

July 16, 2019

POTTSTOWN BOROUGH AUTHORITY

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chomnuk called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Jeff Chomnuk, Aram Ecker, Tom Carroll, Mike Benner and David Renn. Also in attendance were Solicitor Vincent Pompo, Authority Manager Justin Keller, Public Works Director Doug Yerger, Engineer Josh Fox, Utilities Director Brent Wagner, Budget Analyst Gerry Keszczyk, Bookkeeper Janice Lee and Borough Secretary Virginia Takach.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Benner moved to approve the May 21, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Ecker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning & Capital

Mr. Renn requested that Mr. Fox provide an update during his report.

Authority-Townships Meeting Report

Mr. Carroll reported that there was a discussion regarding the Commonwealth Financing Authority grant and there may be an opportunity for a \$500,000 grant for a combined/joint submission with the Townships. He added that Mr. Fox will be looking into this for the Board.

Mr. Carroll also advised that there was a review of the new Hach meters and recommended that a presentation be provided to the Board. There was also a discussion of having common meters under the Hach system, with possibly Pottstown taking the lead.

Mr. Fox commented that he will be scheduling a joint meeting with the parties to review the present agreements and provide requests to Hach.

Mr. Carroll also explained the discussion of a sewer line being replaced by Lower Pottsgrove Township in a trench where there is a water line.

Mr. Fox commented that this is Valley Road and the water line was installed 1973-1974 and is in good condition. He added that he responded to Lower Pottsgrove Township that this is not in our Capital Plan and if has to be relocated, he will work with the Township and recommended no cost be undertaken by the Authority and it should be at the Township's cost.

Chairman Chomnuk requested that Mr. Carroll follow-up on the Authority's behalf regarding discussion with the Townships on the meters.

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AUTHORITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Keller provided an update of the recent rain storm and flooding and commended the work of the Emergency Response Team and Utilities Department. He advised that College Drive remains closed as well as Memorial Park. Mr. Keller also provided an update on the AFSCME contract with hopes of a signed agreement by next meeting.

Mr. Keller also advised that the position of the Construction Project Manager will be finalized in the near future and filled by the next meeting. He added that the Water and Sewer replacement project is scheduled to commence in the near future.

Mr. Carroll reiterated his concerns regarding the stormwater issues, which effect so much of the system and recommended that Borough Council be influenced on this matter.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Pompo referred to the report distributed and advised that no new legislation should affect the Authority. He also advised that the stormwater suit in West Chester has been cleared to proceed to the higher court and will keep the Board apprised.

Mr. Keller commented that he is evaluating a fee schedule with Cedarville Engineering to address stormwater issues and is awaiting the outcome of the West Chester case.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Fox referred to the report distributed and noted that the Water and Sewer Replacement project will be on site July 29th to begin work on North Washington Street and to be completed prior to the start of school opening. He also reported on the Water Supply permit amendment, noting that the combined major permits saved \$10,000 in permit fees. Mr. Fox advised that a 2021-2015 Capital Improvement Plan is being worked on with Staff and will have a draft plan in December. He also reported that the DRBC renewal for the Wastewater Treatment Plant was submitted timely and all correspondence will be initially directed to Mr. Wagner.

Mr. Fox presented proposals for the Flow Monitoring Plan, the Wastewater Treatment Plant Risk Management Plan and the Waste-to-Energy Feasibility Study. Mr. Fox added that he and Mr. Wagner attended the Evoqua Water Academy to review potential equipment that would be considered in the evaluation of the conversions of the digesters at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He also noted that he will be looking into grant money for these projects.

Feasibility Study – Turbidity Compliance

Mr. Fox explained that Mr. Wager received a letter on July 2nd dated April 5th from DEP informing the Authority it had a deadline of July 5, 2019 to demonstrate the Plant's ability to filter to a turbidity of 0.15 NTUs at 95% of the time. The response was provided to DEP by the deadline and provided the three guidelines in which to proceed, being ozone disinfection, chlorine dioxide or ultraviolet light. The Authority now has until April 1, 2022 to demonstrate the facilities compliance. In response to DEP, he proposed that a feasibility study be performed by the Authority.

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Mr. Fox requested authorization to proceed with the Feasibility Study and no bill will be issued at this time.

Mr. Carroll moved to allow HRG to move forward with conducting the Feasibility Study as presented. Mr. Renn seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Lower Pottsgrove Township – Additional Capacity during Peak Flows

Mr. Fox reported that a request was received from Lower Pottsgrove Township for additional capacity from the Wastewater Treatment Plant during periods of peak flows. He recommended a hydraulic evaluation would need to come before the Authority and agreed to prepare a proposal.

Mr. Carroll moved to authorize HRG to prepare a proposal for Lower Pottsgrove Township's request of additional capacity during peak flows. Mr. Ecker seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Upper Pottsgrove Township – RFQ

Mr. Fox referred to Upper Pottsgrove's request for interest in selling its sewer system. After consulting with Upper Pottsgrove's officials, he requested an extension to review this with the Authority Board. He added that, according to the Agreement, Section 1010, the Township cannot voluntarily assign the service agreement without the consent of the Pottstown Borough Authority and the Borough, except to another municipality.

Solicitor Pompo agreed and explained the process of having to come to the Authority for approval of a sale.

Ms. Lee reminded all that the Authority does the billing and collections for Upper Pottsgrove and would be difficult if its system came under a PUC. There is also a syphon overage cost of \$425,000 that has not been paid.

Mr. Renn commented that this Authority has more than it can handle.

Mr. Fox referred to an article regarding Conshohocken's sale of its wastewater collection system.

UTILITIES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Wagner reported that the plants fared well during the recent rain storm. He noted that the flood level is 13.5" and the water was at 3.2" at the peak of the storm. He also announced the creek has been renamed Yerger's Creek.

Mr. Wagner provided an update on the dryer status and explained the 2-month set-back caused by PECO. He added that the dryer needs more cubic feet per air and advised that meetings are ongoing with Gryphon and the company has since ordered a new blower. Mr. Wagner also reported that Mr. Fox will be the lead contact with any further aspects in commissioning of the dryer.

Mr. Fox noted that a meeting is scheduled for August 7th with an expectation of the dryer to be commissioned on September 15th.

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Chairman Chomnuk confirmed that the Board is in support of any correspondence to Gryphon, going forward.

Mr. Keszczyk confirmed that there is a remainder of \$275,000 for the final payment to Gryphon and will be held until the project is complete.

Mr. Wagner also noted that the screen project is underway with building the existing walls out and the influent screens should be completed by September. He added that he and Mr. Fox made a presentation at Penntek regarding the system, which was well received.

Mr. Wagner reported that there was a surge at the Wastewater Treatment Plant during the July 11th flooding but had no overflow. He also confirmed the renaming of Sprogel's Run to Yerger's Creek.

Mr. Yerger commented that there is a Yerger that lives on Yerger Road in Lower Pottsgrove Township.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Yerger reported that the sewer collection faired well during the storm with several roads under water. All is back to the normal flow. Mr. Yerger added the water side had no real problems and the crew is working on fire plugs and the Oak & Hanover Street old hydrant was replaced.

FINANCE REPORT

Mr. Keszczyk reported that as of June 30th, the water fund revenues are at 52% and the expenses are at 46%. The sewer fund revenues and expenses are at 53%. He also reported that the bulk revenue for June was the highest recording at \$333,000 for the month and other finances are on track.

OLD BUSINESS

Colebrookdale Railroad – Waiver of water and sewer line costs

Mr. Keller referred to the May 23, 2019 letter from the Colebrookdale Railroad requested a waiver of the water and sewer line tap-in fees. He noted that the sewer fee is \$1,835 and the water is \$2,204 with any other costs that may be levied. Mr. Keller added that there will be public access to restrooms for patrons of the park and for Colebrookdale passengers as well.

Mr. Yerger confirmed that a water meter was installed and the application fee, inspection fee and meter fee were charged and there will be a meter for the Railroad. He added that the meter will be tapped off before the Memorial Park meter and will be independently tracked.

Mr. Renn questioned if this would be setting a precedent.

Mr. Carroll moved to grant the request of the Colebrookdale Railroad to waive the two fees associated with tapping into the system. Mr. Benner seconded the motion.

Mr. Carroll commented that this is a large benefit for the town and should be considered. The motion carried unanimously.

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NEW BUSINESS

Wastewater flow Meter Data Assistance Project

Mr. Fox reviewed the proposal distributed, which HRG has been conducting for approximately three months, as was previously done by BCM. The proposal includes checking the status of meters on line, review meter data and distributing monthly reports for a lump sum fee of \$19,300. Mr. Fox added that this is an interim project to be assigned to the Construction Project Manager when appropriate.

Mr. Benner moved to approve and authorize execution of the HRG Wastewater Flow Meter Data Assistance Proposal for a cost not to exceed \$19,300 and as outlined in the June 10, 2019 proposal. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

Waste-to-Energy Feasibility Study Proposal

Mr. Fox reviewed the proposal distributed to provide engineering services to complete a feasibility study to evaluate the cost-benefit of a waste-to-energy project for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The project is proposed to increase capacity in Digesters, reduce operating costs through elimination of blowers for digestion, projected adequate amount of methane to produce electricity and reduce operating costs and to utilize exhaust from engines to provide heat to the digester, etc. and to become a net-zero energy facility at a cost of \$34,000.

Mr. Renn moved to approve and authorize execution of the HRG Waste-to-Energy Feasibility Study Proposal for a cost not to exceed \$34,000 and as outlined in the June 10, 2019 proposal. Mr. Carroll seconded the motion.

Chairman Chomnuk confirmed with Mr. Keszczyk that the \$34,000 is in the budget at this time.

Mr. Keszczyk confirmed that it would be in the budget and noted that there are items in the capital plan that could be delayed, adding that the bulk programs would assist in the cost.

The motion passed unanimously.

Colebrookdale License Agreement

Mr. Keller reviewed the Second Amendment to the License Agreement between the Colebrookdale Railroad and the Redevelopment Authority of Berks County regarding an easement for the sewer line.

Solicitor Pompo commented that this is a license, not an easement, which gives the Authority the right to be there only by their permission in the event the concrete encased pipe needs to be removed without having to go back to the Redevelopment Authority of Berks County.

Mr. Carroll moved to authorize execution of the Second Amendment to the License Agreement between Colebrookdale Railroad and the Redevelopment Authority of Berks County. Mr. Benner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

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Sprinkler Update

Mr. Keszczyk referred to the sprinkler historical rates of 2011-2019 handout, which was based on meter size. He also compared rates with surrounding municipalities for fire protection, residential and commercial.

Chairman Chomnuk requested that the Board review this handout which will be relisted for the September meeting and to provide any comments to Mr. Keszczyk and Ms. Lee prior to the next meeting.

Upper Pottsgrove Township – RFP for Sewer Lines

Mr. Keller noted that there is a deadline to submit an RFP to Upper Pottsgrove Township.

It was the consensus of the Board to take no action regarding a response to Upper Pottsgrove Township and table any response at this time.

Utility Bills

Mr. Keller reviewed two draft Utility bills for the Board to consider in order to provide more clarity to customers to provide the number of units, base fee and the rates. This change was also prompted by the sprinkler system matter.

Chairman Chomnuk requested the Board to review and provide comments to Mr. Keller, Mr. Keszczyk and Ms. Lee prior to the next meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Chomnuk recessed the meeting to executive session at 9:10 p.m. for an item of potential litigation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. on motion by Mr. Renn.

Submitted by,

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