

## **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

### **December 13, 2021**

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The Regular Meeting of the Lehigh County Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 12:00 p.m. on Monday, December 13, 2021, Chairman Brian Nagle presiding. The meeting was hybrid via in-person and video and audio advanced communication technology ("ACT"), using the Zoom internet application, including telephone option. 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 in-person or via ACT, using the Zoom internet application, including telephone option. A Roll Call of Board members present was taken. Chairman Brian Nagle, Scott Bieber, Richard Bohner, Norma Cusick, Ted Lyons, Linda Rosenfeld, and Amir Famili were present for the duration of the meeting. Jeff Morgan was present at the beginning of the meeting but left the meeting early. Kevin Baker arrived after the meeting began and was present for the duration of the meeting.

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

Chairman Nagle announced that the Board received their electronic and hard copies of the Board packet in advance and asked if anyone did not receive their copy of the packet. A copy of the packet is also available online.

#### **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Liesel Gross announced that there are no changes to the agenda and no Executive Session is planned.

Liesel Gross also announced that Andrew Moore has accepted the position of the Authority's Director of Plant Operations. Mr. Moore will be working with John Parsons on succession planning in advance of Mr. Parsons' retirement next year.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **November 8, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by Richard Bohner, seconded by Linda Rosenfeld, the Board approved the minutes of the November 8, 2021 Board meeting as written (7-0). Scott Bieber and Kevin Baker abstained.

##### **November 10, 2021 Special Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by Richard Bohner, seconded by Amir Famili, the Board approved the minutes of the November 10, 2021 Board meeting as written (8-0). Scott Bieber abstained.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

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

##### **2022 Board Meeting Schedule (Approval)**

Liesel Gross recommended one change to the 2022 meeting dates as submitted for Board approval. The September 26, 2022 meeting falls on Rosh Hashanah, and Ms. Gross recommended the meeting be moved to September 19, 2022.

On a motion by Ted Lyons, seconded by Scott Bieber, the Board approved the 2022 Board meeting schedule as revised (9-0).

**Resolution No. 12-2021-1 – Customer Facility Fees; Connection Fees; and Suburban Wastewater Tapping Fees (Approval)**

Liesel Gross explained that the tapping fees are required to be adopted by Board Resolution and the tapping fee legislation sets the parameters as to how those fees are calculated. The fees described in detail in Attachment A to the Resolution are the connection fees, which recapture the actual costs that the Authority bears to install meters or service lines for new customers. Attachment B to the Resolution shows the detailed calculations of the Suburban Division wastewater tapping fees, which were developed by the Authority's rate consultant, Keystone Alliance Consulting, Inc. Ed Klein added that the same methodology was used as in past calculations and capital costs were updated through 2020.

On a motion by Richard Bohner, seconded by Linda Rosenfeld, the Board approved Resolution No. 12-2021-1 (9-0).

A roll call vote was taken with the following votes cast:

Brian Nagle – yes  
Scott Bieber – yes  
Richard Bohner – yes  
Norma Cusick – yes  
Ted Lyons – yes  
Kevin Baker – yes  
Linda Rosenfeld – yes  
Jeff Morgan – yes  
Amir Famili – yes

**Lehigh County Authority Strategic Plan (Approval)**

Liesel Gross gave a presentation of the Strategic Plan and an overview of the history and evolution of the Authority, its goals, and work that shaped the plan. The key components of the plan are the Mission, Vision, Values, the Priorities, Strategies and Planned work, and the Measures.

The Mission statement provides a clear message about the organization's purpose. The Authority's new Mission statement is "to protect public health and the environment by providing high quality, safe, and reliable water and wastewater services." The Vision statement is designed to provide inspiration and clarity on the organization's future. The Authority's new Vision statement is "to be a trusted and engaged community partner, advancing the vitality of our region through exceptional water and wastewater services."

Ms. Gross explained that the Values are more conceptual and describe the beliefs and behaviors that drive the Authority's actions and decisions. Chuck Volk and John Parsons gave an overview of the Values which include Service, Engagement, Dedication, Positivity, and Excellences. These Values embody the Authority's beliefs, and qualities which drive the staff's day-to-day activities.

The six priorities represent the most important issues that must be addressed to achieve the Authority's desired future. They are: Regional Collaboration and Leadership, Operational Excellence, Customer Engagement and Support, System Capacity and Reliability, Financial Stewardship, and Employee Engagement and Safety.

Liesel Gross presented the priority area related to Regional Collaboration and Leadership. She explained this priority area highlights the vital role that the Authority plays in the community and outlines the Authority's goals to support the region's needs. Some of the strategies in this area will focus on building relationships with the community and the municipalities served, being more responsive to community needs, sharing the Authority's story, and joining the region's crucial conversations on environmental sustainability and water affordability.

Andrew Moore reviewed the Operational Excellence priority, which focuses on proactively ensuring safe and reliable service delivery, regulatory compliance, and resilient operations through streamlined processes, best practices, and data-driven decision-making. The strategies to achieve this include process improvement, regulatory compliance, leveraging technology and data, and improving the Authority's response when things go wrong. Key initiatives include small systems compliance review and planning, evaluate and update operating procedures, transition all maintenance items into digital systems, Suburban Division technology upgrades, and large diameter valve maintenance program.

Chris Moughan and Susan Sampson reviewed the Customer Engagement and Support priority area, which will create an exceptional customer experience and build trust and understanding of the Authority's essential services. Some of the key strategies include process improvements, responsiveness to become faster and more accurate in addressing customer inquiries, and building awareness so customers can understand the Authority's goals. The Authority will focus on defining the metrics for customer service excellence, technology enhancements and team training, improving customer self-service tools, and creating a sewer system customer education program.

Phil DePoe reviewed the System Reliability and Capacity priority area, which will focus on meeting the region's future and current service needs with thoughtful planning. Some key strategies include developing regional wastewater capacity plans, assessing water capacity to enhance the Authority's supplies and systems to address future customer demands, and managing assets using a comprehensive approach to lower overall costs to customers. The key initiatives for next year will be to meet the deadlines for the Act 537 plan and Suburban Division water supply study, standardize the Authority's master planning approach, and address asset management staffing needs.

Ed Klein reviewed the Financial Stewardship priority area. The Authority's goals focus on cost-effectively serving the community by managing funds effectively and supporting debt commitments, operational needs, and asset management. Key strategies include carefully managing rising costs, improving internal financial processes, finding balance between revenue needs and customer affordability, and considering growth opportunities in a standard and thoughtful way. Key initiatives in the next year will include evaluating the long-term viability of financial system (MUNIS), enhancing financial management tools, increasing focus on the Authority's collections program, and pursuing alternative funding sources for capital projects.

Kathy Martin and Ed Klein reviewed the Employee Engagement and Safety priority area. The Authority's goal is to build a safe, cohesive, and engaging workplace where employees feel personally connected to their work, each other, and the Authority's commitment to excellence. The key safety initiatives include improving accident and root cause analyses processes, increasing safety communications, developing a safety training program for existing and new employees, and

establishing more robust safety metrics. Next year, employee engagement initiatives will focus on standardizing the onboarding process for new hires and new supervisors, developing a mentoring program, and developing internal training tools on critical topics.

Kevin Baker commented on the Customer Engagement and Support priority area, highlighting some ideas and tools that could be used with new technology to improve call handling or self-service tools for customers to use. Ms. Gross explained these are part of the more detailed plans the staff will be pursuing. Mr. Baker also suggested the staff compensation and performance metrics should be incorporated into the plan.

Ted Lyons commented on the financial processes and challenges the staff seems to face with the software tool currently being used. This appears to be a major barrier to progress for the Authority. Ed Klein and Liesel Gross agreed and stated this will be a key initiative to be addressed within the strategic plan.

Scott Bieber asked if the Authority's challenges in handling the customer call volume is associated with not having enough staffing. Liesel Gross stated the call volume on most days is manageable with current staff. However, on certain days such as during a water termination proceeding, high call volumes put pressure on the staff. Adding some self-service features will help the Authority staff manage calls more effectively on peak days. Mr. Bieber asked about the Authority's plans for participation in the legislative or regulatory review process. Ms. Gross explained that the staff is actively engaged in this work already, but more could be done, as described in the strategic plan.

Chairman Nagle said he is proud of this strategic plan and would like to see the document be shared with key stakeholders so they can see the value in their participation in the process. It conveys a message of planning and further commitment to the community.

Jeff Morgan departed the Board meeting during the discussion on the Strategic Plan.

On a motion by Linda Rosenfeld, seconded by Ted Lyons, the Board approved the Strategic Plan (8-0).

A roll call vote was taken with the following votes cast:

Brian Nagle – yes  
Scott Bieber – yes  
Richard Bohner – yes  
Norma Cusick – yes  
Ted Lyons – yes  
Kevin Baker – yes  
Linda Rosenfeld – yes  
Amir Famili – yes

Liesel Gross thanked the Board for their active participation in the planning process and mentioned that Brian Chamberlain and Jennie McKenna from the City of Allentown Office of Compliance, who were in attendance at the Board meeting, also participated in the process.

### **Suburban Division – Industrial Pretreatment Plant Master Plan (Approval)**

Phil DePoe gave an overview of the project that is part of the ongoing Act 537 planning process. The master plan for the Pretreatment Plant will be a roadmap for the implementation of short- and long-

term improvements to the plant and identify the renewals, replacements, and capital improvements necessary to keep the plant fully operational and in compliance for the next 30 years. The plan will also identify improvements to accommodate growth of Boston Beer for loads greater than the current allocation as well as projected growth in non-Boston Beer flows and loads in Upper Macungie Township. Projections for Boston Beer change depending on the market and numerous other factors. They also have a separate contract that details how they pay for pretreatment service. The difficult part is to determine the costs and run up time so the Authority can plan and be reactive to their needs. There was some discussion regarding the flows and loads of Boston Beer.

Jacobs is serving as the Technical Lead for the regional Act 537 plan Pretreatment Plant upgrade option. Because Jacobs is the current plant operator and have developed proprietary modeling software of the facility, their involvement is critical to the planning process. The services they would provide for the Master Plan includes flow and load projection refinement, regulatory review, Pretreatment Plant capacity evaluation, improvement recommendations and cost estimates, renewal and replacement needs and cost estimates, combined heat and power evaluation, and presentation of the Master Plan.

Scott Bieber asked if Jacobs will look into what the potential future regulations may be that would have potential impact on the plant. Mr. DePoe said that the direct discharge report looked at this in great detail. Amir Famili asked if bottlenecks have been identified within the plant to improve capacity. Chuck Volk said there is an identified bottleneck in the solids processing side of the plant, but the cryogenic system has become the most critical process for the longevity of the plant. Some discussion followed regarding plant processes including the use of oxygen, the on-site oxygen generation system, and the capacity of the clarifiers.

Amir Famili asked if Jacobs, as part of their operating agreement, are already providing a master plan. Mr. DePoe said a condition assessment must be completed every five years. Ms. Gross said that Jacobs has not been looking at long-term capital needs for the facility because their contract is a 10-year term and they look at what is within that term. Amir Famili asked if the Authority has the internal capability to complete portions of the work to evaluate capital replacement needs. Chuck Volk explained Jacobs is responsible for the assets and has more information and capacity to do this work than the Authority staff currently has.

Mr. DePoe added that the schedule is to complete the plan this summer and Jacobs will give a presentation to the Board upon completion.

On a motion by Scott Bieber, seconded by Ted Lyons, the Board approved the Capital Plan Authorization for the Suburban Division Industrial Pretreatment Plant Master Plan in the amount of \$191,700.00 which includes the Professional Services Authorization to Jacobs in the amount of \$166,700.00 (8-0).

A roll call vote was taken with the following votes cast:

Brian Nagle – yes  
Scott Bieber – yes  
Richard Bohner – yes  
Norma Cusick – yes  
Ted Lyons – yes  
Kevin Baker – yes  
Linda Rosenfeld – yes  
Amir Famili – yes

**MONTHLY PROJECT UPDATES / INFORMATION ITEMS**

Liesel Gross reviewed the monthly project report for December and noted that there is no second meeting in December. As a result, any items not covered today are either for information or will be discussed in January. The 2020 Audit will remain on the report until the audit is completed, which will occur upon receipt of the Pennsylvania Municipal Retirement System's audit.

Amir Famili asked about the sodium hypochlorite project and the status of the Computational Fluid Dynamics modeling. Chuck Volk said that the modeling is substantially complete and a meeting is scheduled this week to review the results of that modeling. The gaseous chlorine will be used at the wastewater treatment plant until the project is complete.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

Liesel Gross wished the Board members and guests a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year.

**SOLICITOR'S COMMENTS**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS / OTHER COMMENTS**

None.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

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Richard Bohner  
Secretary