

**MUHLENBERG TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY**  
**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD**

A regular meeting of the Board of Muhlenberg Township Authority, Water and Sewer Projects, was held on Thursday, November 9, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m., at 3711 Oak Street, Temple, Muhlenberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania, pursuant to notice both advertised and posted according to law.

The following members of the Board were present:

Scott Lehr  
Richard Heffner  
Otto Voit, III  
Rick Hoffmaster  
Jim Kelly

In attendance were Authority General Manager Timothy Feltenberger, Thomas A. Rothermel, of counsel, and Darryl Jenkins, PE, of Spotts, Stevens and McCoy (SSM), consulting engineer to the Authority. Also present were Jaime Nace, Commissioners/Board appointees Steve Wolfinger and Walt LaSota, and SSM representatives Jamie Lorah and Dan Standish. Janet Hess appeared as a member of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Lehr. Mr. Lehr announced that the Board had met earlier in executive session to discuss matters involving personnel and litigation.

Mr. Heffner made a Motion to approve the Minutes of the previous regular meeting of the Board held on October 5, 2023. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Hoffmaster, and passed unanimously.

There were no comments under the first public comment portion of the meeting.

Mr. Jenkins of SSM provided a formal report of the Authority's consulting engineer for work completed October 1, 2023 through November 9, 2023. Mr. Jenkins referenced a five (5) page report of SSM that had been circulated to the Board in advance of the meeting. The report provides a narrative of the status of each of the twenty-one (21) projects of the Authority on which SSM is currently engaged. Prior to engaging in discussion of regarding his report, Mr. Jenkins advised the Board that he was leaving SSM at the end of this month. In his absence, and going forward, Ms. Lorah and Mr. Standish will be the primary contacts for the Authority.

With regard to the damaged water main located in Laurel Run Creek, Mr. Jenkins confirmed that SSM prepared and submitted an amended emergency permit to DEP to allow entry into the stream for purposes of cutting and capping the pipe, with removal of

the damaged pipe section. At this point, SSM continues to await permit approval from DEP. Crews are ready to mobilize once approval is secured.

As part of the July 2023 floodwaters, manhole 1948 in Laurel Run Creek was exposed and is in need of repair. SSM is near completion of a permit application to DEP to allow for the repair. Mr. Jenkins anticipates submission of the permit to DEP on November 13, 2023.

SSM investigated a sewer backup issue that occurred on the 500 block of Hain Avenue following the July 9, 2023 storm event. Investigation confirmed back-up of sewage flow into the home caused by stormwater intrusion. It was further confirmed that the home flooded secondary to water levels of the adjacent Laurel Run Creek. Mr. Jenkins reported that while the residence could benefit from a backflow valve, unfortunately there is no way to address surface flooding from the creek.

Regarding ongoing efforts to curb stormwater infiltration and inflow into the MTA sewer system, Mr. Jenkins noted that sewer vents and clean-outs should ideally be located 4" above grade when situate in grass areas and flush with grade when located in pavement. Mr. Jenkins advised that in areas of significant stormwater flow, a single 4" vent pipe can allow up to 20 gpm of stormwater into the sewage collection system, which may tax and impair an otherwise fully operational system. Mr. Jenkins recommended investigation of low-lying areas to ascertain whether and to what extent there are homes with defective or broken vent pipes in need of repair. In addition to ensuring the vents are at proper elevation, Mr. Jenkins reported that liner caps are available to seal low-lying pipes. The average cost is nominal, but Mr. Jenkins cautioned that use of a liner cap may be inadvisable in customers' homes that have insufficient venting capacity. The Board requested that SSM proceed with additional investigation of the low-lying and flood-prone areas of the Township so that further policy initiatives may be considered.

SSM investigated a complaint relating to low water pressure in the Rivercrest service area. Mr. Jenkins confirmed that while occasional pressure fluctuations do occur and are normal, there was no evidence to support any failure or deficiency of the distribution system in that area.

With regard to water system risk and resiliency, Mr. Jenkins noted that the system has excellent redundancy. The only recommendation is to consider completing the gap on Route 61 between Tuckerton Road and Water Street to provide added flexibility in isolating any major leaks that might occur. Beyond completing the Route 61 gap, Mr. Jenkins confirmed that each of the three remaining pressure zones in the distribution system has more than adequate storage capacity. Lastly in this regard, Mr. Jenkins recommended the Authority consider installation of pressure monitoring stations at strategic locations throughout the entire distribution system, which would be tied to the SCADA system and assist in quicker leak isolation. The Board was receptive to Mr. Jenkins' recommendations, and directed SSM to proceed with implementation.

SSM is assisting Mr. Feltenberger and the Authority crew in addressing comments received per the DEP/EPA System Inspection Report. A priority task list is being compiled in order to assist the crew. Mr. Feltenberger confirmed that work is already in progress with respect to the deficiencies noted in the report.

With respect to GIS mapping, Mr. Jenkins noted that SSM continues to work with staff to update the database for compliance with DEP lead and copper service line inventory. The inventory report is due in October 2024. Mr. Jenkins estimates that the report is now approximately 50% complete. SSM has recently published an on-line tool for Authority staff to directly update the database, which will further streamline this process.

Mr. Jenkins confirmed that the 2022 H2O Grant Application was successfully submitted in December 2022. The Agency had previously extended announcement of the awards to August 2023. Yet again, the announcement date has been delayed, with the anticipated announcement now expected in January 2024.

Discussion ensued regarding the Eagles Landing pump station and those residents in that area who were affected by the July 2023 storm. Mr. Jenkins updated the Board on further investigation and testing that took place over the past month. In addition to use of backflow valves as a preventative measure, SSM recommends additional action be taken to attempt to reduce the surcharging events secondary to stormwater infiltration, as follows: (i) install flow meters at the Eagles Landing and River Road pumping stations so that operations staff can monitor and react to changes in flow; (ii) schedule biannual cleaning of the sewer lines in Eagles Landing and River Road; and (iii) install manhole inserts in approximately 25 manholes on River Road that lie within and near the floodplain. With regard to the manhole insert plan, Mr. Jenkins noted that the insert should aid in eliminating stormwater inflow, which in turn should help alleviate taxing of the sewage collection system. Once the inserts are installed, flows will be monitored during the next storm both visually and through data collection to determine if use of the device has made an appreciable difference. Depending on such data, the Authority could also consider a project to realign the sewer lines at the intersection of Whitner Road and River Road. Lastly in this regard, Mr. Jenkins recommended that the elevation of the manholes to pump stations be verified to better ascertain flow rates. The Board was unanimous in directing SSM to proceed with all recommended action. Further updates in this regard are expected at the December 2023 meeting.

With regard to replacement of the Ebling Memorial Bridge, which requires relocation of Authority water and sewer lines, Mr. Jenkins confirmed that water and sanitary sewer submittals were reviewed and returned to the County's contractor. A preconstruction meeting is scheduled next week, which Mr. Feltenberger will attend.

Mr. Jenkins reported that Reading and Northern Railroad continues efforts to construct a railroad siding across Route 61, which will require installation of a casing around the Authority's water main that lies under the roadway. There has not been much activity since he and Mr. Feltenberger attended a field meeting with the PUC and other interested parties on August 14, 2023. The Solicitor advised that the railroad recently sought an extension through December 31, 2024 to complete the work, which request was granted

by the PUC. Mr. Jenkins again recommended that the Authority consider working in conjunction with RAWA to cost-share on any such project, considering the adjacent location of the authority's respective mains. Mr. Jenkins and the Solicitor will consult with their counterparts at RAWA for purposes of coordinating a meeting to engage in further discussion of that issue.

Mr. Jenkins presented two Resolutions for Board approval regarding 2023 Local Share Account (LSA) Grant Applications. The Applications pertain to Rivercrest area water main improvements and installation of Storz connectors on Authority fire hydrants. On Motion of Mr. Hoffmaster, seconded by Mr. Kelly, Resolution Nos. 2023-6 and 2023-7 were unanimously approved. Mr. Jenkins will submit the two Applications no later than the November 30, 2023 deadline.

Regarding the River Road pump station, Mr. Jenkins confirmed that one (1) of two (2) pumps is currently out of service. SSM, in conjunction with Mr. Feltenberger, Authority crewmembers, and select contractors, scheduled and completed emergency work at the pump station to enable use of a bypass pump should an added failure occur. The bypass work is now in place and fully functional, on an as-needed basis. Phase II of the project is to complete installation of two (2) new pumps. Mr. Jenkins noted that he was able to secure pricing from a COSTARS vendor who can supply and install replacement pumps. The contractor, Riordan Materials, is preparing a price quote, which should be available for Board review at the December 2023 meeting. Mr. Jenkins estimates that there will be an approximate 14-week lead time, with a period of approximately 3 weeks for installation.

Mr. Jenkins provided an update with respect to installation of a pressure reducing pit in Laureldale, which was a topic of discussion at the October 2023 meeting. The project requires further design considerations to accommodate the pit in an off-street location. To that end, Mr. Jenkins will schedule a field meeting to further review the available options. SSM will also secure price quotes for completion of the work, which may include COSTARS vendors. Mr. Jenkins expects final details by the December 2023 meeting.

There being no further active projects on which to report, and no additional questions posed by the Board, the report of the Mr. Jenkins concluded. Mr. Heffner made a Motion to accept the Engineer's Report as presented. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Voit and unanimously approved. Mr. Voit, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr. Jenkins for his exceptional and dedicated service to the Authority.

Mr. Feltenberger presented the Operations Report for the preceding month, a full copy of which has been appended to these Minutes. 6" main breaks were repaired on Mt. Vernon and Mt. Laurel Avenue, both Type I resulting in no interruption in service. A fire hydrant on Mt. Laurel Avenue was repaired after a hit and run accident, and a hydrant on Tuckerton Avenue was replaced due to an inoperable valve. The remainder of hydrants were flushed. Crewmembers continue to work on the DEP punchlist. A pump at Heather Knoll pump station was repaired to address a corrosion problem. Sewer laterals were cleaned or checked at multiple locations throughout the Township, nine (9) of which were customer owned. CPR training was completed by all crewmembers. Lastly, Mr.

Feltenberger reported that the vacuum truck was repaired, and used a total of eleven (11) man hours over the past month, at an equivalent labor cost of \$3,905. To date, the vacuum truck was used the monetary equivalent of \$77,743, excluding the cost of disposal fees that the Authority no longer pays. The Operations Report then concluded.

Engineering bills for the preceding month were reviewed. Mr. Hoffmaster made a Motion to approve the engineering bills for payment. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Voit and unanimously adopted.

The accounts payable for both the water and sewer departments for the preceding month had been distributed prior to the meeting, a full listing of which has been appended to these Minutes. Mr. Voit made a Motion to approve payment of the accounts payable for both the water and sewer departments, as presented. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Heffner and unanimously adopted.

Under the Solicitor's Report, Mr. Rothermel advised that negotiations regarding a potential water supply interconnection with Maidencreek Township Authority ("Maidencreek") have resumed following the Township's renewed commitment to the MTA. Mr. Rothermel will follow up with Maidencreek's Solicitor with the intent of finalizing terms for Board review and approval.

Mr. Rothermel confirmed that the Board previously established a Citizens' Advisory Committee at the August 2023 meeting. The Board deferred action on approving Resolution No. 2023-2, which details implementation of the Committee. The Resolution is expected to be an Agenda item at the December 2023 meeting.

Resolution No. 2023-5 was presented, which effects amendment to the Articles of Incorporation of the Authority for purposes of expanding the number of Board members from five (5) to seven (7). Such action was prompted by vote of the Township Commissioners at its October 16, 2023 meeting whereby Commissioners Wolfinger and LaSota were named MTA Board appointees. Mr. Voit moved to table the vote, citing the Boards' impending restructuring. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Hoffmaster. Discussion ensued. Mr. Voit confirmed, unequivocally, that the Board is not opposed to passing the Resolution, that it is not opposed to the Township action that precipitated such Resolution, and that the Board welcomes Commissioners Wolfinger and LaSota to the group. Tabling the vote was merely a timing issue. Mr. Voit further confirmed that the MTA looks forward to working together with the Township for the betterment of the residents. Per Mr. Voit, the tabling of the vote should not be viewed as anything contrary to that. After discussion, the Motion passed by majority vote. Resolution No. 2023-5 will be an Agenda item at the December 2023 meeting.

Mr. Rothermel circulated a draft Sewer Backflow Prevention Policy (the "Policy") in advance of the meeting, in accordance with the Board's approval of such program at the October 5, 2023 meeting. The Policy provides for reimbursement of a maximum dollar figure to eligible residential customers for installation of a sewer backflow device, either exterior or interior to the home. The details of the Policy are contained in a written

document that will be uploaded to the Authority website, together with FAQ's and a form Application. Mr. Feltenberger assisted in formulation of the Policy, as did SSM, which included compilation of a service map that shows eligible homes located within designated flood-prone and flood-plain areas. Mr. Voit made a Motion to approve the Policy, with maximum reimbursement to eligible residential customers in the amount of \$2,500. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Heffner. Discussion ensued regarding the maximum reimbursement amount. The Motion passed by majority vote (Mr. Lehr and Mr. Kelly opposed, based on the reimbursement amount). Mr. Voit made a second Motion to assign eligibility to all MTA residential sewer customers with homes located in a flood-plain and flood-prone area, as designated by the MTA, and for those residential MTA sewer customers who have experienced a sewer backup through no fault of their own within the past 120 days. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Heffner and passed unanimously. The Solicitor will work with Mr. Feltenberger in updating the Authority website to include all Policy documentation. Mr. Feltenberger will also educate office staff regarding the newly-implemented Policy. Lastly, Mr. Jenkins commented that the Township may want to consider a Codes change that requires a backflow valve be required installation for all new construction.

Mr. Rothermel presented proposed Rule changes affecting billing (i.e. due date in 45 days, extended from 30 days; assessment of a 10% penalty 5 days thereafter), water leaks, emergency shutoff practices, and sewer backflow valves. Mr. Voit made a Motion to amend the Rules, as presented, with the billing change effective December 1, 2023. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Hoffmaster and unanimously approved. With regard to the billing change, Mr. Heffner noted that such change would not affect Laureldale Borough sewer customers, who are subject to Laureldale's policies and procedures regarding sewer billing, not the MTA.

No further questions were posed to Mr. Rothermel. The Solicitor's Report was approved by Motion of Mr. Hoffmaster, seconded by Mr. Voit and unanimously approved.

The Treasurer's Report was presented, as detailed in a three (3) page report appended to these Minutes. Scott Boehret of Transcend Business Advisors, consultant controller to the Authority, circulated a preliminary budget to the Board in advance of the meeting. Mr. Boehret advised that further details are needed in order to finalize the budget, which will be presented to the Board for review and approval at the December 2023 meeting. Next, discussion was held regarding the status of the various funds held in Certificates of Deposit (CD), some of which are pending maturity as of November 15, 2023. Of those CDs set to mature, Mr. Voit made a Motion to rollover 2 water escrow account CDs, 1 to a 3 month term and one 1 to a 6 month term; and to rollover 6 sewer escrow account CDs, 1 to a 6 month term and 5 to three 3 month terms each. That Motion was seconded by Mr. Heffner and unanimously approved. On Motion of Mr. Heffner, seconded by Mr. Voit and unanimously adopted, the Treasurer's Report was accepted as presented.

Under New Business, Mr. Feltenberger reported that the Authority website had been updated and modernized. Mostly, he appreciates the functionality of the banner postings

regarding emergency updates and customer notifications. The Board was encouraged to review the website to offer any further suggested improvements or additions. As part of improvements to customer interaction and notifications, Mr. Feltenberger suggested that the Authority create a Facebook account. The Board was supportive of the initiative, but suggested deferring implementation until ARRO has finalized its report regarding recommended office staff roles and responsibilities.

Regarding Laureldale Borough sewer shutoff practices, Mr. Feltenberger confirmed that he and Mr. Heffner would engage in discussion regarding streamlining of shutoff payments and continued use of MTA crewmembers to perform water shutoffs in the Borough. Should a change in customary practices in this regard prove necessary, the respective Boards will reduce an agreement to writing. Mr. Feltenberger will update the Board, as may be necessary.

Mr. Feltenberger confirmed that the Authority's billing software vendor, Diversified, is nearing completion of new programming to implement a \$50 sewer credit to all MTA sewer customers. The programming should be completed within the next two (2) weeks. The new programming will also include confirmation of any senior or military discount.

Discussion regarding the DEP Inspection Report was held under the Engineer's Report.

Mr. Feltenberger confirmed that the City of Reading released its 2024 treatment and transportation rates under the Intermunicipal Agreement. Beginning January 1, 2024, the combined transportation and treatment rate per equivalent EDU will be \$164.69, which is an increase of 4.27% over the prior year. Mr. Boehret will be apprised of the increase for budget purposes.

Mr. Feltenberger sought a Motion to adopt a revised Schedule of Rates and Charges. Mr. Heffner made the Motion, seconded by Mr. Voit, which was unanimously approved.

Mr. Rothermel confirmed that there was discussion regarding potential bond funds for capital improvements associated with the water division, considering available funds in such account and impending sizeable projects involving the Maiden Creek interconnection, DEP lead service inventory, and remediation of forever chemicals (e.g. PFAS, PFOA) as per DEP/EPA policy initiatives. The Board directed that a representative of RBC Capital Markets attend the December 2023 to provide the Board with more information about such funding opportunity.

No Executive Session was called.

There were no comments under the second public portion.

Under the Member and Staff Comments portion of the meeting, Mr. Hoffmaster suggested that the Board consider becoming more involved in Township activities in order to create more of a presence and awareness of all the good things the Authority accomplishes. The Board was in agreement with Mr. Hoffmaster's suggestion. Mr. Heffner was directed

to plan the Authority Christmas party. Chairman Lehr circulated a letter of acknowledgement regarding the Solicitor, which is appended to these Minutes.

There being no further business of the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m. on Motion of Mr. Voit, seconded by Mr. Kelly, and unanimously approved. The next regular meeting of the Board of the Muhlenberg Township Authority will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, 2023, in the Authority Maintenance Facility main meeting room, 3711 Oak Street, Temple, Muhlenberg Township, Berks County, Pennsylvania 19560.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard K. Kelly", is written over a horizontal line.

Title: