

## **REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

### **March 23, 2020**

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The Regular Meeting of the Lehigh County Authority Board of Directors was called to order at 12:04 p.m. on Monday, March 23, 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 attendee of the meeting, was able hear each other attendee, and be heard by each other attendee. The public could participate in the meeting through in-person attendance in the Authority's public meeting room, which was also connected to the ACT. A Roll Call of Board members present was taken. Norma Cusick, Ted Lyons, Linda Rosenfeld, Jeff Morgan, Amir Famili, 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 and Susan Sampson. Staff members Lisa Miller and Chris Moughan were present in the Authority's public meeting room.

Chairman Nagle announced that today's Board meeting is being videotaped and streaming live and recordings will be posted to the Authority's website.

#### **REVIEW OF AGENDA**

Liesel Gross stated there are no changes to the agenda.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

##### **March 9, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes**

On a motion by Norma Cusick, seconded by Linda Rosenfeld, the Board approved the minutes of the March 9, 2020 Board meeting as published (7-0).

Chairman Nagle announced that the Board conducted an emergency meeting on March 19, 2020 regarding the national COVID-19 pandemic emergency. The Board took action to authorize the Staff to implement any and all necessary measures to comply with Federal, State or Local emergency declarations and orders, including any personnel, financial and other emergency operational actions that may be required, with the purpose of ensuring a continuous supply of safe drinking water and effective wastewater treatment for all customers, and protecting the health of LCA's employees who are charged with these responsibilities. The action was unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

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

##### **Emergency Declaration – COVID-19 Pandemic Response**

Liesel Gross updated the Board on the current operational changes and policy updates that have been implemented to ensure uninterrupted service of safe water and sewer to the community while protecting the health and well-being of its employees. An internal Pandemic Response Team has been organized to review the Pandemic Response / Depleted Workforce plan and implement any additional provisions and plans that may be needed. Some specific details implemented under

Phase 3 of the Authority's Pandemic Response Plan were outlined and discussed in the memorandum provided. If the need for quarantine of employees arises or further staff reduction is experienced, the staff will be putting together plans for that later in the week. Supplies of food and cots have already been delivered to LCA buildings.

Ms. Gross said that she and Ed Klein have been discussing the financial impact on the Authority and are very concerned about the financial impact to our customers who may be unemployed as a result of this emergency. To help customers through the hardship, the Authority has taken action to suspend water service termination due to non-payment and to waive late fees until further notice. A few cost reduction measures will take place, including some capital projects that will not proceed as normal.

Jeff Morgan questioned if our large industrial customers are still operating during the pandemic. Liesel Gross said yes, the Governor's Business Closure Order still permits many of the Authority's larger customers to continue to operate, as they are food and beverages manufacturers or operate other essential logistics activities. Brian Nagle asked if the Authority is keeping a separate accounting of COVID-19 expenses so that, if federal funding becomes available, the expense can be easily tracked. Ms. Gross responded that accounting codes have been established to track costs. An internal decision tree, that follows CDC guidelines, is currently being developed to assist managers if an employee comes in contact with someone who is sick, or if an employee becomes sick. Amir Famili asked if there will be a public notification regarding the waiving of late fees. Ms. Gross explained that the fees will be waived across the board, and Susan Sampson will provide a notification on our public website, along with all updates and other notifications regarding COVID-19. Susan Sampson also reported that a comprehensive notification was drafted informing the public of measures that are being taken to protect the public as well as employees. It will be posted by the end of the day.

Liesel Gross also noted there are other information items posted to the website. For example, a notice was recently posted reminding customers not to flush anything other than toilet paper so avoid clogging the sewer system.

In furtherance of the motion that was approved at the emergency meeting on March 19, 2020, Solicitor Mike Gaul requested that the Board adopt a motion specifically declaring an emergency.

On a motion by Linda Rosenfeld, seconded by Norma Cusick the Board approved a formal Declaration of Emergency in response to the national COVID-19 pandemic emergency and directed Authority staff to implement the LCA Emergency Response Plan, retroactive to March 16, 2020 (7-0).

Solicitor Gaul also commented on the new federal guidelines that are being issued regarding employee wages and paid leave requirements. He will work with Authority staff on implementation of any new requirements.

Liesel Gross stated she will continue to keep the Board updated as new policies and procedures are being developed. The Board commended Ms. Gross and the staff for their hard work and effort during this hardship, and gave their full support for decisions and approaches implemented to date.

### **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Ed Klein presented the January and February reports that were distributed to the Board agenda packet and also the February 2020 financial presentation file that was sent separately. Mr. Klein

reported that the forecast and cash flows are positive at this point, but expects forecasting to become more difficult to complete, as the national COVID-19 pandemic emergency will impact the Authority in ways that are not yet known.

### **MONTHLY SYSTEM OPERATIONS OVERVIEW**

The February 2020 report was included in the Board agenda packet, and there were no questions from the Board regarding the information presented.

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Liesel Gross commented that she appreciates everyone's patience and flexibility as the Authority adjusts to changes in operational and communication protocols under this emergency declaration.

### **SOLICITOR'S COMMENTS**

None.

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

None.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

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Norma Cusick  
Assistant Secretary