



HEARING NOTES

Legislative Oversight – LO25-0012

Investigative Hearing – Solid Waste and Department of Public Works

Committee: Legislative Investigations
Chaired by: Councilman Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer
Hearing Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025
Time (Beginning): 4:35 PM
Time (Ending): 7:50 PM
Location: Council Chambers
Total Attendance: Approximately 95 in-person
Approximately 15 virtually

Committee Members in Attendance:

Isaac “Yitzy” Schleifer Antonio Glover
Paris Gray Ryan Dorsey
Sharon Green Middleton

Bill Synopsis in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Attendance sheet in the file?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Agency reports read?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Video or audio-digitally recorded?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> n/a
Certification of advertising/posting notices in the file?.....	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Evidence of notification to property owners?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a
Final vote taken at this hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> n/a

Major Speakers

(This is not an attendance record.)

- Isabel Cummin, Office of the Inspector General (OIG)
- Khalil Zaied, Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Patrick Moran – American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
- Anthony Wyche, Local 44 Shop Stewart (AFSCME)
- Todd Reynolds, City Union of Baltimore (CUB)
- DPW Employees:
 - S. McNair

- Clarence Thomas
 - Reginal Peaks
 - Reginald Noble
 - Victor Lee, Jr.
 - Rosalee Hansen
 - A. Williams
 - Doc Cheatham, Speaker
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Major Issues Discussed

1. Chairman Schleifer called the hearing to order and gave opening remarks, starting with a moment of silence for the deceased DPW employees. Some other statements and/or remarks he gave at that time were:
 - He stated, “the Council is working for better pay and working conditions for DPW employees.”
 - Talked about the importance of:
 - Talking and communicating with the employees/staff
 - Getting to the culture of the Department, and
 - Increasing the level of service in the Department
 - He also stated, “how we treat our employees says a lot!”
2. President Cohen also gave opening remarks. Some topics and/or statements made were:
 - Stated, “the Sanitation Workers” provides essential services to the City of Baltimore and its residents.
 - He talked about statistics/data regarding deaths and injuries at the DPW
 - Stated, “the treatment of the employees/workers must change!”
 - About his visits to the City Yards
 - About working conditions
 - Workers are afraid to speak out due to repercussions!
 - About the importance and need of a “safety culture” within the DPW
 - He asked, “How close is the Department toward having a safe culture in the Department?”
3. Vice Chair Glover also gave opening marks. Some topics and/or statements made were:
 - He talked about the history associated with deaths of sanitary workers (in general) throughout the country/United States of America.
 - About how the workers are underpaid and/or get low wages and stated, “how can we change this?”
4. Isabel Cummin, OIG talked about the background and history associated with the investigation, OIG Case #25-0004-I which included topics and/or discussions such as:
 - Conditions of the working environment in DPW
 - Lack of adequate training
 - The importance of making workers/employees a priority!
 - And stated, “Now, as a result of the investigation, employees/workers have a voice!”

5. The committee/councilmembers stated concerns, made comments and asked Ms. Cummin questions. Some were:

○ Questions

- Is the Bureau of Solid Works a safe place to work at today?
- OIG Report pertaining to deaths and injuries
 - Can you talk about the different types of injuries, including the causes for same?
 - Is DPW doing what it needs to do to prevent deaths and injuries on the job?
 - How many deaths and injuries do you think could had been prevented if proper equipment and/or tools were available?
- What is being done to change the routes for the trash trucks?
- What are the standards for heat stress during summer months?
- Are the workers paid hazard differential?
- Can you talk about the working conditions today versus the working conditions of yesterday?

○ Comments

- Several comments were made regarding trauma informed care and physical and mental health

○ Supervision

- What has been done in the area concerning supervisory duties and/or updates?
- Supervisor training is needed and is of concern!

○ OIG Investigation

- Did you talk to any of the Unions about any of their interactions with the workers/employees?
 - Can you talk about some of the bargaining items that the Unions have asked about during the past year?

6. Khalil Zaid, DPW, gave a PowerPoint Presentation. A copy is on file.

7. The committee/councilmembers stated concerns, made comments and asked Mr. Zaid questions. Some were:

○ Questions

- Is the Bureau of Solid Works a safe place to work at today?
 - Comment: Riding and/or working on the back of trucks is a dangerous job!
- What is the process for reporting injuries?
- How do you classify the level of an injury(s)?
 - Who do you report injuries too?

○ **Requested by Councilmember Gray: Can DPW provide data on injury reports over the past five years- please include the following information:**

- By year
- By Department & Job/role
- The severity of the injury/incident
- Hospital Visits & hospitalizations
- How many were reported to the Union &/or MOSHA
- What corrective action has been taken to address active dangers
- Can you talk about how COVID impacted/affected the Department?
- What are the two (2) most important safety measures needed and how soon can they be implemented?

- What is the process and/or threshold for not allowing workers to work outside?
- What is the process and/or plan for monitoring the heat?

▪ **Requested by Councilmember Ramos: Please provide the following:**

- The complaint/feedback hotline number, the number of complaints in the past 6 months and nature of those complaints.
- Outline of the Summer heat plan and what the oversight will be. Realizing there is still negotiation to do here, please send to us when ready.
- the DPW section of the Wage Study, and briefings on the implementation of the entire wage study.

Requested by Councilmember Middleton: Please provide the following:

- The dates and times DPW have met with the Unions
 - Comments
 - Pay raises are important!
 - Adequate health benefits are important!
 - Supervisors must be held accountable for his/her actions
 - How do you meet with workers for resolving issues?
 - What happens when workers don't feel comfortable talking with his/her direct report? Can he/she come to you?
 - Direct connection and/or communication with the workers is needed!
 - Salary Study and Salaries
 - Comment: "We are far behind in salaries!"
 - **Requested by Chairman Schleifer: Please submit a copy of the salary study when it is available**
 - What is the going rate for the salaries of workers in the Department?
 - It is important that salary increases are implemented! That workers are paid appropriately and treated well!
 - Citywide Salary Study – what is the timeline for implemented the study and when will it be available?
 - Must ensure that the workers are not just met halfway!
 - Unions
 - How are the union negotiations going?
 - What is the bargaining process; how often is it and whose responsibility is it to respond?

8. Three (3) union representatives testified. Some highlights and/or topics of their discussion were:

- Death of co-workers
- Lack of bargaining with unions – is of concern
- Talked about the history of bargaining activities
- Low salaries – is of concern
- Safety issues
- Workers' training

9. The committee/councilmembers asked the union representatives questions. Some were:

- Can you talk about what are the most important safety issues that need to be addressed?
- What are some challenges for getting wage increases?
- How are injuries reported to the Unions and how are they handled?

10. Several DPW workers testified. Some comments and/or concerns stated were:
- I don't trust the unions!
 - Unions does not do anything for workers!
 - Talked about the negative elements experienced in work environment and as a worker as well
 - Listening to the workers is essential!
 - Overworked with low pay!
 - Concern – low wages
 - Can't afford to retire!
 - Safety issues
 - Injuries on the job
 - Comment: The city needs to do better by its workers!
 - Workers need different representation!
 - Comments regarding retaliation on the job!
11. Doc Cheatham testified. Some comments made were:
- Bad culture is in more agencies than DPW!
 - The work culture is running employees' away!
 - Workers are losing his/her job for speaking out!
 - Retaliation is of concern!
12. President Cohen gave closing remarks and said:
- When can we find out when pay raises takes effect?
 - Looks forward to the "Ride Along" with DPW staff
 - Looks forward to:
 - The retraining of Supervisors
 - Improving safety culture as well as continuous improvements
13. Hearing called to recessed.
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Further Study

Was further study requested?

Yes No

If yes, describe.

1. See "yellow" highlights in the Mayor Issues Discussed section above.
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Marguerite M. Currin

Marguerite M. Currin, Committee Staff

cc: Bill File

OCS Electronic File

Date: March 26, 2025



Baltimore City Council Committee Hearing Attendance Record

Subject: Legislative Oversight – Investigative Hearing – Bureau of Solid Waste and Department of Public Waste	LO#: LO25-0012
Committee: Legislative Investigations	Chair: Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer
Date: Thursday, March 20, 2025	Time: 4:30 PM
Location: Council Chambers	

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

What is your position on this bill?

Lobbyist: Are you registered in the City?*

CHECK HERE TO TESTIFY



First Name	Last Name	Address / Organization / Email	Testify	For	Against	Yes	No
John	Doe	400 N. Holliday St. Johndoenbmore@yahoo.com	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DR CHEATHAM	MARVIN	1520 APPLEGTON 21217 MHCDC	✓	✓			
Carrington	Scott	149 Dawson st Struggle for Socialism/PPA/WU					
Todd	Reynolds	2704 sulgrave Ave Baltimore MD 21218	✓	✓			

*NOTE: IF YOU ARE COMPENSATED OR INCUR EXPENSES IN CONNECTION WITH THIS BILL, YOU MAY BE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REGISTER WITH THE CITY ETHICS BOARD AS A LOBBYIST. REGISTRATION CAN BE DONE ONLINE AND IS A SIMPLE PROCESS. FOR INFORMATION VISIT: [HTTPS://ETHICS.BALTIMORECITY.GOV/](https://ethics.baltimorecity.gov/) OR CALL: 410-396-4730

City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Meeting Minutes - Final

Committee on Legislative Investigations

Thursday, March 20, 2025

4:00 PM
400 Du Burns Council Chamber, 4th floor, City Hall, Phone:
1-408-418-9388, Access Code: 2345 174 2912 Password:
Public Link: [https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?](https://bmore.webex.com/bmore/j.php?MTID=ma1d5c457bf0c7fa59a3c1e1c0b7ee273)
MTID=ma1d5c457bf0c7fa59a3c1e1c0b7ee273

LO25-0012 - Investigative Hearing - Solid Waste & Department of Public Works

CALL TO ORDER

INTRODUCTIONS

ATTENDANCE

Present 5 - Isaac "Yitzy" Schleifer, Antonio "Tony" Glover, Ryan Dorsey, Sharon Green
Middleton, and Paris Gray

ITEM SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

LO25-0012 Investigative Hearing - Bureau of Solid Waste and Department of Public Works

For the purpose of requiring the leadership of the Department of Public Works to address issues of workplace safety in the Solid Waste Division, with specific attention to all applicable occupational health and safety laws, training, facility and equipment safety, fair and equitable treatment of employees. This hearing follows Inspector General Isabel Cumming's issuance on March 5, 2025, of an Investigative Report Synopsis regarding DPW's organizational culture.

Hearing was recessed.

ADJOURNMENT