

May 18, 2021

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chomnuk called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Present were Mike Benner, Jeff Chomnuk, Tom Carroll, Aram Ecker and David Renn. Also in attendance were Solicitor Vincent Pompo, Authority Manager Justin Keller, Engineer Joshua Fox, Public Works Director Doug Yerger, Utilities Director Brent Wagner, Bookkeeper Gerry Keszczyk and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach.

PUBLIC COMMENT

a. Ekaterine Eastimond, 448 Cherry Street – questioned the amount of her utility bill in the amount of \$3,634.92 for the property at 448 Cherry Street, which she has owned since 2014. She noted that she has not been able to obtain a previous meter reading and also that she has been paying the base rate of \$200 quarterly since she owned the property.

Chairman Chomnuk advised that Staff would review and will be in touch with Ms. Eastimond.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Benner moved to approve the April 20, 2021 minutes as presented. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning & Capital

Mr. Renn had nothing to add to the Engineer's Report.

Townships Meeting Report

Mr. Carroll reported that he did not attend the meeting but read the minutes and had nothing to add.

Inflow and Infiltration Committee

Mr. Carroll noted that a meeting is scheduled on May 19th and will provide a report for the next meeting.

AUTHORITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Keller advised that interviews for the Finance Director position will begin this week. He added that two supervisor positions are open. Mr. Keller also advised that negotiations would begin to discuss the AFSCME contract, which expires this year.

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Mr. Keller reported that he met with Representative Ciresi's office, adding that Pottstown was awarded \$2.1 million from the American Rescue Plan Act, where funding for water and sewer infrastructure projects may qualify. The funding will be allocated in June or July and must be spent by the end of 2024. He also noted that Water Wednesdays are returning from June 16 to August 18th. Mr. Keller reported that the Hall is expected to reopen June 1st with hybrid meetings beginning June 9th.

Mr. Keller recommended resuming water shut-offs in June in light of the pandemic nearing an end. He suggested sending 90-day notices to delinquent customers with shut-offs scheduled in the fall. The shut-offs were normally a 60-day notice. In addition, there is state funding available for utility bills. There was no objection from the Board.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Pompo referred to his report distributed to the Board, adding an application was filed with the PUC in protest of the Upper Pottsgrove/Pennsylvania American Water Company related to its wastewater collection and conveyance system. This will be discussed later on the agenda. He added that he received a complaint on this date, filed against the Authority and the Borough on this matter and will be discussed in executive session.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Fox reviewed the report distributed updating the Board on the LT2 enhanced Surface Water Rule, noting that he is working with Staff to achieve compliance with the LT2 requirements for short-term and long-term goals. The last step will be to finalize the water supply permit application.

Mr. Fox also reported that the NPDES permit will be submitted prior to the next meeting and to the State prior to the June 3, 2021 deadline, as required every six years for the Wastewater Treatment Plant to discharge into the River.

UTILITIES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Wagner reported that Staff will be working to install the Air Scour system for the next 3-6 months. He also noted that the Water Treatment Plant is at full staff. Mr. Wagner also advised that a new hire has replaced retiree Randy Neiman and he is still seeking third-shift operators.

Mr. Wagner explained a chemical imbalance at the Wastewater Treatment Plant with a polymer issue. He advised that Staff has been working through the discrepancy for the last three weeks and should be resolved in the near future. He also reported that the dryer is working well, recently processing 76 tons and having success with the Plant's own belt.

Mr. Wagner also noted that one year remains with the Baro contract.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Yerger advised that the crews have been working on the King Street repairs and working with PECO to attempt to get paving on both sides of King Street. He added that there is a personnel shortage at this time but expects to have the gas project at Hanover to York Street resolved in the next few weeks.

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FINANCE

Mr. Keszczyk advised that the positive trend continues. He reported that water revenues are at 32% and expenses at 29%. The sewer revenues are at 35% and expenses at 29%. He added that the bulk revenue is over budget by \$88,000 for the year to date and sludge hauling expense is \$145,000 under budget.

Mr. Keszczyk agreed to review the 448 Cherry Street issue with Public Works and report to the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

Spring Valley Farms

Mr. Fox advised that HRG conducted a final walkthrough with Allan Myers in April and has no objection to the release of escrow funds and to establish a 15% maintenance bond for Phase 3.

Mr. Carroll moved to release the remaining escrow amount providing the Developer produces a maintenance bond for the next 18 months and establish a 15% maintenance bond. Mr. Renn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Valve Turning Project Update

Mr. Keszczyk advised that he worked with HRG and the Solicitor to advertise the bid for the Valve Turning Project and is now ready to advertise.

It was the consensus of the Board to authorize Staff to move forward with the project.

NEW BUSINESS

PENNVEST Proposal -Lead Service Replacement

Mr. Fox explained the proposal for HRG to prepare and submit an application for grant financing to PENNVEST for the Lead Line Replacement Initiative. The proposal consists of seven phases, all contingent on receiving financing and would be included in the grant applicant as applicable costs. The deadline for application is August 4th. The Authority's liability would be \$6,500.

Mr. Benner moved to authorize HRG to move forward with the PENNVEST application for the lead water replacement grant program as outlined in the May 14, 2021 proposal. Mr. Renn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Ratify filing of protest in PUC Application

Solicitor Pompo referred to the application to the PUC in protest of the Pottstown Borough Authority and the Borough in its approval of the application of its acquisition of the Wastewater System Assets of Upper Pottsgrove Township. He advised that the application was submitted in opposition of the ratepayers having to pay the overage of the syphon project. This application was filed on May 13, 2021 and requested the Board's consideration in ratifying this action.

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Mr. Benner moved to ratify the action of the application to the PUC in protest of the Authority and the Borough regarding the sale of the Upper Pottsgrove Township Wastewater System Assets to Pennsylvania American Water Company as dated May 13, 2021. Mr. Renn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

2021 Water and Sewer Replacement Project Contract No WS-1

Mr. Fox requested authorization to issue a notice of intent for the 2021 Water and Sewer Replacement project as the bids do not open until May 21st and would then have to wait until the July meeting for award.

Mr. Benner moved to authorize HRG to issue a notice of intent to the lowest, responsive, responsible bidder for the 2021 Water and Sewer Replacement Project, Contract No. WS-1, in an amount not to exceed \$1.8 million. Mr. Renn seconded the motion.

Mr. Carroll retired his concern as to why Liquid Fuel funds cannot be combined with the projects and the associated paving.

Mr. Fox advised that it was discussed and it cannot be piggy-backed with Liquid Fuel dollars. He added that the Liquid Fuel auditors saw Authority funds transferred to Liquid Fuels.

Mr. Yerger advised that he did this in the past and was not readily accepted by the Liquid Fuel program and was told these issues could not be comingled. In fact, he was instructed to repay the water fund for any Liquid Fuel money used for pothole repairs.

The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Chomnuk recessed the meeting to executive session at 7:45 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m. on motion by Mr. Renn.

Submitted by,

Virginia L. Takach, Borough Secretary
for Thomas Carroll, Secretary