

**LOWER SAUCON AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
OCTOBER 25, 2023**

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Gress called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

**2. Roll Call**

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

**3. Citizen Agenda Items**

None.

**4. Minutes**

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Keich to approve the minutes dated September 20, 2023 as presented.

Roll Call 4-0 Motion Approved. (Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Smith and Mr. Davis were not present).

**5. Financial Report**

Mr. Corcoran was not present. Mr. Corcoran gave a few updates for Mr. Ross to note to the Board Members. Mr. Ross said there were substantial costs incurred due to the Meadows Road bridge project. Mr. Ross said we did order and pay for the water and sewer pipe for the creek crossing. Mr. Ross said a majority of the pipe was delivered already. The extra expenses due to the bridge work will be reimbursed. Mr. Thakkar asked if the reimbursement of the extra expenses is confirmed. Mr. Ross said to some level the expenses will be reimbursed.

Mr. Gress asked if the Authority is keeping all necessary parties informed of all the additional expenses, we are incurring to ensure we get reimbursed. Mr. Youst said he sent a cost estimate of all the additional expenses the Authority will incur because of the bridge work. Mr. Youst will let Mr. Ross know the cost estimate that was submitted, and he can then share that with the Board Members as he did not know the figure off hand.

The financial report then continued into the Creekside update.

## **6. Agenda**

### **A. Personnel**

Mr. Ross discussed with the Board Members about another field crew member that gave his resignation. Mr. Ross said he posted help wanted ads on our Facebook and website. There was a brief discussion by the Board Members. After the discussion regarding the Authority crew and staffing the Board Members then made a motion for the promotion of Jack Daniels.

Motion by Mr. Gress Second by Mr. Keich to approve the promotion of Jack Daniels from mechanic to foreman retroactive October 16, 2023.

Roll Call 4-0 Motion Approved. (Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Smith and Mr. Davis were not present).

### **B. Video Security System**

Mr. Ross said he had TDS come out and give the Authority a quote regarding a video security system for the Authority. Mr. Ross said Lower Saucon Township used TDS for their video security system. The quote from TDS is \$5,745.00. Mr. Ross said based on discussion at the last board meeting he went ahead and told TDS to go ahead with the installation of the system for the Authority. Mr. Ross went over the layout of the proposed video security system. Mr. Ross said he would like formal approval from the Board Members today. The Board Members then made a motion to approve the quote from TDS.

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Werner to approve the TDS quote in the amount of \$5,745.00 for the Authority video security system.

Roll Call 4-0 Motion Approved. (Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Smith and Mr. Davis were not present).

### **C. 2024 Budget**

Mr. Ross went into the budget overview.

Mr. Ross then went over the salary budget along with the health care costs with the Board Members. Mr. Ross will gather the health insurance contribution figure options the Board Members would like to see for discussion at the meeting next month.

Mr. Ross first reviewed the 5-year capital plan with the Board Members. Mr. Ross said next year we will be replacing the water main on Quarter Mile Road near North Drive

down to Bingen Road. Also, next year we will have the yearly meter replacements. Mr. Ross said we will be replacing the small dump truck next year as well. Mr. Ross said we are due on the computer replacement schedule to replace his computer in 2024. Also, he said that he budgeted funds for security updates to the Authority building and next year he will look at replacing the doors throughout the building.

Mr. Ross then reviewed the highlights of the water and sewer budget.

Mr. Ross told the Board Members to review and look over the budget and let him know if they have any questions or concerns.

It was noted that there will be an increase in the capital charge next year from \$6.00 a quarter to \$9.00 a quarter.

Mr. Ross said that if we do not receive the grant for the Creekside project, we will likely have to raise the sewer rates from \$90.00 a quarter to somewhere around \$105.00 a quarter.

Mr. Ross also noted to the Board Members that he included in the handouts a copy of the salary survey of the area that Hellertown Borough Authority had completed for them last year. Mr. Ross then briefly reviewed the survey compared to what the Authority employees are receiving for their compensation.

Mr. Thakkar asked if the Authority will be increasing our customer base. Mr. Ross said there is not much development going on in the township.

#### **D. Creekside Update**

Mr. Youst said the estimated additional costs are due to the bridge work and they are going to the project manager. Mr. Youst said PennDOT serves as the intermediary for federal funding. PennDOT has not been able to fully commit to the reimbursement of the additional expenses. The reimbursement of funds will be determined on the federal level not by PennDOT. Mr. Youst said that PennDOT understands the extra expenses that the Authority has due to the bridge work and will express that to the federal representative, but they ultimately do not have the authority for the reimbursement of funds. Mr. Youst explained to them in the narrative how the Authority must work around the bridge first and we need the reimbursement of those extra costs in a timely manner to have the funds to pay for the original Authority project or the Authority will have to explore funding.

Mr. Thakkar said we are assuming that we will get reimbursed but that is not a guarantee. Mr. Youst said he has asked to see how we can find out any information regarding the reimbursement of the extra expenses.

Mr. Gress asked when the grant decision will be made. Mr. Ross said there is a Commonwealth Financing Authority meeting scheduled for the afternoon of November 21<sup>st</sup> and hopefully the grant decision will be on this agenda. The next Authority board meeting is scheduled for November 21<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Gress asked when the Authority will need to start paying the contractor. Mr. Youst said there are still permits that we need to get at this time. Mr. Youst said we do not have the permit yet for the driveway. Mr. Youst said because the work is close to a wetland it was said that the Authority has to withdraw our permit and they want individual permit applications. Mr. Youst said there is a meeting scheduled on November 1<sup>st</sup> about breaking the project into two separate projects. Breaking the project into two would mean that each project would be less than 1 acre of land disturbance. The meeting will be with the DEP and the Northampton County Conservation District, and it will be expressed by Mr. Youst on behalf of the Authority that we need to get the work completed around the bridge before June 1<sup>st</sup> when the county will begin work on the bridge. DEP is discussing about the Authority having two permits and separating the jobs. This is for the NPDES permit.

Mr. Gress asked when the actual costs for the construction will begin. Mr. Ross said that the Authority has two term investments that will mature on December 8<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Ross said that he would like to renew each investment, but we can use these funds if needed for the project costs. Mr. Youst said the costs for the contractor would begin in the spring.

Mr. Thakkar asked when the bridge work will begin with the county and Mr. Youst said June 1<sup>st</sup>. The projects would be one because of the bridge work and the other would be the Authority pump station. The bridge crossing is the first project that needs to be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup> and the second project is the Authority pump station. This is what Mr. Youst will express at the meeting Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Youst noted that we received the fabrication shop drawings for the generator building today. The drawings are completed and ready when the Authority needs them.

Mr. Ross then noted that when we switch over from the old water line to the new water line, we will have to use the emergency interconnection we have with Hellertown Borough Authority.

## **7. Citizen Non-Agenda Items**

None.

## **8. Reports**

### **A. Attorney**

Attorney Backenstoe said he has helped the authority as needed over the past month.

### **B. Engineer**

Mr. Youst said for the Creekside project regarding the pump supplier the alternative pump suppliers are unable to supply the pumps needed for the project. The only supplier that can provide the pump is the supplier the Authority has used in the past and is the supplier the Authority would prefer to use.

Mr. Youst said he feels at this time it is important for the Authority to update our tapping fee study since the last update and fee change was around the time of 2014 or 2016. The tapping fee needs to be updated so that the Authority charges all-new connections to the system an updated amount with current figures.

The Board Members made a motion to approve Mr. Youst updating the tapping fee study.

Motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Keich to update the tapping fee study to be approved at the January meeting.

Roll Call 4-0 Motion Approved. (Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Smith and Mr. Davis were not present).

### **C. Administrator**

Mr. Ross said the Authority's sewer agreement with Hellertown Borough Authority will be ending this December. Mr. Ross contacted six haulers for pumping and dumping that will be needed until the Creekside pump station is operational. Mr. Ross said he is still communicating with the administrator at Hellertown Borough Authority to see if we can come to an agreement to send them our flows until our pump station is operational. There has been back-and-forth communication between Mr. Ross and the Administrator of Hellertown and there has been trouble coming to terms and an agreement. Mr. Ross and Mr. Gress will look at attending a Hellertown Borough Authority meeting to present our situation to their Board Members personally.

Mr. Ross also mentioned a water main break occurred on October 18<sup>th</sup> on Hilltop Road. Mr. Ross said the crew did an excellent job on the water main break repair.

### **D. Chairman**

Mr. Gress had nothing to report.

**E. Members**

No members had anything to report.

**9. Adjournment**

Upon motion by Mr. Gress and agreement by the Board Members the October 25, 2023 Board Meeting adjourned at 8:52 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Kerchner  
Recording Secretary