

WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
August 11, 2014

The Workshop Meeting of the Lehigh County Authority was called to order at 12:11 p.m., on Monday, August 11, 2014, Chairman Asa Hughes presiding. Other Members present at the commencement of the meeting were: Tom Muller, Richard Bohner, Brian Nagle, Scott Bieber, Norma Cusick and Ted Lyons. Authority Staff present were Aurel Arndt, Liesel Adam, Bradford Landon, Ed Bielarski, Frank Leist, Pat Mandes and Kevin German.

Steve Marcino of Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson (JMT) was also in attendance.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Mr. Arndt stated there would be no additional items for this meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Marcino introduced himself and his consulting firm, JMT, to the Board and explained he was attending the meeting in order to become more familiar with Authority projects.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Arndt stated there would be one Executive Session to be held following the completion of the regular meeting agenda to discuss personnel matters.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

July 14, 2014 Workshop Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Bohner, seconded by Ms. Cusick, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the July 14, 2014 Workshop Meeting (5-0). Messrs. Nagle and Lyons abstained.

ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Health & Safety Manual (Approval)

Mr. Arndt introduced Mr. German, the Authority's Risk Manager, to present the Health & Safety Manual update.

Mr. German explained that the Authority's risk management program has undergone significant changes since the Allentown water and sewer systems were transferred, and he would be preparing quarterly reports for the Board's review to share information about claims, accidents, and other incidents addressed by the risk management team. He explained a new risk management team has been formed, comprised of the Risk Manager, Human Resources Manager, and Facility Team Leaders representing each of the Authority's key facilities. Furthermore, each facility has formed a safety team, made up of employees who work at the facility and led by the Facility Team Leader.

He explained that the Health & Safety Manual presented to the Board is a revision from the Authority's existing manual and includes updated information on policies, facilities, roles and responsibilities. He explained that the Facility Team Leaders will facilitate adoption of employee safety programs that are pertinent to each facility, and the manual will provide overall guidance on safety policies and their enforcement.

Mr. Hughes commented that having a strong safety program is essential for the Authority's operation.

Ms. Cusick inquired about the Authority's experience for workers' compensation claims or other accidents or safety incidents, and whether this has changed since the transfer of the Allentown systems. Mr. German explained that the Authority's prior claims history was very favorable, with very low incident rates. The incident rate has increased since August 2013, and the focus on employee safety is very important to reduce this trend moving forward.

On a motion by Ms. Cusick, seconded by Mr. Muller, the Board unanimously approved the Health & Safety Manual as presented (7-0).

SYSTEM OPERATIONS OVERVIEW

Mr. Bohner inquired about the status of the USEPA Administrative Order for the elimination of sewer system overflows in the Allentown and Western Lehigh sewer systems. Ms. Mandes explained that a meeting has been scheduled for early September for the Authority and its municipal sewer signatories to meet with USEPA on this matter and to request a five-year deadline extension for compliance with the order. She explained that significant progress has been made on compliance due to the initiation and completion of several projects to monitor and remove infiltration and inflow into the sewer system, and this progress should be viewed favorably by regulators as an indication that the Authority will use the deadline extension as an opportunity to continue this positive progress.

Mr. Hughes inquired about a recent media report on a sewer backup that occurred in the Allentown system, and whether the Authority's preventative maintenance program would eliminate such incidents in the future.

Mr. Arndt explained that the Authority has completed significant preventative maintenance in the Allentown system since it was transferred, but this maintenance alone will not prevent backups from occurring. In particular root intrusion is a problem that cannot be predicted, and blockages caused by grease and other objects that customers put into the sewer system can only be controlled by changes in customer behavior. He suggested that customer education is one approach that may prove useful in reducing sewer backups.

STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Arndt reviewed the Authority's efforts to update its Strategic Plan, focusing current efforts on revising the Authority's vision and mission statements. To that end, he distributed a worksheet to all Board members, inviting them to provide feedback on the Authority's critical stakeholders that should be included in the revised Strategic Plan.

Mr. Arndt also commented that the August 21, 2014 Board meeting would be canceled unless additional action or discussion items were identified as needing attention prior to September.

SOLICITOR'S COMMENTS

Mr. Landon informed the Board that residual property located at the Authority's wastewater pre-treatment facility in Fogelsville, which was owned by the County of Lehigh, has been transferred to the Authority, with all proper documentation filed for the transfer of the deed. The County has retained four acres for their own use, including possible sale to a third party.

Mr. Landon also reported that the bankruptcy filing by KidsPeace has been concluded, and the Authority's prior agreements with KidsPeace regarding future sewer services in North Whitehall Township remains in place.

OTHER COMMENTS

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Hughes called an Executive Session at 12:59 p.m. to discuss personnel matters. Staff members and Mr. Marcino left the meeting. The Executive Session ended at 2:25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chairman adjourned the meeting at 2:25 p.m.

Richard H. Bohner
Secretary