

**LOWER SAUCON AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Gress called the meeting to order at 6:35 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Present were Mr. Gress, Chairman; Mr. Smith, Vice Chairman; Mr. Werner, Secretary; Mr. Davis, Member; Mr. Keich, Member; Mr. Ross, Administrator; Mrs. Kerchner, Secretary; Mr. Backenstoe, Attorney; (Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Thakkar were not present and Ms. Fetzer and Mr. Youst were present via zoom).

3. Citizen Agenda Items

None.

4. Minutes

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Keich to approve the minutes dated August 15, 2023 as presented.

Roll Call 4-0-1 Motion Approved. (Mr. Davis abstained and Mr. Corcoran and Mr. Thakkar were not present).

5. Financial Report

Mr. Corcoran was not present.

6. Agenda

A. Personnel

Mr. Ross said he emailed the Board Members stating that Jonathan Barron submitted his resignation. Mr. Davis asked how the market is now for hiring new employees. Mr. Ross said it is tough. Mr. Davis asked if we should consider starting the hiring process earlier to allow time to find a replacement. It was then determined that Mr. Ross will begin the hiring process in January. Mr. Keich asked Mr. Ross if he feels any other employees will resign. Mr. Ross said he does not think anyone else will leave.

B. Water Main Break

Mr. Ross said on Wednesday September 6th we had a significant water main break on Black River Road at Surrey Road. He said we started receiving calls about low pressure around 2:45 P.M. It took until about 10:45 P.M. until the crew located the break. The repairs were completed around 5:00 A.M. Mr. Ross then gave the Board Members an overview of the water main break. Mr. Ross said years down the road we will need to replace the water main all along Black River Road and Bingen Road. Mr. Youst agreed that some form of action will need to be taken to update the water main in this area.

C. 2024 Budget

Mr. Ross said he included in the board packet a great deal of information regarding the CPI and Social Security CPI increases for 2024. Mr. Ross said the articles are there for the Board Members to read. He said he will have the information at the end of September to see where we are nine months out for this year. Mr. Ross said if we receive the grant, we will not have to raise the sewer rates but if we do not receive the grant, we will have to raise the sewer rates. Mr. Ross said the grant decision will be made in November as the September meeting was cancelled. Mr. Smith said getting the grant is important and it will have a significant impact on the budget if we do not receive it. He said for Mr. Ross to think of contingencies for the budget with and without the grant funds. Mr. Ross noted that he has a great deal of confidence that we would receive funding for the project if we do not receive the grant.

D. Creekside Update

Mr. Ross said at the PMAA conference he talked to the administrator of Hellertown Borough Authority about the agreement we have for our Creekside pumping. He said that their administrator talked to her Board Members about our offer to them and they said they like the idea that we offered them but did not like the numbers we offered. Mr. Ross said the Authority offered Hellertown \$1,000.00 a week for as long as we need to continue the process with them. He said that Hellertown is looking for \$1,600.00 a week with a 2-year guarantee and a \$49,000.00 capital contribution that can be paid over 3 years. Mr. Ross said he would bring this back to his Board Members. Mr. Ross said we can spend a great deal less having a company pump and haul the waste for the Authority. Mr. Ross said that he does not support the terms that Hellertown has offered, and if they can not do for if for what we offered (our cost of pump and haul) then we would just be spending extra money to continue using them.

Mr. Youst said one of the items he wrapped up this week at the request of PennDOT was submitting the updated final design budget numbers for both the water and sewer utility relocation work. He said that on the sewer side under temporary construction they allowed the Authority to include the cost of the pump and dump. This does not guarantee it will be

approved and reimbursed. It may be included in the reimbursable costs. Mr. Youst agreed we would not want to commit to a capital charge or a 2-year term with Hellertown Borough Authority. Mr. Ross said he will contact the companies for the pump and haul again to get the updated costs.

Mr. Youst said we received approval for one of the three PennDOT permits. The approved permit is for the bored crossing of PA 412 at Meadows Road. The first review of the driveway permit applications has been completed. He said his environmental team is working on the revisions for the NPDES storm water permit. Mr. Youst said he updated the critical elements timeline. Mr. Youst then went over a brief review of the project timeline. Mr. Gress asked if we are on track for the first two milestones. Mr. Ross then asked about applying for a PENNVEST loan. Mr. Youst said we are many months away from beginning the application process but suggested that Mr. Ross contact PENNVEST to receive some general information.

Mr. Keich said that in previous discussions our big capital item was the generator. He said the timeline shows a decision being made this December about giving the go ahead to begin production of the generator. Mr. Youst said we gave the supplier the go ahead on phase one and they will have a package for us soon. Mr. Youst said that yes, December 19th would be when the Board Members would award the second phase of the contract if they feel comfortable doing so. He said this will be before we get word about the NPDES permit at the beginning of January. We can delay the construction contract. We can push back the go ahead for production of the generator if we want to, but it was determined that the critical element is approving phase two which is building the generator to save time since it is a long lead item.

Mr. Ross said it is his understanding that any purchases before receipt of the grant would not be covered by the grant funds. Mr. Youst said this generator would be configured for the Authority's needs specifically and it would be difficult for the Authority to resell it if it would be the wrong size, so he said we want to give prudence with giving the go ahead on phase two of the contract.

The Authority received a significant portion of the pipe for advanced procurement. The supplier wanted to make sure that the rest of the order for the pipe they will be sending to the Authority will meet our requirements. The pipe and parts do fit the requirements, and it will be delivered in October.

7. Citizen Non-Agenda Items

None.

8. Reports

A. Attorney

Attorney Backenstoe had nothing to report.

B. Engineer

Mr. Youst said the contractor for the developer for the Saucon Overlook development has submitted the paperwork for the water booster station.

C. Administrator

Mr. Ross said we received information on one of the PFAS class action settlements. He will talk this over with Attorney Backenstoe to see what options the Authority has.

D. Chairman

Mr. Gress asked Mr. Ross if he would like to discuss the incident that occurred with a threatening customer who came into the office. Mr. Ross then explained what happened. There was then a discussion, and it was determined that the Authority will get a security camera and Mr. Ross will have the quotes for this at the October meeting.

Mr. Gress brought up again about the proposed cell phone tower next to the Steel City tank. There was a discussion about whether the Board Members would like to show opposition to the cell phone tower and what action they would like to take. It was determined that Mr. Ross will talk to the Lower Saucon Township manager to get more information. Attorney Backenstoe went over the options the Authority has and said he will assist the Authority if it is needed.

E. Members

Mr. Davis congratulated Mr. Ross on being made president of PMAA.

9. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Corcoran the September 20, 2023 Board Meeting adjourned at 7:56 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Kercher
Recording Secretary