

**LOWER SAUCON AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
MAY 17, 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. Corcoran, Treasurer; Mr. Davis, Member; Mr. Ross, Administrator; Ms. Fetzer, Assistant Administrator; Mrs. Kerchner, Secretary; Mr. Backenstoe, Attorney (Mr. Smith, Mr. Keich, Mr. Carocci, Mr. Reccek and Mr. Youst were not present).

3. Citizen Agenda Items

None.

4. Minutes

Motion by Mr. Anderson, Second by Mr. Werner to approve the minutes dated April 19, 2022 as presented.

Roll Call 4-0-1 Motion Approved. (Mr. Smith and Mr. Keich were not present and Mr. Gress abstained).

5. Financial Report

Mr. Corcoran discussed the year-to-date treasurer's report. He noted that the Woodland Drive water main replacement materials are paid for. Also, he pointed out that the Authority pays monthly water bills to the City of Bethlehem, while the sewer bill to the City of Bethlehem is quarterly. Mr. Corcoran said the Authority's cash amount is in line with last months.

6. Agenda

A. Summer Hours

Mr. Ross said last summer was the first year we implemented summer hours for the Authority. Mr. Ross said that the summer hour policy went well and there were no issues. He would like to propose the same policy for this summer. There was some discussion

about the hours and policy and the board members came to an agreement about the summer hours for the field crew and the office staff.

Motion by Mr. Davis, Second by Mr. Gress to have Bill discuss this with for both the four 10-hour days and reviews with the office schedule for having every other Friday off or we continue as we are.

Mr. Davis then modified the motion to include the employees would alternate Fridays off if this option is chosen.

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

B. Late Fees, Liens and Penalties

Mr. Ross said he is proposing to reinstate the late fees, liens and penalties starting September 7th. The customers will have a quarter notice before reinstating the fees. We have put on hold the late fees, liens and penalties for two years during COVID. Mr. Corcoran asked about the Authority having liens on properties. There was a brief discussion regarding customer liens and payments during COVID. Mr. Corcoran asked for more information on the specific liens the Authority has on customers. Ms. Fetzer said she will provide the lien information to any Board Member who asks.

Mr. Werner confirmed that he understood that there were no late fees assessed on customer accounts for a 2-year period and they will be reinstated September 7th. Mr. Ross said that is correct. Mr. Ross said if a customer comes to us and says they are having trouble paying their bill and needs help he said we are willing to work with the customer. Mr. Ross said there is also a LIHWAP utility assistance program that customers who need help paying their water bill can apply and see if they qualify for assistance.

The Board Members then made a motion to reinstate the late fees, liens and penalties.

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Werner to reinstate the application of late fees, liens and penalties beginning September 7, 2022.

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

C. Creekside Update

Mr. Ross said we have undergone some permitting fees with Lower Saucon Township. He said hopefully we can begin the land acquisition for the billboard property soon. Mr. Ross said Mr. Youst gave his update which he included in the operations update for the Board Members. Mr. Ross then had Attorney Backenstoe provide his update.

Attorney Backenstoe said Mr. Youst was working on a storm water plan which then must be submitted to Lower Saucon Township. Attorney Backenstoe feels we have completed our appeal time with no appeals by any township residents. Attorney Backenstoe expressed as he said at the last meeting that he feels we should go ahead with the land acquisition with the billboard company. He said we have a title company that is ready to oversee the closing on the property for the Authority. Attorney Backenstoe said we can wait for Mr. Youst to give another update, but he feels we are ready to begin the land acquisition.

Mr. Werner asked Mr. Ross about the dates on the Creekside update handout and how confident he is that we will be able to follow the project timeline. Mr. Ross said he feels that the construction will most likely carry over to December and will not be completed in September. Mr. Ross said we cannot begin construction until we receive all the permits and approvals, and we still need to obtain DEP and PennDOT approvals.

Mr. Corcoran asked if these costs are reimbursable because the Authority must relocate our lines. Mr. Ross said the costs are reimbursable and we are keeping track of the expenses to submit them to be reimbursed. Mr. Ross said we do not have to wait to begin construction based on the bridge work, but we must wait on the relocation of the overhead electric lines. It was noted that township is in the process of acquiring a portion of the Meadows catering property.

Mr. Gress asked what we can do next to move forward with the project. It was determined that we can work on the land acquisition. Also, Mr. Ross said Mr. Youst is working on the DEP and PennDOT permits. Mr. Ross said that Mr. Youst can begin working on the bidding package so that it is ready once we obtain the necessary permits. Mr. Ross also reminded the Board Members that we will need an easement from a nearby homeowner.

The Board Members then made a motion to proceed with the land acquisition.

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Corcoran to pending Mr. Youst's approval that we progress forward with purchasing the land and putting it in the Authority's name.

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

7. Citizen Non- Agenda Items

None.

8. Reports

A. Attorney

Attorney Backenstoe said he has spent most of his time on the Applebutter Road tank project. He has spent an extensive amount of time reviewing several documents one of which include insurance documents provided by the contractor. He said he had to make sure the contractors insurance declaration covered IESI because the Authority only has an easement there and we do not own the land where the tank is located. IESI accepted the insurance as well. Mr. Ross noted that the contractors may be able to begin work before the proposed August start timeframe. We still need to receive the new bladder for the booster pump and get that working before work can begin on the tank.

Attorney Backenstoe also noted that he was working with Mr. Ross on the renewal for the Avaya telephone contract for the Authority office phones.

Also, Attorney Backenstoe noted he was working with Mr. Ross regarding new construction in the township that the Authority will service with sewer. It is important to be sure the plans line up with how the structure is being used once connected. This is important to make sure that the Authority charges the correct amount of connection fees and bills them the correct amount quarterly based on if the structure is being used residentially or commercially.

B. Engineer

Mr. Youst was not present.

C. Administrator

Mr. Ross said the board packet included a copy of the annual Consumer Confidence Report regarding the quality of the water the Authority provides our customers. The report is mailed out in June to every water customer. Mr. Ross said it is noted on the report about a violation the Authority had from the water testing lab failing to complete a water test on time. Mr. Ross noted that we no longer use that testing lab. Mr. Corcoran asked if we receive calls regarding the water quality from customers or reporters. Mr. Ross said we receive calls from water customers from time to time mostly asking about the hardness of the water.

Mr. Ross said he has a printout of the PLGIT term investments he set up for the Authority. He noted that they are not PLGIT CD's and that they are PLGIT term investments. Mr. Ross said the terms had a higher interest rate than the CD's. The terms are laddered so one matures each quarter and we can reinvest that one with the higher rates.

Mr. Corcoran said there is a difference between term investments and CD's. He said there is a reason for the higher interest rate with the term investments. Mr. Corcoran said term investments are not FDIC insured. He said we should discuss whether the Authority is willing to take the risk of investing in PLGIT. He said he will investigate PLGIT and see

if the Authority would want to remain invested with them. He said he will look at the investment policy he had started drafting for the Authority as well. He said we must see if we want to invest in a PLGIT term that is not FDIC insured and see if the higher interest rate is worth the risk. Mr. Ross said he has confidence in the stability of PLGIT. Mr. Corcoran said the Authority must make sure we are comfortable investing with PLGIT.

Mr. Ross noted that he has not received a quote back from Hillegass Contracting regarding the repairs to the Cobble Creek sidewalk.

Mr. Ross said the work is proceeding on the Sunderland Drive water main replacement. He said so far everything is moving along well with the project.

D. Chairman

Mr. Gress informed the Board Members about the fire on Friday May 13th at a house on Black River Road. He noted that he is involved with the Lower Saucon Fire Rescue. He said there were issues the fire department had connecting to the fire hydrant along with not having enough water pressure to fight the fire. The fire hydrant and water service for this fire was in the service area for the City of Bethlehem. He said he is going to attempt to schedule a meeting with Ed Boscola at the City of Bethlehem to let them know of the issue they had. He said he is also going to ask about the City of Bethlehem putting on quick connections on the fire hydrants. Mr. Gress said he may also have the fire chief attend the meeting as well.

E. Members

No members had anything to report.

9. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Werner, Second by Mr. Corcoran the May 17, 2022 Board Meeting adjourned at 7:21 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Kerchner
Recording Secretary

