

**LOWER SAUCON AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
MARCH 29, 2022**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Gress called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Present were Mr. Gress, Chairman; Mr. Anderson, Vice Chairman; Mr. Werner Secretary; Mr. Keich, Member; Mr. Carocci, Council Liaison; Mr. Ross, Administrator; Ms. Fetzer, Assistant Administrator; Mrs. Kerchner, Secretary; Mr. Backenstoe, Attorney; Mr. Youst, Engineer (Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Smith and Mr. Reccek were not present and Mr. Davis arrived after the voting for the minutes).

3. Citizen Agenda Items

None.

4. Minutes

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Anderson to approve the minutes dated February 15, 2022 as presented.

Roll Call 4-0 Motion Approved. (Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Smith were not present and Mr. Davis arrived after the vote).

5. Financial Reports

Mr. Corcoran was not present. Mr. Gress said the water and sewer revenues are not as high but that goes along with the billing cycle and will pick up with the quarterly billing.

6. Agenda

A. Water Rate Increase

Mr. Ross said the water rate increase letter went out to all our water customers Monday March 21, 2022. Mr. Ross said he will add information regarding the rate increase on our website and Facebook page in a day or so once the customers start receiving the letters. Mr. Ross then said to the Board Members that he attended a webinar regarding the affordability of water rates. The webinar included information to assess how a rate increase

would affect the customers in a service area. He went over a brief explanation of the handout he included in the board packet. There is a calculation to see how affordable the water rate is based on the income range for the residents. The handout showed the figures at our current rate and our new rate. The household income figures that were used were from Hellertown as Lower Saucon Township figures were not available. Mr. Ross said the webinar indicated that customers should only spend about 2% of their monthly income on their water bill and an amount of 4% or more would be too great an amount for water monthly. Mr. Ross said even with the price increase most of our population is in the acceptable range.

Mr. Gress did reiterate that the Authority belongs to the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. Lower Saucon Authority customers can see if they qualify for assistance with payment of their water bill from the program. Also, there are other payment assistance programs. Mr. Ross said the Authority works with our customers if they make an effort to pay their bill.

B. Creekside Update

Attorney Backenstoe said we completed the presentations to Lower Saucon Township and were successful. The Authority received approval from Lower Saucon Township. Attorney Backenstoe said the Attorney for Lower Saucon Township is writing a letter of approval for our project to the township. After the letter is completed, the Authority must wait 30 days for any public appeals.

Mr. Youst said Attorney Backenstoe did an excellent job presenting at the meetings. Mr. Youst said he received correspondences from PennDOT that maps out their tentative plan for the Meadows Road bridge demolition and replacement. The letter was sent out to all utility companies who have services around the bridge. He said there is a meeting April 6th with PennDOT where all utility companies can attend and PennDOT will explain their plan with the bridge, and the utility companies are welcome to express their needs and concerns. Mr. Youst said one part of the bridge will conflict with the Authority force main. He also said there is an area at the Meadows catering facility that may be a possibility for the Authority to obtain an easement for relocation of our force main. Additionally, Mr. Youst said we are likely to need an additional easement from a nearby property owner. Mr. Youst said the correspondence mentioned that the costs associated with the relocation of the utility lines would be reimbursable. Mr. Youst said he will forward the information to Attorney Backenstoe regarding the costs being reimbursable so he can look at what is required by the Authority.

7. Citizen Non- Agenda Items

None.

8. Reports

A. Attorney

Attorney Backenstoe said most of his report was included in the Creekside Update. He did note that he has been in communication with Mr. Youst and reviewed the bid documents for the Applebutter Road tank work. He said Mr. Youst did an excellent job with the bid documents and there were only a few minor adjustments needed before the package was put on the bidding website.

B. Engineer

Mr. Youst said that the Applebutter Road tank work bid is on the PennBid website. He said there have been quite a few companies that have viewed the bid. He said the factory trained maintenance company has picked up the bid from the PennBid website. The number of bidders will be small for this project as there are only a few certified companies that can complete the work. The bids will be opened on Thursday April 14th at 2:00 P.M. The bids will then be reviewed, and a recommendation will be made at the April board meeting. The bid includes a mandatory question that must be completed which is for the bidder to give a committable start date to commence work in the field.

Mr. Youst said he is beginning work on the annual water report that is due to the City of Bethlehem the end of April. He said he received the information he needed from Stacey. He said he let the City of Bethlehem know that he needs the information from them to complete the report and said hopefully he will get that soon to complete the report for the city by the end of April.

C. Administrator

Mr. Ross said we will have a busy stretch with the amount of work for the crew. He said in April we have meter reading and the yearly fire hydrant flushing. Starting in May will be the water main replacement project. He said we did discuss personnel and if we need to hire an additional crew member. Mr. Ross said we may need to hire a temporary crew member or even a permanent full time crew member for all the upcoming work. Mr. Ross said if the Board Members agree he would like to move forward with bringing in another crew member. There was some discussion, but the Board Members agreed about bringing on a new crew member whether it may be a temporary crew member or a full-time permanent crew member. Mr. Ross said he would like the Board Members to give him the authority to hire either a temporary crew member or a full-time permanent crew member. The Board Members then made a motion for authorization.

Motion by Mr. Anderson, Second by Mr. Davis to authorize Mr. Ross to obtain either a future full-time employee or temporary summer employee to pick up our workload.

Roll Call 5-0 Motion Approved. (Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Smith were not present).

D. Chairman

Mr. Gress said he will not be able to attend the April board meeting.

E. Members

No Members had anything to report.

9. Adjournment

Upon Motion by Mr. Werner and agreement by the Board Members the March 29, 2022 Board Meeting adjourned at 7:21 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Kerchner
Recording Secretary