

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

Regular Meeting Minutes – December 10, 2020

CALL TO ORDER:

A quorum was reached, and after reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Thomas Tomayko called the Dec. 10, 2020 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:

Ed Eckenrode
Daniel Karns
Paul J. Kremer Jr. (entered at 7:02 p.m.)
Ron Lutz
Greg Such (via teleconference)
Thomas Tomayko
Dave Weber

OTHERS PRESENT:

Manager Autumn Crawford
Solicitor Matt Racunas
Consulting Engineer Chad Hanley
Samantha Schmucker of HRG
Facilities Manager Keith Warner
Office Administrator Evan George

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mark Butler

VISITORS:

No visitors were in attendance.

MINUTES:

In a motion made by Daniel Karns and seconded by Dave Weber, the Board unanimously approved the Nov. 12, 2020, Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended.

BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS:

A list of bills in the amount of \$61,506.29 was presented to the Board in the form of Expenses by Vendor summary with checks dated Dec. 10, 2020. Manager Autumn Crawford answered questions that board members had regarding the bills.

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Ron Lutz, the Board unanimously approved all of the bills for payment as presented by the Manager in Expense by Vendor summaries with checks dated Dec. 10, 2020.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:

The Secretary had nothing to report.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES:

Personnel Committee

The Committee presented the proposed WBCA employee wage increases for 2021. The Manager explained that the recommended increases were based on cost-of-living increases and comparisons with industry averages. Increases ranged between 3% and 4%. Mr. Tomayko said that, moving forward, the committee will focus on raises based on merit and education.

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Daniel Karns, the Board voted unanimously in a roll call vote to approve the employee wage increases for 2021. Ed Eckenrode, YES; Daniel Karns, YES; Paul J. Kremer Jr., YES; Ron Lutz, YES; Greg Such, YES; Thomas Tomayko, YES; Dave Weber, YES. NOTE: Although his vote did not count due to his absence, Mark Butler requested that it be known that he voted YES.

The Manager reported that a new employee was let go before the end of his probation period.

Finance Committee

- The Committee requested a motion to pay off the Authority's debt.

In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board voted unanimously to approve the transfer of \$107,145.64 from the Capitol fund to pay off the Authority's debt.

- The Committee requested the approval of Resolution 12-20B, authorizing the filing for an application of a Butler County Infrastructure Bank loan in the amount of \$10,644,000

for the Harmony Pump Station Project.

The Engineer explained the application process and answered Board members' questions.

Mr. Weber asked how long the Authority would have to draw down funds; the Engineer answered 18-to-24 months.

Mr. Eckenrode asked when the loan would be approved and when construction would begin. The Engineer said approval could take place in March or April 2021 and construction could begin in mid-fall 2022.

Mr. Kremer asked what would happen if the Act 537 Plan is not approved. The Engineer said in that event, the Authority does not have to close on the loan.

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Ron Lutz, the Board voted unanimously to approve Resolution 12-20B authorizing the filing for an application of a Butler County Infrastructure Bank loan in the amount of \$10,644,000 for the Harmony Pump Station Project.

- The Committee requested the approval of Resolution 12-20 defining the Authority's rates and late charges.

In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Daniel Karns, the Board unanimously voted to approve Resolution 12-20 imposing sewer rates and charges for the use of the Authority system upon the owners of property served by the Authority's sewer collection, conveyance and treatment.

Mr. Such raised concerns about proposed rate increases. The Manager said that the next rate increases are not scheduled until 2030 and are based on conservative projections. The Engineer said as more information becomes available, rate increase estimates could fluctuate. Future development can affect rate increase amounts.

Facilities Maintenance Committee

The Committee had nothing to report. A meeting is scheduled for Dec. 30, 2020.

Administrative Review Committee

The Committee had nothing to report.

REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR:

The Solicitor highlighted the following report items:

- Reviewed the issue of significant increase that Zelienople Borough is charging for water

meter reads. The Solicitor planned to discuss the meeting held with representatives of WBCA and the Borough during an executive session. Depending on the outcome, the issue could result in court proceedings or with the Public Utility Commission.

- Worked on documents relating to the revival of the Authority needed for the increase in debt related to the Act 537 Plan, as well as expanding the Authority's Articles of Incorporation based on future projects outside of the normal service area.
- Received a Right-To-Know request from a Harmony resident for documents related to Creekside Manor and the Act 537 Plan. Documents will be provided with appropriate redactions.

Mr. Such asked whether the Act 537 Plan is a public document. The Solicitor explained that the final, approved Act 537 Plan is a public document, but that there are exclusions for engineering feasibility studies and draft documents. The purpose behind redactions or exclusions for incomplete draft documents was to avoid confusion, because changes will occur during the process. The Engineer said a draft of the 537 Plan is posted in its entirety on the Zelienople Borough web site. The Manager said that some items were excluded because they were an incorrect version.

REPORT OF THE ENGINEER:

- The Manager reviewed a draft of the Act 537 Plan FAQ document that will be circulated to WBCA customers. The document, once finalized, also will be posted online. The pamphlet explains why the Authority needs to construct a new water pollution control plant. The Board discussed and recommended revisions. The Manager stressed urgency in completing the document and making it available to the public as soon as possible.
- Samantha Schmucker reviewed a Power Point presentation of HRG's Special Study: Pump Station and Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrades Update. The presentation highlighted the current waste water treatment facility's deficiencies and illustrated why a new facility is needed. Plans for a new treatment plant, an overview of how existing facilities will be repurposed, and customer impacts were highlighted. The Board discussed and recommended revisions.
- **Herman Pump Station Replacement:** The Notice to Proceed was issued Nov. 23, 2020. The Substantial Completion date and Final Completion Date were received. No submissions have been received from the contractor except for the initial schedule. The Engineer will update the Board on any new developments. Construction could begin as early as February or March 2021.
- **Act 537 Plan:** The public comment period ends Dec. 23, 2020.
- **Harmony Pump Station Upgrade:** Meetings are being scheduled with Zelienople Borough, property owners, DEP and PennDot.

- **Water Pollution Control Plant Upgrade:** Design meetings are scheduled; one was held for Electrical and another is set for disinfection and sludge handling.
- **Act 57:** Has not been started yet; end-of- year for the financial services group is occupied with budget measures. The deadline for the tap fee calculation report will be done in early 2021.

REPORT OF THE MANAGER:

ADMINISTRATIVE

- In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board voted unanimously to close the Walnut Ridge Development escrow account.
- In a motion made by Paul Kremer and seconded by Ron Lutz, the board voted unanimously to close the Brookview Farms Development escrow.
- In a motion made by Greg Such and seconded by Paul Kremer, the Board voted unanimously to approve HRG's Inspection Services rate for 2021 from \$100 per hour to \$90 per hour.
- In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed 2021 budget as presented by the finance committee.

SEWER SYSTEM REPORT

- **Morning Glory Farms:** Evans City wants to install the gravity line to accumulate additional customers, but it has to show it benefits the whole corridor; the developer has to show that they can do the plan with or without the gravity sewer. The developer has a design for a downhill low-pressure system.
- **Jackson Ridge Phase 2:** In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Daniel Karns, the Board voted unanimously to release cash in escrow posted in lieu of bonding in the amount \$107,876 (less 15%) for Jackson Ridge Phase 2. (\$91,694.60 will be released.)

In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Tom Tomayko, the Board voted unanimously to accept a performance/labor and materials bond set aside agreement in lieu of bond in the amount of \$107,876 for Jackson Ridge Phase 2.

- **Harmony Junction Pump Station:** The Manager will review the Authority's flood insurance policy in January 2021. A new wastewater treatment plant will make improvements so that pump station will no longer flood. The Manager wants for review whether it is worth considering, in the interim, if the Authority should carry more flood

insurance on this pump station. She will circulate and forward correspondence from the insurance provider for the Board to review.

PAST DUE ACTIVITY

On Dec. 3, 2020, a total of 43 customers failed to respond to the 30-day past due notification and were posted for water shut-off. Payment was due on or before Dec. 13, 2020. 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
October 2020	\$11,567.96	\$3,466,397	\$135.02	\$7,774.97	\$22,944.92
November 2020	\$11,451.35	\$5,612.11	\$410.07	\$7,492.35	\$24,965.88

OLD BUSINESS:

No old business was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business was discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:31 p.m. to discuss litigation issues and exited at 10:06 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business to discuss, Greg Such motioned to adjourn, seconded by Daniel Karns, and the Dec. 10, 2020 Regular Meeting adjourned at 10:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Pepper, Recording Secretary
Western Butler County Authority