

Water and Sewer (Lease and Operations) Compliance Review Board

Meeting 12/20/23

Questions and Answers

1. How does a homeowner check if they have lead pipes? (Mr. Zucal)
 - a. As easy as going into your basement and performing a simple test(s). See attached *Checking your water distribution pipes for lead*.
 - b. After you check your home for lead pipes, complete the online service line survey <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/368b5c052f7449049eac6e7569dbee62> to record the results. No matter what type of material the pipes are made of -you can help us to comply with the regulation.
2. What is the homeowner's cost for lead line replacement? (Mr. Zucal)
 - a. Referring to the pilot lead service line replacement program which is funded through PENNVEST (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act). The award is split between a \$1,555,508 loan and a \$3,383,892 grant.
 - b. LCA will replace 100% of the lead service lines both public and private in the pilot area. See attached *LCA Allentown Lease Service Line Replacements project area map*.
3. How much is budgeted for water bill financial assistance? (Ms. Gerlach)
 - a. Pennsylvania Homeowner Assistance Fund (PHAF)
 - i. 53 applicants, 17 grants equaling \$19,339.19 in 10.5 months. An increase of over \$4,400 in the third quarter.
 - b. LCA Hardship Grant Program administered through IPartner/Dollar Energy
 - i. LCA has budgeted \$500,000 and will continue the program until all the funds are expended.
 - ii. 178 grants equaling \$44,758 since 2021.
 - iii. Applications continued to increase significantly this year with award amounts more than 4x the previous 12-month period.
 - c. Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) a temporary emergency program to help low-income families pay overdue water bills. This very successful program has ended and the City and LCA are advocating that Congress to extend the program.
 - i. Total LIHWAP since 2021: 528 grants for a total of \$240,403.43.
4. How did you choose the area for the pilot lead service line replacement program? (Ms. Khanwalkar)
 - a. Three components were reviewed:
 1. Density of lead service lines in a neighborhood,
 2. Water equity information, an affordability assessment using average water costs as a percentage of MHI (median household income) and
 3. Road restoration, avoiding resurfacing a recently paved road.
5. What is the distribution of the capital regulatory budget? (Ms. Khanwalkar)
 - a. Two major regulatory responses for which LCA is and will continue to seek alternate funding sources (grants, etc.)
 - i. Lead and Copper = \$50,000,000
 1. Majority of funding to be used for service line replacements.
 - ii. PFAS (The per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) = \$15,000,000
 1. Funding will be used for investigations and/or treatment upgrades. LCA is studying possible treatments.
6. How many watermain breaks have occurred in 2023, commenting that 2022 had 34 water main breaks and hoped it wasn't a trend. (Mr. Lichty)
 - a. As of November 30, 2023 there were eight watermain breaks in Allentown. Watermain breaks are factored into the watermain replacement prioritization which includes assessing the physical condition of the pipes as determined through inspections, leak/break records, flow testing results, and other criteria.