

**SUMMIT TOWNSHIP SEWER AUTHORITY
MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING
MARCH 26, 2020**

The regular monthly business meeting of the Summit Township Sewer Authority was called to order virtually at 9:03 a.m. via a publicly advertised, open, interactive Zoom Meeting, hosted by the Sewer Authority at 8890 Old French Road, Erie, Pennsylvania. CALL TO ORDER

Present: Chris Fette, Chairman; Michael Rose, Vice Chairman; Laban Marsh, Secretary; Mark Welka, Treasurer; William C. Steff, P.E., Manager; George Joseph, The Quinn Law Firm; Chad Yurisc, P.E., Greenman-Pedersen; Caitlyn Haener-Schwab, Administrative Supervisor; Amy McCaslin, Billing Clerk. Absent: Cloyd J. Rose, Ass't Secretary. Visitors: None. ROLL CALL

Motion by Mr. M. Rose, seconded by Mr. Welka, to approve the minutes of the February 27, 2020 Regular Business Meeting. Vote 4/0. 2/27/20 MINUTES

Motion by Mr. M. Rose, seconded by Mr. Welka, to approve the minutes of the March 5, 2020 Special Meeting. Vote 4/0. 3/5/20 MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Welka, seconded by Mr. M. Rose, to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted to and reviewed by all Board members. Vote 4/0. TREASURER'S REPORT

Motion by Mr. Welka, seconded by Mr. M. Rose, to approve the Expenditure Report as submitted to and reviewed by all Board members. Vote 4/0. EXPENDITURES

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Solicitor Joseph reports that the Authority has received a signed, notarized sales agreement from the Cullen property owners. The Authority needs to purchase a 660 sq. ft. parcel adjacent to the current Oliver Road Lift Station that is required for the Oliver Road Lift Station Upgrades Project. Solicitor Joseph recommends that the Board approve the agreement so that the Authority can move forward with the subdivision of the parcel. CULLEN PARCEL ON OLIVER ROAD

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. Welka, to approve the sales agreement to acquire a 660 sq. ft. parcel, adjacent to the Oliver Road Lift Station, from the Cullen property owners. Vote 4/0. APPROVE CULLEN SALES AGREEMENT

Solicitor Joseph reports that the Authority has received a signed promissory note from S.T.I.E.D.A. in which the Authority will borrow \$400,000.00 to recapitalize funds expended during the Meadows Lift Station Upgrades Project. The loan will be repaid by the Authority to S.T.I.E.D.A. in monthly installments for twenty-years, at an annual interest rate of 2%. Solicitor Joseph requested that the dates on the amortization schedule should be changed to reflect that the starting performance date in the agreement has passed, however the solicitor for S.T.I.E.D.A. did not agree, so the dates remain the same. Solicitor Joseph recommends that the Authority approve the agreement as written. BORROW \$400K FROM S.T.I.E.D.A.

**Summit Township Sewer Authority
Monthly Business Meeting
March 26, 2020**

Motion by Mr. M. Rose, seconded by Mr. Marsh, to approve the promissory note with S.T.I.E.D.A. to borrow \$400,000.00 for a twenty-year term, at 2% annual interest. Vote 4/0.	APPROVE S.T.I.E.D.A. LOAN
Solicitor Joseph reports that Scott Haywood from VNet has contacted the Authority to request authorization from the Authority to install a high-speed cable in the Authority's Right-of-Way on New Road. Solicitor Joseph advised that the Authority does not have exclusive rights nor does the Right-of-Way Agreement give the Authority the ability to confer rights to a third party; the Authority only has the right to make improvements associated with sanitary sewer within the easement area. Manager Steff advised Mr. Haywood that he should contact the landowner.	VNET REQUEST TO USE RIGHT-OF-WAY DENIED
Solicitor Joseph reports that he has transmitted some recommended wording and definitions to Manager Steff regarding the proposed changes to the Township Zoning Ordinance Section 605.6 Odors. Manager Steff responded that he needs time to review Solicitor Joseph's recommendation prior to passing along to the Township.	ZONING ORDINANCE WORDING
Solicitor Joseph reports that Article X of the Rules and Regulations needs to be updated. Solicitor Joseph explained that the Board has recently adopted an Act One Fee Schedule to include attorney's fees in the collections process for delinquent accounts. Accordingly, Solicitor Joseph will work on a revision for Article X to reflect the new procedures; the revision will be presented for Board review at a future meeting.	ARTICLE X REVISIONS REQUIRED
ENGINEER'S REPORT	
Engineer Yurisc reported that he submitted revised DCED grant applications following the March Special Meeting. Engineer Yurisc advised that the DCED was originally going to announce the grant awards in July, but that date may be delayed due to the state of emergency created by the Covid-19 pandemic.	DCED GRANT APPLICATIONS UPDATE
Engineer Yurisc reported that he has been working with Manager Steff on the plan review for Saddlewood Phase 3. Engineer Yurisc explained that Saddlewood plans to install more than five individual grinder pumps in a low pressure system. The developer is required to obtain a PA Clean Streams Law permit, and the application process requires a Planning Module Component 3. The project engineer, Sanford Surveying and Engineering, has submitted a Sewage Planning Module Component 3 for approval by the Authority. Also, Engineer Yurisc is currently working on updating the Authority's Rules and Regulations for low pressure systems.	SADDLEWOOD PHASE 3
Engineer Yurisc reported that the Authority has received a planning inquiry for a subdivision of the Cornelius property on Oliver Road. Since the sewer is at capacity on Oliver Road, the Cornelius subdivision must either wait for the completion of the Oliver Road Gravity Upsizing Project or they can apply for an exemption by attaching a corrective action plan provided by the Authority. Manager Steff added that he has not yet received a response from Sanford indicating how they want to proceed with the Cornelius Subdivision.	CORNELIUS SUBDIVISION

**Summit Township Sewer Authority
Monthly Business Meeting
March 26, 2020**

Engineer Yurisc reported that he has reviewed an inquiry from Auto Row regarding capacity on Route 19. Engineer Yurisc responded that capacity is available.

AUTO ROW
CAPACITY
INQUIRY

Engineer Yurisc reported that the planning module for the Oliver Road Lift Station Upgrades Project was approved by the Township Supervisors at their most recent meeting. Engineer Yurisc advised that the plans have not been submitted to DEP yet because DEP is practically shut down due to the state of emergency created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

OLIVER ROAD
LIFT STATION
UPGRADES

Engineer Yurisc lead a discussion regarding planning sewer upsizing in coordination with the construction of the PA DOT roundabout at Five Points. Engineer Yurisc advised that PA DOT will not allow the Authority to have a separate project underway simultaneously during the roundabout construction. Manager Steff responded that in past projects PA DOT agreed to integrate construction of new sewer lines into their project and the Authority cost-shared. Manager Steff specifically cited the upsizing of sewer on Route 19, north of I-90 as an example. Manager Steff recommended that the Authority should inquire about PA DOT integrating sewer construction during their project, and that the Authority would offer to cost-share. Engineer Yurisc responded that the PA DOT has proposed integrated construction and cost-sharing for the areas of force-main that are required to be replaced, but the upsizing is not required, so that part of the project may have to be negotiated with PA DOT. Manager Steff responded that for the non-essential, the Authority would expect to pay 100%, but an integrated project is preferable to trying to coordinate a separate project around PA DOT. Engineer Yurisc will take the lead on presenting the Authority's position to PA DOT.

PA DOT
FIVE POINTS
ROUNDBOUT
PLANNING

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Steff reports that S.T.I.E.D.A. has requested reimbursement from the Authority for solicitor fees associated with the preparation of the Meadows Lift Station Upgrades Project Promissory Note in the amount of \$325.00. Manager Steff recommends that the Authority should reimburse S.T.I.E.D.A.

S.T.I.E.D.A.
REIMBURSEMENT

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. Welka, to reimburse S.T.I.E.D.A. for solicitor fees in the amount of \$325.00 for the preparation of the promissory note. Vote 4/0.

APPROVE
REIMBURSEMENT

Manager Steff requests authority to reallocate some funds in the 2019-2020 Budget. Manager Steff explained that, at the August 29, 2019 Regular Business Meeting, the Board authorized the reallocation of \$40,000 from the Route 97 Inflow and Infiltration repairs account to the Route 97 Inflow and Infiltration Investigation account. Manager Steff recommends transferring \$26,794 from investigation back to repairs. The funds are needed to pay for the NFG cross-bore repair on Robison Road and to undertake repairs of defects in the public portion of the Route 97 system found during the investigation. Discussion ensued.

REALLOCATE
BUDGETED
FUNDS

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. Welka, to reallocate \$26,794.00 currently budgeted for Route 97 Inflow and Infiltration Investigation to Route 97 Inflow and Infiltration Repairs. Vote 4/0.

AUTHORIZE
REALLOCATION

**Summit Township Sewer Authority
Monthly Business Meeting
March 26, 2020**

Manager Steff reported that the Authority has made significant temporary changes to the Authority's operations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, based on directives from state, county and township officials. Beginning on March 16, 2020, the office has been closed to the public. On March 19, 2020, Manager Steff attended a webinar regarding social distancing and began working with the Board and Authority staff to determine essential work functions. Manager Steff reduced the on-site presence of the staff, allowing some to work from home to best promote distancing. Manager Steff is not requiring the Operations staff to report to the building; the Operations staff will continue to work in the field, work from home, and respond to alarms as necessary to continue essential functions. Administrative staff will rotate reporting to the building and working from home to continue essential functions, such as processing accounts receivable, accounts payable, customer billing, and payroll. Currently, the office hours have been reduced to Monday thru Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Manager Steff requested Board authorization to ratify the temporary work changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with full pay and benefits for all Authority staff in their varying roles.

COVID-19
RESPONSE:
OPERATIONS
CHANGES

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. M. Rose, to ratify the poll to approve temporary work changes with full pay and benefits for Authority employees. Vote 4/0.

RATIFY
TEMPORARY
CHANGES

Manager Steff requested authorization to further reduce the onsite presence of administrative staff in the interest of public health and safety. Manager Steff recommends that administrative staff will coordinate to observe the temporarily reduced office hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Administrative Supervisor Haener-Schwab added that, on the days when they are not office hours, the office staff will still bring the mail into the building.

REDUCE ONSITE
PRESENCE OF
OFFICE STAFF

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. M. Rose, to reduce the office hours to Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., until further notice. Vote 4/0.

APPROVE
REDUCED
OFFICE HOURS

Manager Steff recommended that the Authority should waive penalty and interest posting for the April billing cycle and continue the policy through the duration of the Covid-19 emergency. Discussion ensued. Manager Steff explained that the action would apply to all delinquent accounts, usage and assessment.

PENALTY AND
INTEREST
POSTING

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. M. Rose, to waive penalty and interest posting for the April billing cycle and continue to waive penalty and interest for the duration of the Covid-19 emergency. Vote 4/0.

WAIVE P&I
POSTING DURING
COVID-19
EMERGENCY

Manager Steff recommended that the Authority should suspend water service terminations on delinquent accounts until further notice. Billing Clerk McCaslin explained the delinquent account notification process. Manager Steff clarified that the delinquent customers will still be notified of their delinquent balance due and the Authority will also notify them that the water-termination policy is temporarily suspended. Discussion ensued.

WATER
TERMINATION
POLICY

**Summit Township Sewer Authority
Monthly Business Meeting
March 26, 2020**

Motion by Mr. Marsh, seconded by Mr. M. Rose, to suspend the termination of water service policy for delinquent sewer customers until further notice. Vote 4/0.

SUSPEND WATER
TERMINATION
POLICY

Manager Steff reported that he requested that the Authority employees not travel, but the Board should consider adopting a travel policy during the Covid-19 emergency. Manager Steff reported that some companies are requiring mandatory self-quarantine when an employee returns from travelling in an infected area. Manager Steff proposed that the Board should consider a policy of mandatory self-quarantine for any employee who travels outside of Erie. Manager Steff added that an Authority employee lives outside of Erie County, so the Board should consider adding a layer to the policy that separately addresses elective travel, emergency travel, and essential travel. Manager Steff explained that some employees can work from home, but not all employees can. Manager Steff continued that the danger is that an employee would return from an infected area, not knowing that they are infected, and unknowingly contaminate the workplace. Therefore, Manager Steff recommends that if an employee chooses to travel, and they cannot work from home, they should have to use their accumulated paid time off to cover their travel plus fourteen days of quarantine, to the extent that they have the accumulated time. Chairman Fette responded that such a policy would require the employees to self-report their travel. Chairman Fette requested guidance from Solicitor Joseph regarding compliance with FMLA. Solicitor Joseph responded that the recently passed coronavirus relief act provides for emergency family medical leave and up to eighty hours of paid sick time for anyone who is sick, caring for someone who is sick, or employees who are caring for children due to the school closings, but it does not apply to travel. Chairman Fette asked Manager Steff how the Authority should distinguish between essential and non-essential travel. Manager Steff responded that employees may want to travel for funerals. Mr. Welka added that the township has also asked employees to refrain from travelling and to consider themselves on-call while on paid leave. Chairman Fette proposed that the Board should address the issue only if something specific comes up, because the potential circumstances that would compel anyone to travel during the Covid-19 emergency are too varied to adopt an effective blanket policy.

COVID-19
RESPONSE:
EMPLOYEE
TRAVEL
RESTRICTIONS

Manager Steff requested guidance from the Board as to how often the Board would like to meet to discuss the status of circumstances and the impact on the Authority during the Covid-19 emergency. Solicitor Joseph advised that Manager Steff could send informational updates to the Board, but a meeting would have to be advertised and open to the public. The Board agreed that the Board should plan on attending monthly regular business meetings, and have additional meetings only as-needed.

COVID-19
RESPONSE
UPDATES

Manager Steff proposed that the Board should consider a financial policy establishing a strategic reserve. Manager Steff recommended that the Board could use the policy to establish a minimum financial reserve, then only spend and/or borrow for projects outside of the reserve. Manager Steff proposed keeping 12 months of operating funds in reserve. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed to revisit the issue when the Covid-19 emergency is over and the real impact is known.

STRATEGIC
RESERVE
POLICY

**Summit Township Sewer Authority
Monthly Business Meeting
March 26, 2020**

NEW BUSINESS

None.

With no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Marsh motioned to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Welka. Vote 4/0.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Fette adjourned the meeting at 10:24 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by,

Caitlyn Haener-Schwab
Administrative Supervisor