

**LOWER SAUCON AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF MEETING
NOVEMBER 21, 2023**

1. Call to Order

Mr. Gress called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Citizen Agenda Items

None.

4. Minutes

Motion by Mr. Werner, Second by Mr. Gress to approve the minutes dated October 25, 2023 as presented.

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

5. Financial Report

Mr. Gress asked the Board Members if they reviewed Mr. Corcoran's email. The Board Members said they reviewed the email. Mr. Corcoran noted in his email that he would like to wait and approve the budget at the December meeting to give him time to review it.

6. Agenda

A. Personnel

Mr. Ross told the Board Members that interviews were conducted for the two field crew vacancies. He noted that we are accepting applications through the month of November. For the interviews there were six applicants and five were interviewed. Mr. Ross said that the police department has let us use their electronic signs to advertise our openings. He said there are two candidates out of the five interviewed that we are looking at hiring. Mr.

Ross then asked the Board Members for leeway to talk to any employee when they give notice that they are leaving and ask them why they chose to leave and make an offer to them if applicable to keep them from leaving. The Board Members agreed to give Mr. Ross flexibility regarding this matter. There was a brief discussion regarding the Authority field crew members leaving.

Mr. Reccek noted that it takes a great deal of time to train new field crew employees.

After discussion, the Board Members agreed to implement the raises for all employees which includes the field crew and the office staff.

Motion by Mr. Werner, Second by Mr. Keich to enact the 2024 budgeted pay increases to all employees to start the November 26th pay period.

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

The Board Members then decided to discuss the benefits at the December meeting.

B. Video Security System

Mr. Ross said the security cameras are set up and noted that we have five cameras. He went over the location of the cameras and the video monitors. Mr. Gress noted about checking how the audio recording plays back to see if we can hear that well. Mr. Ross said we have not tried the audio play back but said he will check how the audio feedback sounds. Mr. Reccek noted that we need to have signs in the lobby to let anyone entering our building know that we have a video and audio recording system in place. Attorney Backenstoe agreed that we need to have signs stating that there is video and audio recording on the premises.

C. 2024 Budget

The Board Members said that they would discuss the budget at the December meeting. Mr. Ross noted that the water main replacement project next year on Quarter Mile Road has been taken out of the budget. This was decided because we will have two new field crew members that we will be training. Mr. Reccek then went over the pipe replacement schedule and noted that this area is not causing problems and is just on the routine water main replacement schedule. This is not a problem area. Mr. Reccek said he is going to be looking at the sewer system more next year and doing the routine maintenance of the system.

D. Creekside Update

Mr. Ross noted that the Commonwealth Financing Authority met today, and they did not have the grant decision on the agenda. He sat in on the meeting and voiced his concern for the Authority and asked if there is any consideration about the Authority having a time sensitive project and needing to know about the grant now. The representatives at the meeting said to speak to our contact and Mr. Ross said he emailed our contact. The best case is that they would award the grant at their January meeting. Mr. Gress asked if there is anything we can do about this and suggested the idea of talking to our local representatives. The Board Members agreed to contact our representatives and express our concerns.

Mr. Youst then went into his Creekside update. Mr. Youst said he had his meeting with the County Conservation District, the regulators from Wilks Barre, the township manager and the County public works director. This meeting was to see if the storm water permitting representatives would offer us any grace or sympathy regarding the issue that DEP raised when reviewing our original permit application. He said we got most of what we were asking for, which was the erosion control plan for the Meadows Road construction part of the project. We would like to keep the bridge work and the pump station as two separate projects. Mr. Youst said we need to put out to bid the Meadows Road portion of the project now and advertise that project as well. The bids would be received around January 10th and we would be able to go over the bids and award the bid at the January meeting. This will give the contractor enough time to get what they need ready for the job, such as getting their boring contractor scheduled. The contractor will then be ready for the spring to start construction. This will hopefully get our work done in May ahead of the county bridge construction start date of the beginning of June. Mr. Youst then went over the estimated amount the bids will come in at. This bid is just for the work needed to get around the bridge. Mr. Youst said that if we must move along with this part of the construction for the project and we lose grant eligibility for this portion we would lose out on about \$200,000 after the reimbursed costs are subtracted out.

Mr. Youst asked the Board Members if they would make a motion to advertise the Meadows Road utilities project.

Motion by Mr. Werner, Second by Mr. Gress to advertise the Meadows Road Utilities project on Wednesday November 29th and to be available on PennBid that same day and to open the bids in time to make a recommendation for the January board meeting.

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

Mr. Youst then noted that the site drainage plan for the pump station property was submitted and had the initial review with the township and they saw no problem with the plan. We still need formal confirmation that the plan is approved.

Mr. Youst said phase one, which is the shop drawings for the generator building, needs some rework on the electrical parts. The final shop drawings are estimated to be completed around January or February. Mr. Youst noted that the NPDES permit estimated approval date will be June.

Mr. Ross noted to the Board Members that we have an agreement now with Hellertown Borough Authority and we do not need to do the pump and haul. Mr. Ross then went over the agreement with the Board Members. He will contact Attorney Backenstoe next week to formalize the agreement.

Mr. Youst then went over loan options with the Board Members. Mr. Ross said Embassy bank will not give a loan unless the Authority has an account with them which we do not. Mr. Ross will then have to see what Fulton bank can offer the Authority.

Mr. Smith said before we discuss obtaining a loan we need to look at where we are at and see if we receive the grant. He said we can start the discussion around the March meeting to go over the Authority funds and our options. He said right now there are too many unknowns.

Mr. Ross handed out an updated Creekside update for the Board Members. He went over a brief review of the update with regards to the spending and the milestones completed. The handout was updated based upon Mr. Corcoran's suggestions.

7. Citizen Non-Agenda Items

None.

8. Reports

A. Attorney

Attorney Backenstoe had nothing to report but noted that he helps as needed when called upon.

B. Engineer

Mr. Youst had nothing further to report.

C. Administrator

Mr. Ross said our PLGIT term investments for Fund 3 and Fund 4 will come due December 8th and said he plans to roll them over for 90 days so we have the funds available during the spring when we would have to start using them.

Mr. Ross then went over the 3rd quarter water usage with the Board Members. He said we are doing well and have a very low lost water percentage. He noted that we did lose water from the main break on Black River Road. He said Mr. Reccek and the crew do an excellent job with leak detection to prevent lost water to the system.

D. Chairman

Mr. Gress had nothing to report.

E. Members

No members had anything to report.

9. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Gress, Second by Mr. Smith the November 21, 2023 Board Meeting adjourned at 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily Kerchner
Recording Secretary

