



**BUILDINGS, SAFETY ENGINEERING
AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT**

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To: CP Mary Sheffield
From: David Bell, Director *DB*
Buildings, Safety, Engineering, Environmental Development
Date: April 3, 2024
Re: Responses BSEED 2024 Budget Hearing

Please find below responses to your questions sent on 03/21/24 regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025 Budget for the Buildings, Safety Engineering & Environmental Department.

1. On page B13-8, it appears that there were 28 department vacancies of February 9, 2024.
 - What positions are currently vacant?
 - What is the delay in filling the vacancies?
 - Can BSEED achieve its goals while understaffed?

As of March 18, 2024, BSEED has 53 Full Time vacant positions (excluding ARPA-related positions)

53 full time vacancies as of March 18, 2024

The vacant positions are as follows:

- Building Inspector - 7
- Housing Inspector - 10
- Customer Service Representative III-BSEED - 12
- Environmental Specialist I - 1
- Environmental Specialist II – 1
- Senior Environmental Control Inspector - 2
- Environmental Control Inspectors - 11
- Commercial and Residential License Investigator - 1
- Zoning Inspector - 2
- Electrical Inspector - 2
- Elevator Inspector – 2
- Supervising Electrical Inspector -1
- Business System Support Specialist II -1

The delay in filling these vacancies is because the City of Detroit is competing with other municipalities and industries especially in the skilled trades. Another reason is due to attrition caused by retirement of employees. We are actively in collaboration with the Human Resources department for active and continuous recruitment.



To the extent possible, BSEED is using improved efficiencies and technology to improvise for the shortfall of classified employees.

2. **On page B13-9, what accounts for the more than \$1 million decrease in Operating Supplies, from \$3,169,037 in FY2024 to \$2,026,804 for FY2025?**

The decrease in operating supplies is largely due to the decrease of \$800,000 of One-Time Expenditures funded by the Public Health Fund in FY24.

3. **On page B14-9, Revenues from Contribution and Transfers decreased from \$5,532,257 in FY2024 to \$3,862,693 in the Mayor's proposed FY2025 budget.**
 - **What accounts for the nearly \$2 million decrease in revenues?**
 - **Why do revenues continue to decrease to \$1,652,289 by FY2028?**

The Contributions and Transfers category is the use of fund balance from prior years, in FY25 and beyond, it is projected that the need to utilize fund balance will decrease due to the increase in revenue from other sources.

4. **On page B13-11, under Construction Code Fund, what accounts for the increase in Other Expenses from \$153,350 in FY2024 to \$431,065 for FY2025?**

This increase includes funding to support personnel costs attributable to the recent AFSCME Non-Supervisory Tripartite labor agreement. The contract terms were reached at a late stage in the budget process and were set aside in Other Expenses to be allocated as needed in FY 2025.

5. **What is the process for the enforcement of blight violations and penalties?**
 - **What leeway do inspectors have to issue warnings versus tickets?**
 - **What is the maximum number of warnings before a ticket is issued?**
 - **What is the maximum number of tickets before the department takes legal action on a property?**

All inspectors have a leeway to issue correction orders prior to issuing a ticket. The correction order is the only warning prior to issuing a ticket. Sometimes if it is an environmental issue, the Solid Waste Ordinance does not require issuing a warning prior to issuing a ticket for solid waste over 10 cubic yards.

Property owners are given a correction order with a compliance date after every inspection. If the owner fails to comply to the correction order, then tickets are issued. Every day that a violation exists counts as a separate occurrence and is subject to another ticket being issued. After several tickets are issued if the property owner remains non-compliant the department may ask the Law Department to file a nuisance lawsuit against the property owner.

6. **Recent complaints from residents in multiple Senior Buildings highlight the need for robust inspections at these facilities.**



- **Has BSEED hired more elevator inspectors since the introduction of the Elevator Enforcement Ordinance in 2019?**
- **How often are senior building elevators inspected?**
- **What is the process for enforcement of elevator complaints?**
- **Does BSEED have a department strictly for the addressing Senior building complaints? If not, how much funding would that require?**

We have added 3 inspectors since the introduction of the elevator ordinance. Senior Building elevators are inspected minimally once per year and or upon receiving complaint. Elevator complaints are recorded into Accela, an inspector is dispatched immediately on incidents and/or within 24 hours on all complaints. A full inspection of equipment is performed, and a correction order is issued. If it is equipment related the care is taken out of service until necessary repairs are made and a reinspection for compliance is completed. The Property Maintenance Division addresses all complaint inspections on senior buildings within 48 hours and same day if the issue is an emergency condition. No additional funding is required as the budgeted number of inspectors is adequate to handle all senior building related complaints.

- 7. Does BSEED currently conduct Radon testing for commercial and residential buildings?**
- **If not, who conducts Radon inspections in Detroit?**
 - **What would be the cost to have a Radon inspection division?**

BSEED does not conduct Radon testing. The State of Michigan or private companies conduct Radon testing in the City of Detroit. There has not been any consideration for adding a Radon testing division, as a result a cost has not been determined.

- 8. What educational guides or programs does BSEED have to notify residents and businesses of BSEED compliance rules and possible fines?**
- **Does BSEED work with the DEGC to educate prospective property and business owners on required inspection and licenses?**

BSEED works with the DEGC and the Department of Neighborhoods to provide virtual webinars and in-person presentations in each council district regarding compliance standards and our enforcement efforts. We have a yellow highlighted link on our main page that speaks specially about residential and commercial ownership responsibilities. We also use social media and now recently billboards.