

SMITHVILLE BOARD OF ALDERMEN
WORK SESSION
July 7, 2026 6:30 p.m.
City Hall Council Chambers and Via Videoconference

1. Call to Order

Mayor Boley called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m. A quorum of the Board was present: Marv Atkins, Kelly Kobylski, Melissa Wilson and Dan Hartman. Leeah Stone was absent.

Staff present: Cynthia Wagner, Gina Pate, Matt Bond, Chief Lockridge, Jack Hendrix, Rick Welch, Matt Denton, Linda Drummond and Mayra Toothman.

City Attorneys present: Padraic Corcoran.

2. Utility Needs and Financing Discussion

Cynthia provided a brief overview of the history of the master planning process for the City's infrastructure. The City has undertaken extensive planning, infrastructure assessments, and utility rate studies to evaluate the long-term needs of its water and wastewater systems. These efforts have consistently identified significant infrastructure needs and have highlighted the importance of continued investment to maintain reliable utility services, address aging facilities, and support future community growth. As development has continued and utility demands have increased, the City has faced the challenge of balancing growth-related improvements with the need to rehabilitate and replace aging infrastructure that has served the community for more than 30 years.

Finance Director Rick Welch presented the utility and financial needs for the City's utility infrastructure. In response to these needs, the City has invested in utility improvements, including water and sewer treatment facility upgrades, sewer rehabilitation projects, force main improvements, sewer line replacements, and ongoing lift station upgrades. While these investments have improved systems, there are still several critical concerns.

The City has also implemented an ongoing sewer rehabilitation program focused on identifying and repairing aging infrastructure before major failures occur. Through slip lining sewer lines are being restored and their service lives extended. While these annual improvements have allowed the City to make progress in preserving existing assets, they represent only a portion of the broader infrastructure needs identified through the planning process.

Looking ahead, the City faces more than \$100 million in projected utility infrastructure needs over the next decade. Planned projects include major wastewater treatment plant upgrades, capacity expansions, infrastructure replacement projects, and improvements designed to enhance system reliability, operational efficiency, and redundancy. These improvements will meet current service demands, accommodate future growth, comply with regulatory requirements and reduce the risk of costly emergency repairs. Rising construction, material, labor, and borrowing costs further reinforce the importance of addressing these needs proactively.

Recent utility rate studies evaluated funding options necessary to support these investments while maintaining the long-term financial health of the utility systems. The studies anticipate a

combination of debt financing, utility rate revenues, reserves, and other funding sources. Following discussions during the Board's budget retreat, staff was directed to pursue State Revolving Fund (SRF) financing, evaluate interim financing options such as Certificates of Participation (COPs), and begin preparing for a future ballot question that would be needed to support major infrastructure projects.

Board members emphasized that utility infrastructure is one of the City's most important responsibilities and agreed that postponing needed improvements would likely increase future costs and elevate the risk of service disruptions or emergency repairs. The Board also stressed the importance of public education and transparency, noting that residents should understand the condition of the utility systems, the reasons investments are needed, and how proposed financing mechanisms would work.

The Board reaffirmed that maintaining local ownership and operation of the City's utility systems remains the preferred approach since the City would lose complete control. The Board members also noted that while developers contribute to growth-related infrastructure through construction obligations, impact fees, and other development costs, many of the projects under consideration involve maintaining and upgrading existing infrastructure that serves the entire community.

To increase public awareness and understanding, staff plans to expand outreach efforts through community conversations, informational meetings, educational materials, and utility facility tours. These initiatives will provide residents with firsthand insight into the condition and operation of the utility systems and help explain the investments required to maintain reliable water and wastewater services. The Board expressed support for continuing and directed staff to move forward with developing ballot language, educational resources and public engagement efforts. The overall goal is to provide residents with information about infrastructure needs, available funding options and the long-term benefits of investing in the infrastructure that will support the community for years to come.

Adjourn

Alderman Hartman moved to adjourn. Alderman Kobylski seconded the motion.

Ayes – 4, Noes – 0, motion carries. Mayor Boley declared the work session adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Linda Drummond, City Clerk

Damien Boley, Mayor