

**WESTERN BUTLER COUNTY AUTHORITY
607 MARKET STREET
ZELIENOPLE, PA 16063
PHONE: (724) 452-5501**

Regular Meeting Minutes – May 13, 2021

CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum was reached, and after reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Thomas Tomayko called the May 13, 2021 meeting of the Western Butler County Authority Board of Directors to order at 7 p.m.

PRESENT ON ROLL CALL:

The following board members were in attendance:

Mark Butler
Ed Eckenrode
Daniel Karns (remotely)
Paul J. Kremer Jr.
Ron Lutz
Thomas Tomayko
Dave Weber

OTHERS PRESENT:

Manager Autumn Crawford
Solicitor Matt Racunas
Consulting Engineer Chad Hanley
Samantha Schmucker of HRG (remotely)
Facilities Manager Keith Warner
WBCA Billing Coordinator Jennifer Fassinger
Recording Secretary Nicole Peffer (remotely)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Greg Such was absent.

VISITORS:

No visitors were in attendance.

MINUTES:

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Dave Weber, the Board unanimously approved the April 8, 2021, Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended.

BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A list of bills (\$99,055.94 in Operating, \$219,071.77 in Capital) was presented to the Board in the form of an Expense by Vendor summary with checks dated May 13, 2021. Manager Autumn Crawford answered questions that board members had regarding the bills.

In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board unanimously approved all of the bills for payment as presented by the Manager in Expenses by Vendor summaries with checks dated May 13, 2021.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:

The Secretary had nothing to report.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES:

Personnel Committee

- New hire Dave Gillespie passed his 90-day probation and is performing inspection work.
- The Manager proposed hiring two additional employees instead of one to replace an employee who retired. Only two inspectors are performing in the field, and three are needed. In addition, the workload in the business office has increased to the point where one employee needs to be pulled to support the office part-time, possibly moving to a full-time role within the next two to three years. Two candidates have been interviewed, and the Manager explained that incoming funds from inspection fees will cover the cost of an additional employee.

In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board voted unanimously to hire one additional employee at a rate of \$24 per hour.

- The Board discussed a memorial gift to honor the late George Hancher for 22 years of service as the Authority's original solicitor.

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Mark Butler, the Board voted unanimously to make a \$500 donation in George Hancher's name to the American Cancer Society.

Finance Committee

The Manager reported a smooth transition to WesBanco as the Authority's new depository.

Facilities Maintenance Committee

The Committee had nothing to report.

Administrative Review Committee

The Committee had nothing to report.

REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR:

- There were no new Right to Know requests, and the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records reached a decision in WBCA's favor in response to an appeal filed by a resident.
- Reviewed the PA American Water shut-off agreement.
- Held ongoing discussions regarding the format for the transfer of meter reading data from Zelienople Borough. The Manager said that the Borough's meter readings had to be estimated in April to ensure that WBCA's bills were sent to customers on time. Customers will be notified via notes on the monthly bill and WBCA's web site. Jennifer Fassinger explained that adjustments will be made to bills as necessary.
- Received and recorded easement documents for the Foxwood Trails development.
- Worked with the Engineer on executing and recording documents needed for Herman Pump Station. The Solicitor planned to meet with property owners at WBCA's office regarding private easement paperwork, notarize the paperwork at that time and take it to the Butler County Courthouse.
- Worked on documents necessary for the Authority's revival. The Manager asked whether WBCA could revive as a county regional authority. The Solicitor said that would require further investigation and discussion.
- Discussed and attended a meeting with Zelienople Borough officials regarding adoption of the Act 537 plan.

REPORT OF THE ENGINEER:

- **Herman Pump Station Replacement Project:** An unmarked active private water line and gas line were exposed during excavation, and the Engineer anticipates a change order for the bore to be 20 feet longer. The wet well will be set soon.

In a motion made by Paul Kremer and seconded by Ron Lutz, the Board voted unanimously to approve payment applications in the amount of \$150,819.25 to the general contractor and \$3,608.10 for the electrical contractor.

- **Act 537 Plan:** Attended meetings to address comments regarding the plan. Mark Butler requested an overview of how the plan affects Lancaster Township.
- **Harmony Pump Station Upgrade:** Sewer design and base mapping is complete, and planning approval is needed before permits are sent to the Department of Environmental Protection.
- **Water Pollution Treatment Plant Administration Building:** The Manager launched discussion of constructing a new administration building before the wastewater pollution treatment plant replacement project begins. She said this would be a way to move forward, because it is not part of the Act 537 Plan and DEP approval is not required for the administration building. She requested permission to contact architects about design and cost estimates.

Mark Butler requested clarification. The Engineer said HRG has staff to design buildings associated with the wastewater pollution treatment plant. He suggested that the site design and structural engineering can be done in-house, but recommended retaining an architect that designs public spaces as a professional service to design the new administration building's architectural elements.

The Manager explained that constructing a new administration building would cost \$3 million to \$4 million from the \$55 million for the Act 537 Plan, with \$9 million set aside as a contingency. Mr. Butler asked whether there would be an additional expense. The Engineer said construction of a new administration building is part of the budget.

Ed Eckenrode asked how about the time frame of construction. The Engineer estimated three months for the design phase, but could not estimate the time frame for the construction phase because of flood plain encroachment permitting.

The Manager proposed a basement and ground floor construction. Mr. Butler raised the issue of storm water management. The Manager said retention ponds and storm gardens are integral to the design, including a pervious or gravel parking lot. The Engineer said underground detention is also likely to be included. Mr. Eckenrode asked if the building could be designed to add a second floor in the future. The Engineer said it could.

In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Tom Tomayko, the Board voted unanimously to move forward with construction of a new administration building.

- The Engineer briefly updated the Board on Conveyance System Improvements projects (Zelienople Curve, Route 68 and Route 19).
- HRG completed a short plan review for connection to the existing sanitary sewer system for a proposed Duncan Donuts on South Main Street, Zelienople. Daniel Karns said the Borough denied approval and requested revisions.

REPORT OF THE MANAGER:

ADMINISTRATIVE

- In a motion made by Tom Tomayko and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board voted unanimously in a roll call vote to accept Resolution May 13, 2021, for the Butler County Infrastructure Bank loan for Harmony Pump Station in a roll call vote.

Dave Weber asked whether Act 537 approval or submission was required to obtain the loan. The Engineer said yes, but BCIB does not require permits in-hand and is similar to a bond issue. The Authority will have to take the money within the next 12 months, but will be able to earn interest if they remove the rest of the funds and place it in a Certificate of Deposit.

The Manager said after weighing the pros and cons, it was determined that it is more advantageous to pursue the loan now rather than wait until next year.

The Engineer explained that after Zelienople Borough and Lancaster Township approve the Act 537 Plan, the DEP will approve the plan rather quickly. The Manager said that because the County is loaning WBCA money, the Department of Economic Development, the County commissioners, bond council and PFM have examined and vetted the plan and are actively involved in urging Zelienople and Lancaster to approve it.

Ed Eckenrode asked whether the loan could be refinanced. The Manager recommended against it because of the interest rate. The monthly payment would be \$92,000 in 2022 (\$11.1 million over 10 years).

Tom Tomayko asked about unused funds. The Manager said savings from the Harmony Pump Station replacement project would be used to pay for additional upgrades. The Engineer said any unused funds will be paid back against principle.

In a motion made by Paul Kremer and seconded by Ron Lutz, the Board voted unanimously to accept Sewer Revenue Note, Series of 2021 in a roll call vote.

- WBCA Tier II Emergency and Hazardous Chemical Inventory response was filed with the State of Pennsylvania and Butler County.
- Morning Glory Farms is now under contract with Weaver Homes. Pumping will occur through the Sipple Pump Station.
- Mr. Weber asked for an update on the Meinert Sewer Extension Project in Lancaster Township; the Manager said it is moving forward. They are running into a lot of rock and had to move in additional equipment to dig through it.

PAST DUE ACTIVITY

On May 6, 2021, a total of 31 customers failed to respond to the 30-day past due notification and were posted for water shut-off. Payment was due on or before May 20, 2021. Only customers on a public water service are included for shut off. Customers with a balance in excess of \$20 who are 60 days past due are included.

	Zelienople	Jackson	Lancaster	Harmony	Total
March 2021	\$9,531.98	\$5,111.38	\$89.38	\$7,741.88	\$22,474.60
April 2021	\$7,456.61	\$5,074.79	\$15.37	\$5,535.54	\$18,082.31

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business was discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

No Executive Session was held.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business to discuss, Ron Lutz motioned to adjourn, seconded by Ed Eckenrode, and the May 13, 2021 Regular Meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Peffer, Recording Secretary
Western Butler County Authority