

**COMMISSION FILE NO:** 25-171-12 **DATE INTRODUCED:** December 1, 2025

**INTRODUCED BY:** Executive Director (Signature on File in the Office of the Commission)

**REFERRED BY COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON TO:** Policy, Finance, and Personnel Committee

**RELATING TO:** Amend the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget for Watercourse In-House Services

**SUMMARY:**

The Commission is requested to amend the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget to adjust expenditures to provide watercourse maintenance services in-house rather than through contractual services and authorize funding for three positions: one Watercourse Maintenance Specialist, pay grade 5, and two Watercourse Maintenance Technicians, pay grade 4.

The District owns many watercourse assets, including approximately 350 acres of land, retaining walls and headwalls, culverts, and trash racks. The District's 129 miles of jurisdictional streams include enclosed and open concrete-lined channels and non-concrete-lined natural streams. The District uses contracted maintenance services to maintain its watercourse channels and riparian properties. These contracts are one- to two-year duration, focusing on four different geographic areas. Maintenance activities under the contracts include mowing, natural vegetation maintenance, snow removal, and debris and woody vegetation removal.

District staff completed an in-house analysis in response to several ongoing challenges within the District's maintenance program. In recent years, the District has experienced rising contract costs, low bidder turnout, and quality concerns with certain contractor services. These issues prompted the District to evaluate its current contracting approach and consider the potential benefits of completing some of this maintenance work in-house.

**ATTACHMENTS:** **BACKGROUND** ☒ **KEY ISSUES** ☐ **RESOLUTION** ☒  
**FISCAL NOTE** ☒ **S/W/MBE** ☐ **OTHER** ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

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**COMMITTEE ACTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMISSION ACTION:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **SUMMARY (Cont'd)**

### **Amend the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget for Watercourse In-House Services**

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Transitioning more maintenance activities to District staff could provide several key advantages. First, cost savings are anticipated through reduced contracting expenses and better resource allocation. Second, in-house teams offer improved responsiveness, enabling the District to address maintenance needs quickly and proactively, particularly during weather events or urgent situations. Finally, increasing internal maintenance capacity would create opportunities for workforce development.

Given the increasing costs and performance challenges associated with contracted maintenance services, the District has a strong rationale for conducting this analysis. By assessing the potential for expanding in-house capabilities, the District aims to enhance service quality, improve responsiveness, and achieve long-term cost efficiencies while supporting workforce development and community engagement.

To provide watercourse maintenance services, District staff request an amendment to the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget to transfer expenditures associated with contractual watercourse maintenance services to new staff and operating costs, as well as utilizing the unallocated reserve for upfront equipment costs. District staff request personnel changes within the Technical Services Division including adding three authorized and funded positions (one Watercourse Maintenance Specialist, grade 5 and two Watercourse Maintenance Technicians, grade 4) and the reclassification of a Project Manager, grade 13, to a Watercourse Maintenance Supervisor, grade 14. Additionally, five intern positions will be added to the Human Resources budget. Furthermore, operating costs within various cost centers, such as equipment, tools, vehicles, insurance, training, and fringe benefits, are included as a part of this requested amendment.

As shown in Table 1 in the Background Section, amending the 2026 operations and maintenance budget for in-house watercourse maintenance has an impact of \$182,861 on total 2026 expenditures which is to be absorbed by the unallocated reserve. Between 2026-2030, internal analysis estimates total savings to the District to be \$889,000.

## BACKGROUND

Amend the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget for Watercourse In-House Services

**Table 1:**

Account	Description	2026 Adopted	2026 Amended	Change
<b>Engineering Services</b>				
18500	Machinery & Equipment	-	\$225,450	\$225,450
18700	Transportation Equipment	-	296,698	296,698
51100	Salaries	2,688,306	2,872,933	184,627
55100	Seminars/Training	55,550	56,750	1,200
64900	Contract Services, N.O.C.	1,634,964	721,000	(913,964)
65500	Waste Disposal Charges	-	5,000	5,000
66100	Repairs & Maint - Struc, Grds, & Pavement	-	196,073	196,073
67100	Repairs To Machinery & Equipment	-	24,600	24,600
75600	Lab Supplies & Chemicals	-	3,000	3,000
76500	Tools and Supplies	-	31,900	31,900
<b>Administration</b>				
78000	Fuel	65,000	81,000	16,000
<b>Human Resources</b>				
53100	Work-Study Program	238,379	283,667	45,288
<b>Finance</b>				
63000	Insurance Premiums	2,345,691	2,365,989	20,298
<b>Fringe</b>				
54100	Retirement System Contribution	6,995,003	7,008,296	13,293
54200	Group Health Insurance	5,164,875	5,172,615	7,740
54300	Group Life Insurance	363,886	367,099	3,213
54500	Social Security	2,047,972	2,065,216	17,244
54700	Group Dental Insurance	205,400	210,036	4,636
54900	Long-Term Disability	80,852	81,417	565
<b>Total Impacted Expenditures</b>		<b>\$21,885,878</b>	<b>\$22,068,739</b>	<b>\$182,861*</b>

\*Additional expenditures requested to be funded by the 2026 unallocated reserve.

## **RESOLUTION**

Amend the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget for Watercourse In-House  
Services

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**RESOLVED**, by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage Commission, that the 2026 Operations and Maintenance Budget is amended to adjust expenditures to provide watercourse maintenance services in-house rather than through contractual services and to authorize funding for three additional positions: one Watercourse Maintenance Specialist, pay grade 5, and two Watercourse Maintenance Technicians, pay grade 4.