treatment for large-diameter pipes currently costs the same as standard cleaning and CCTV inspection. An As-Needed Engineer will review 2025 CCTV footage and make maintenance recommendations.

Mr. Alford reported the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules determined the revised community collection system permits were less burdensome, so EGLE can now resubmit the draft rules to JCAR. Based on emails provided by EGLE, communities will receive a collection system classification according to their population. Each community will be issued a permit reflecting the size and type of its system, which will also necessitate a certified operator in charge. As the updated permit changes reflect more reasonable requirements, the process will now proceed to JCAR. He clarified that the permit excludes the sampling of spills or unknown substances, as managing those situations falls strictly under the purview of treatment plants. Mr. Alford has drafted a push back letter that the Board members can send out to their elected officials. The letter emphasizes that all water from local collection systems is discharged into the DUWA NPDES-certified system and includes a formal objection to any unfunded mandates. Mr. Alford anticipates that EGLE will model the new community requirements after our current collection system permit. Existing staff will be grandfathered certified for their current collection systems.

Another item discussed was regarding the BASF IPP permits which are progressing well; draft comments have been received, and Veolia is nearing the final issuance of these permits. It's been over a year since GLWA's doubled their ortho phosphate to provide protection from lead in the drinking water systems. Veolia O&M continues to monitor phosphorus concentrations at the DWTF, and any associated increases to Ferric/PACL dosing. Between February 13th and 14th, 22 odor reports were received, with the majority occurring between the

overnight and early morning hours. Residents from 17 households reported strong odors both indoors and outdoors, in some cases waking them from sleep. Mr. Alford stated that these odors are unlikely to be correlated with DWTF operations, noting that plant flow rates remained at approximately 30 MGD, Ferric dosing was maintained at a normal rate of 1 gpm, and the dryers were offline. Additionally, wind conditions were negligible and plant staff reported normal odors. In response, the Veolia team inspected local sewers and an industrial facility located north of the DWTF. No evidence of strong odors was found. After reviewing the DUWA and SWDDD piping systems, Mr. Alford concluded that the reported odor was not likely to be waterborne. The source of the odor remains unidentified at this time. Veolia hired Brown and Caldwell to conduct a facility wide odor study at the DWTF which was initiated in November 2024. The second phase data, which focuses on liquid odor, is currently under analysis and a draft report is expected shortly. Brown and Caldwell have identified two potential chemical treatment options to reduce odor. Brown and Caldwell's subcontractor are looking at the pH of the recycle water and the effectiveness of ferric chloride on odor at different pH levels. With the dryer currently not running the carbon odor control unit is not being utilized at this time. Mr. Alford encourages those interested in further discussing these items to attend the upcoming Technical Committee meetings. Mr. Alford communicated that the Fishbeck and Veolia teams met to review the asset inventory for the wastewater treatment plant. They will review the findings to prioritize where capital improvement funds can be most effectively allocated. Additional walk through inspections will be done this month. McCallister technicians recently serviced the plant's backup power systems, successfully restoring two of the three generators to service. The third unit requires new temperature sensors to resolve minor defects. Full redundancy will be restored once these final components are installed.

**b. UV Disinfection Replacement Project**

According to Mr. Alford, the project remains on its updated track with no new delays. The new project manager at CCC is providing strong oversight and helping to regain momentum. As shutdowns commence, the team is looking to make up time on the schedule. The 100-hour burn testing is underway to ensure operational reliability for the newly installed UV channel. The installation of the temporary disinfection system is nearly complete.

**c. Biosolids Dryer Facility Project**

Jason Tapp reminded the committee that the dryers have remained offline since September. While several identified deficiencies have already been addressed

and corrected, one primary obstacle remains: the State boiler inspector has indicated the thermal oil units used to heat the dryers are boilers, but do not meet code currently. While the State boiler inspector was involved during construction, the thermal oil units were tagged as boilers 2 years after starting. Veolia is looking at all options including challenging the boiler classification.

Mr. Tapp continued that Jason Nash is evaluating a strategy to adjust the pH of the recycle line from 5.0 to a target range of 7.0–7.5. While the annual chemical cost for this adjustment is estimated at \$3 million, Veolia is concurrently investigating the use of more efficient chemicals at lower dosage rates. Furthermore, the team is exploring methods to reduce the overall recycle flow, which would significantly lower the annual operational expenditure and chemical requirements. Mr. Tapp assured everyone that nothing is going to delay the implementation of these temporary measures that are going to get things back online.

## **7. Treasurer's Report**

Jason Couture presented the various items below to the Board, which start on page 32.

### **a. Fiscal Year End Change Coordination**

Mr. Couture reported the fiscal year end change coordination was completed with only auditing and budgeting items remaining. Doug Drysdale added that BS&A has completed the fiscal year change but cannot implement it until 2025 is closed out. This will most likely take place late May/early June once Plante Moran has completed the Audit.

### **b. Quarterly Financial Statement – Q4 2025**

Mr. Drysdale presented the quarterly financials, which start on page 34. A few things to point out include: as of December 31st, 2025 cash and investments total \$41.4 Million and receivables total \$2 Million. More receivables have been collected this year compared to the prior year. There are no changes for capital assets as it will be completed once the audit has been completed and expenditures for projects this year have been capitalized. Accounts payable is \$1.2 Million, which is less than the previous year due to the grant project expenditures. There is a surplus of net revenues and expenditures totaling \$1.6 Million. Beginning on page 36 is the revenues and expenditure report for DUWA. Overall revenues came in at about \$39.4 Million versus the budget being \$37.8 Million. Expenditures totaled \$37.7 Million, leaving the authority a surplus of \$1.6 Million.

### **c. Community Self Reporting Status Log**

Jason Couture continued to report that the majority of the communities are up to date. River Rouge is slightly behind. Doug Drysdale has been reaching out to the appropriate personnel to get them caught up.

**d. Aging Accounts Receivable**

The total amount in the Aging Accounts Receivable (AR) is \$4.6 Million of which \$4.1 Million is current. 10% is over 60 days delinquent. Mr. Couture noted that River Rouge has paid amounts that are over 120 days, and Dearborn Heights has paid amounts which are over 30 and 60 days delinquent. Mr. Drysdale continues to reach out to industrial users but is having difficulty collecting based on entities changing emails and etc. Consequently, formal letters drafted by DUWA's attorney will be issued to those entities that remain unresponsive.

**e. Pending Invoices**

The total amount in this month's invoice register is \$8,929,003.01. The largest invoices include those to US Bank for SRF, lien and WIFIA bond payments. Additionally, large payments were for Veolia for monthly O&M and unit cost reconciliation, Wyandotte Municipal Services for utilities, and CCC for the UV project construction.

Motion by Riverview, supported by Wyandotte to approve payment of the pending invoices in the amount of \$8,929,003.01. The motion passed unanimously by all attending members.

**8. Public Comment**

There was no further Public Comment.

**9. Other Business**

Mayor Wooley noted the potential need to relocate the June or July meetings due to an HVAC system installation scheduled for the Taylor Council Chambers. In response, Mayor Kuspa offered the Southgate facility as an alternative location if necessary.

Mayor Kuspa requested support in the form of signatures on a letter, drafted in coordination with legal counsel, opposing proposed legislation that would strip local communities of control over residential housing. He invited the Board Chair and all member communities to sign the letter in a show of unified opposition to the action.

Motion by Southgate, supported by Taylor to authorize legal counsel to draft a formal letter of opposition regarding proposed state legislation that would remove local control over residential housing, local communities are best positioned to manage their own

infrastructure. Furthermore, it shall highlight that the increased housing density proposed by these bills would place an undue burden on aging infrastructure. This correspondence, signed by DUWA, is to be submitted to the appropriate state representatives. The motion passed unanimously by all attending members.

There were no other items brought forth for consideration as “Other Business” items.

**10. Next Meeting Date: Thursday, April 9, 2026 (9:00 AM; In-Person)**

Chairperson McLeod reminded the Board that the next regular meeting would take place on Thursday, April 9, 2026 at 9:00 AM in-person at the City of Taylor Council Chambers.

**11. Adjournment**

There being no other business, Chairperson McLeod announced that a motion to adjourn would be in order. Motion by Southgate, supported by Romulus to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously at 10:30 AM.