

## **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

### **April 13, 2020**

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The Regular Meeting of the Lehigh County Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 12:06 p.m. on Monday, April 13, 2020, Chairman Brian Nagle presiding. The meeting was held via video and audio advanced communication technology ("ACT"), using the ZOOM internet application, due to the national COVID-19 pandemic emergency. Each Board member and other attendees of the meeting were able to hear each other attendee, and be heard by each other attendee. The public could also participate in the meeting via ACT, using the ZOOM internet application. A Roll Call of Board members present was taken. Chairman Brian Nagle, Amir Famili, Jeff Morgan, Richard Bohner, Linda Rosenfeld, Norma Cusick and Kevin Baker were present through ACT for the duration of the meeting.

Solicitor Michael Gaul was also present via ACT. Authority Staff present via ACT were Liesel Gross, Ed Klein, Todd Marion, Susan Sampson, Phil DePoe, Andrew Moore, Chuck Volk, Chris Moughan, John Parsons, Mark Bowen, and Lisa Miller.

#### **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Liesel Gross stated there are no changes to the agenda.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **March 19, 2020 Emergency Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Nagle noted a grammatical error. On a motion by Norma Cusick, seconded by Linda Rosenfeld, the Board approved the minutes of the March 19, 2020 Board meeting as corrected (6-0). Richard Bohner abstained.

##### **March 23, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by Norma Cusick, seconded by Linda Rosenfeld, the Board approved the minutes of the March 23, 2020 Board meeting as published (6-0). Richard Bohner abstained.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

#### **ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

##### **2021-2025 Capital Plan**

Liesel Gross provided an overview of the 2021-2025 Final Draft Capital Plan, including a PowerPoint presentation, for Board approval. It is important to note that approval of the Plan does not indicate authorization for Plan funding. The Authority made an adjustment to its capital financing to reflect the ongoing system rehabilitation work required for the future. Annual and ongoing projects and system rehabilitation will be funded directly through annual revenues or existing operating reserves. Borrowing would be limited to large scale projects that are not expected to be repeated or to develop water or sewer capacity to meet future customer requirements. Funding for Allentown system upgrades remain undetermined due to the ongoing negotiations and discussions between LCA and the City of Allentown related to the Concession Agreement. To balance these funding strategies, a forecast of future revenue requirements is presented annually to ensure the Plan goals can be met.

Public comments were received in writing from the City of Allentown and the Lehigh Valley Planning Commission.

Jennifer McKenna, City of Allentown Office of Compliance, commented that the cooperation with the City of Allentown is appreciated especially regarding any additional charges to the rate payers.

On a motion by Linda Rosenfeld, seconded by Richard Bohner, the Board approved the 2021-2025 Capital Plan – All Divisions (7-0).

**Suburban Division – Heidelberg Heights Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation Program Construction Phase Bid Rejection**

Chuck Volk asked for approval to reject the bids for the annual improvements of the Suburban Division – Heidelberg Heights Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation project. The project is part of the Corrective Action Plan to eliminate hydraulic overloads and bypasses at the Heidelberg Heights Wastewater Treatment Plant, and is in the third phase of annual sewer main and lateral replacements. The reason for the rejection is the very high bids that were received for the project. The unexpectedly high bids were due to the uncertainty of the availability of materials and manpower. Mr. Volk recommended waiting 30 days, and then rebidding the project using a smaller scope.

Chairman Nagle asked if there was anything specific causing the uncertainty or could it be related to the COVID-19 crisis. Mr. Volk spoke with the lowest bidder and was told that the uncertainty to obtain material and have manpower to do the work is all related to the COVID-19 crisis.

Amir Famili asked if DEP would understand a delay of six to nine months for the project, or will they demand the Authority complete the project with the current schedule. Liesel Gross noted that the Authority did contact DEP, and they will consider a delay as long as the Authority shows due diligence and acts on good faith. Mr. Famili suggested waiting three months then rebid the project.

On a motion by Linda Rosenfeld, seconded by Jeff Morgan, the Board approved the rejection of the bids and authorized waiting a minimum of three months to rebid the project using the same scope of the work as originally bid (7-0).

**Suburban Division – Park Pump Station Upgrade Electrical Contract Change Order No. 2**

Chuck Volk asked for approval of the final electrical contract Change Order No. 2 for additional electrical work, electrical hardware, and support services that were provided at Park Pump Station during the extended station startup and performance testing period. The final change order consists of Lights in Parkway transformer, e-stop and raceway replacement for pre-existing comminutors, additional City of Allentown permit costs, start-up operational changes and SCADA changes, added alarms and hardware, additional programming to the existing generator, and security system repairs.

Jeff Morgan stated that these types of issues are completely common for this type of project, and he recommended approval. Ed Klein commented that this will not harm the budget. Richard Bohner asked if this change order will complete the need to invest in this facility for the foreseeable future. Chuck Volk replied that there will be a future need to replace the generator due to a declining performance and explained that he will plan to begin design on that project next year.

Mr. Volk asked for approval of the Capital Project Authorization – Amendment No. 2 for the Electrical Contract Change Order to Shannon A. Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$45,544.87.

On a motion by Linda Rosenfeld, seconded by Jeff Morgan, the Board approved the Capital Project Authorization – Amendment No. 2 for the Electrical Contract Change Order to Shannon A. Smith, Inc. in the amount of \$45,544.87 (7-0).

### **MONTHLY PROJECT UPDATES / INFORMATION ITEMS**

Liesel Gross reviewed the report and highlighted items for the April 27, 2020 Board meeting. Ms. Gross also noted that in May there will be a presentation by the Auditors regarding the 2019 audit.

Chairman Nagle questioned why there is a temporary hold on the Allentown Division SCADA system replacement project. Chris Moughan explained that due to the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, no external contractors are allowed in LCA's facilities. The system is working well, but will require an additional four days to complete once the emergency is lifted.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Liesel Gross updated the Board on the COVID-19 Pandemic planning noting that the entire structure at the Authority has changed. Ms. Gross stated she is proud of the employees for their cooperation. There are approximately 45-50 employees working from home thanks to the tremendous effort by the IT department. The various operations departments have restructured their schedules to allow for proper social distancing and employee health protection, and many new protocols have been put in place across the entire organization to limit face-to-face contact between employees and with the public. She reported that the new arrangements seem to be working well. Supervisors have been performing wellness checks daily as an early warning sign of any sick employees. On the customer side, the offices are closed and in-home customer visits have been eliminated, except in case of an emergency. Water service termination and penalties have been suspended to support customer payment of their water and sewer bills.

Kevin Baker asked if there have been changes in the water consumption. Liesel Gross said it's too early to tell. Many of the Authority's large industrial customers are still operating because they are considered to be life-sustaining businesses. There are some sewer challenges due to the flushing of items that should not be flushed, such as paper towels and baby wipes, and there is a slight increase in fats, oils and grease coming from increased household usage.

Chairman Nagle asked about employee morale. Ms. Gross stated that employees have been exceptionally flexible and she has received positive feedback, but employees are understandably worried about the situation. She also acknowledged that many employees are working less desirable shifts as a result of the change in operations. She noted that employee cooperation and support has been very strong, which is greatly appreciated. Chairman Nagle commented that the employees are doing a great job. Ed Klein commented he is pleased with groups of employees being cooperative. John Parsons commented that Operations is getting by and people are adapting. Chuck Volk commented that the pretreatment plant is operating similar to the Operations group and are split into two shifts to reduce employee interaction. Susan Sampson commented that the customer service group is working remotely taking care of customers daily and the field metering crew is taking extra safety precautions.

### **SOLICITOR'S COMMENTS**

None.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS / OTHER COMMENTS**

Jennifer McKenna, City of Allentown Compliance Office, suggested changing the wording to the Monthly Project Updates, Allentown Division – Water Filtration Plant SCADA System Replacement to read “*On hold temporarily due to COVID-19*” for better explanation. Ms. McKenna complimented the Authority on the way it is conducting its teleconference Board meetings. Liesel Gross credited Chris Moughan for his work on this. Chairman Nagle gave recognition to all employees.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

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Richard Bohner  
Secretary