

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

May 24, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the Lehigh County Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 12:02 p.m. on Monday, May 24, 2021, Chairman Brian Nagle presiding. The meeting was held via video and audio advanced communication technology ("ACT"), using the Zoom internet application, including telephone option, due to the 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, including telephone option. A Roll Call of Board members present was taken. Chairman Brian Nagle, Richard Bohner, Norma Cusick, Kevin Baker, Linda Rosenfeld, Scott Bieber and Amir Famili were present for the duration of the meeting.

Solicitor Michael Gaul of KingSpry was present along with Authority Staff, Liesel Gross, John Parsons, Chris Moughan, Chuck Volk, Susan Sampson, Andrew Moore, Phil DePoe, Lisa Miller and Todd Marion.

Chairman Nagle stated that the Board received their electronic copy of the Board packet in advance and asked if they also received their hard copy of the packet. Mr. Nagle also stated that the Board received copies of the approved 2022-2026 Capital Plans along with the approved 2021 Budget. He asked if everyone received these items to which the Board members replied yes.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Liesel Gross stated there are no changes to the agenda and there are a couple of items for Staff Comments. An Executive Session is scheduled to follow the regular meeting to discuss matters of personnel and also legal matters with the Solicitor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Richard Bohner noted some grammatical errors. On a motion by Richard Bohner, seconded by Norma Cusick, the Board approved the minutes of the May 10, 2021 Board meeting as corrected (5-0). Scott Bieber and Kevin Baker abstained.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Allentown Division – Kline’s Island WWTP: Solids Process Boiler and HVAC System Upgrade Project – Design Phase Authorization

Chairman Nagle noted that a revised Capital Project Authorization form was issued with the correct phase of the project noted.

Chuck Volk gave an overview of the project and described the process to replace the boilers and associated HVAC system at Kline’s Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. Two of the boilers that heat the anaerobic digesters are located in the basement beneath the causeway that connects the digester control building with the dewatering building. This is a corrosive environment which

accelerates the aging of the equipment. There is less than 4 feet of clearance around the boilers, which makes maintenance difficult and potentially a safety issue. The Pa. Department of Environmental Protection requires the digesters to be heated to 95 degrees to achieve Class B biosolids pathogen reduction and to stabilize the sludge to be dewatered. If this process is interrupted in a major way, the sludge would have to be landfilled, which is much more costly than the current land-application process. Some design errors occurred when the boilers were installed in 1995, including a miscalculation of the gas output of the digesters, which causes challenges for the plant operational staff. Mr. Volk explained that the plant staff have done a great job modifying the system to operate properly over the years, but the equipment is now at the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced. Mr. Volk said this project will replace and consolidate the three old boilers into two that are sized adequately to handle whole load. The new boilers will be placed at grade level in a new structure that will provide adequate clearance for maintenance and safety considerations. Mr. Volk said the Authority authorized GHD to perform preliminary engineering work to develop a conceptual Basis of Design Report for the replacement of the boilers and associated HVAC equipment. GHD was selected based on their prior experience with anaerobic digester rehabilitation projects at the facility, and their knowledge of the solids processing system.

Amir Famili asked if corrosion from the off gas is part of the challenge creating the need for this project. Mr. Volk said the corrosion issue is a problem with the HVAC system and not so much for the boilers. Chairman Nagle asked if the Authority received any DEP violations as a result of the difficulty operating these boilers. Mr. Volk said no violations have occurred as a result of the boilers due to staff efforts to modify the system to allow for proper heating of the sludge.

On a motion by Norma Cusick, seconded by Linda Rosenfeld, the Board approved the Capital Project Authorization for the Design Phase in the amount of \$175,159.00 which includes the Professional Services Authorization for the Design Phase Engineering to GHD, Inc. in the amount of \$147,659.00 (7-0).

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REVIEW

Liesel Gross stated that Ed Klein is not present at today's meeting and recommends holding any Board questions regarding the April Monthly Financial review until the June 14 Board meeting. A copy of the presentation was sent to the Board and Staff, and is also posted to the Authority's website.

MONTHLY SYSTEMS OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

John Parsons reviewed the April 2021 Monthly Systems Overview report, noting that despite a dry spring season, Schantz Spring is still producing well. Mr. Parsons said that the precipitation level in our area is very low and the Authority will be monitoring closely. A Pennsylvania drought conditions map was presented showing the Authority's service area as being abnormally dry. Conditions of groundwater and surface water are continually monitored and a Drought Watershed Monitoring Report posted online.

STAFF COMMENTS

Liesel Gross reported that last week a few municipalities and municipal authorities had a joint meeting with the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System (PMRS) to discuss their financial reporting challenges and delays that the municipalities have been experiencing. There has been quite a large turnover of employees at PMRS, including the Executive Director, CFO, Client Relations Manager, Program Manager, and several other staff members. They assured everyone on

the call that the organization is getting back on track, but as previously discussed, the Authority's audit will be delayed until September or October until PMRS data is received. Chairman Nagle asked why the large turnover in staff had occurred. He said the Board needs to feel comfortable and safe knowing the funds are being managed properly. Ms. Gross said PMRS has struggled with succession planning and technology implementation for quite some time. From a financial performance perspective, however, the funds are healthy and performing well.

As a follow up to the conversation from the previous meeting regarding the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Gross reported that the Authority has made some internal changes that will go into effect June 1st. Employees will be working in the office a little bit more, while still maintaining the flexibility to work remotely and maintain social distancing. There will also be some limited opening of the offices for public access. Ms. Gross asked the Board members how they would like to proceed with future public meetings. She stated that Solicitor Gaul has done more research on remote meetings for municipal authorities and would like him to comment, along with Chris Moughan, who has been working on the technology to allow for hybrid meetings including a mix of in-person and virtual attendance options.

Chris Moughan reported that the Authority's main conference room will be converted to a Zoom meeting room allowing for more opportunities for participation in the meetings. Starting on June 7th, the Authority will be able to allow for in-person public participation along with a live broadcast of the meetings. Ms. Gross noted that Pennsylvania is still operating under a Declaration of Emergency and can continue meeting virtually, but she would like to get a feel for when the Board would like to start meeting in person. Scott Bieber commented that he is looking forward to going back to regular in-person meetings. Kevin Baker also commented that he is fine with either meeting in-person or via Zoom. Solicitor Gaul commented that after May 31st, there will not be any restrictions on capacity or the opening of businesses. The only restriction will be unvaccinated persons must still wear a mask. There is no restriction that would prevent the Board from having an in-person meeting at the Authority's main conference room. Board members who desired to participate remotely could still do so under the Authority's by-laws and the Sunshine Act, provided they are able to hear comments at the meeting, and be heard by meeting attendees, via Zoom or conference call. Linda Rosenfeld asked if the public will be allowed in the conference room and if the Authority can screen the public and ask if they have been vaccinated. Solicitor Gaul said that the public can attend the meetings and cannot be asked if they have been vaccinated. The majority of the Board members stated they would be in favor of resuming in-person meetings. Ms. Gross commented that if the Authority is going to resume in-person Board meetings, the staff will poll the Board members to learn who will attend in-person versus via Zoom so the room can be set up properly for that and provide proper spacing and safety measures.

On a motion by Norma Cusick, seconded by Richard Bohner, the Board approved resuming in-person meetings at the Authority offices, with capabilities for remote attendance, starting with the June 14, 2021 meeting, but subject to confirmation from the Chief Executive Officer that the appropriate technology is in place to allow for such meetings to take place (7-0).

SOLICITOR'S COMMENTS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS / OTHER COMMENTS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

Richard Bohner
Secretary