

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
MOUNT LAUREL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY**

April 19, 2024

Chairwoman Murphy called the regular meeting of the Mount Laurel Township Municipal Utilities Authority to order at 7:00 p.m. via in person and videoconference. A sign with the call-in information was posted at the Elbo Lane Water Treatment Plant Facility Meeting Room and posted on the Authority's official website.

Those in attendance were:

Carol Murphy	Chair
Cheryl Coco-Capri	Vice Chair
Elwood Knight	Secretary
Christopher Gray	Deputy Secretary
John Francescone	Member

Also in attendance were:

Pamela Carolan	Executive Director
Jonathan Sears	Director of Finance
Rachael Concepcion	Employee Engagement/ Safety Officer
William Long	Consulting Engineer
George Morris	Solicitor

Chairwoman Murphy announced that the notice requirements of the "Senator Byron M. Baer Open Public Meetings Act" have been satisfied. Annual notice has been transmitted to two newspapers; it has been prominently posted on the Municipal Bulletin Board and filed with the Mount Laurel Township Clerk.

Public Comment – General

No members of the public were present.

Minutes

Following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Gray the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the March 27th, 2024, regular meeting, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Gray, Mr. Knight and Mr. Francescone.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstention, 0 absent

Developments/New Connections

There were no resolution regarding new connections this month.

Ms. Carolan reported that the bypass pump has been installed by DELCO's contractor, at our Mason Creek pump station.

Mr. Long added that they expect the PS expansion project as related to the DELCO Haddon Point development to be completed in July.

Operations

Water System Summary

Ms. Carolan presented the Operations report.

Ms. Carolan reported that there were no water main breaks since the last meeting. She added that water usage has been typical for this time of year, and we are currently using one well, in addition to buying from NJAW and WMUA.

Ms. Carolan reported that NJAW will be turned off on April 30th, and that the MUA will sometime receive water quality complaints following a change in water source because it can alter the taste and odor, but our water supplied to customers remains compliant.

Ms. Carolan reported that the winter preventative maintenance in the water plant is near completion.

Ms. Carolan reminded the board that the CCR (Customer Confidence Report) issuance deadline is June 30 and that the MUA has not been mailing the CCR in the past few years in efforts to save money; the CCR is put on the MUA website, with the link on the June bills.

Sewer System Summary

Ms. Carolan reported that trucking has periodically continued for Ramblewood.

She added that there were two spills in the golf course, not directly related to the overall Ramblewood issue and that the spills were caused by clogs in the main; toilet paper was wrapped around an underdrain plug that dislodged and entered the system and that a large number of sticks were found.

Ms. Carolan added that this all occurred in the golf course and that we've also had problems with materials being put in the manholes that would not enter organically, like golf flags and large sticks, Ms. Carolan is going to reach out to the township to see if they can offer additional monitoring of the area during the night to protect the integrity of the system.

Ms. Carolan also reported that the MUA has 7 pump stations operating outside of normal parameters. She added that at the sewer treatment plant, there are some RAS pump issues and that we are waiting for replacement parts, but it is not currently adversely affecting the treatment process.

Ms. Carolan then provided an update on the emergency work being performed at Ramblewood, specifically 4 manholes in the Roger's Walk line that have been elevated and rehabbed.

Mr. Gray asked what the total number of manholes covered in the emergency work was?

Mr. Carolan informed him that it was originally 13 manholes scheduled within the emergency repair, but there are 3 manholes within the 13 scheduled where materials may not be able to be received.

Ms. Carolan also informed the board that ERI is fast tracking a portion of the larger slip lining project, and the MUA plans to accept bids for slip lining on May 9th, and award at the May board meeting.

Ms. Carolan added that yesterday the MUA had a NJDEP inspection of the collection system and 5 pump stations; there were no issues with our pump stations.

She added that the DEP inspector then went to the Rogers Walk easement, golf course easement, to see where we are currently experiencing problems, which led to questions and a list of information to be provided by the MUA.

Ms. Carolan noted that the DEP inspector requested copies of ordinances by Mt Laurel Township to eliminate sump pumps in homes connected to the sanitary sewer system.

Ms. Carolan sent a request to Mt Laurel Township to meet, to get ahead of any time requirements by DEP; a confirmation report from DEP is expected in the next few weeks.

Mr. Gray stated that further discussion would need to occur about the request from the DEP and suggested that the MUA could work with the Township to accomplish the sump pump inspections during the inspections for home sales.

Ms. Carolan also reported additional underdrain plugs have been dislodging which is exacerbating our problems in Ramblewood.

Ms. Carolan added that the vehicle lift in our garage is currently out of service causing a backlog of work to be completed. Mr. Gray asked if we could reach out to the township to set up an agreement to use their lift in the meantime.

At 7:27 pm Chair Murphy closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

Presentation of Engineer's Status Report

Mr. Long presented the report.

Active Projects in Construction

Replacement of Part of Library Force Main and Millstream Force Main Connection, M-180-322-003

The project includes replacing a section of the existing PVC library force main with 10" HDPE (via directional drill), beginning at the pump station, through the adjacent wooded area to Route 295, and cleaning and televising the force main crossing under Route 295/NJTP. The project also includes replacement of the connection of the Millstream force main to the primary force main in Union Mill Rd. Project will be financed via an NJIB loan. Contract awarded to JVS Industrial and Commercial Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$1,219,000.83 on April 20, 2023. The Millstream connection is complete. Pavement restoration remains. JVS was on site today completing the library force main connections and next week they plan to complete pigging of the highway crossing.

Ms. Carolan shared photos of today's work and added that MUA staff continues to monitor the area for leaks.

Atrium & Hooton Pump Station Upgrades, M-180-347-001

No change in status. This project included electrical and control system replacement and upgrades at both the Atrium and the Hooton Road stations. The Atrium station work also included pump replacement and replacement of the emergency generator which also connects to the adjacent Horizon Way Water Booster Station. Financing via NJIB Loan. On December 16, 2021, a contract in the amount of \$1,177,150.00 was awarded to Eagle Construction Services. Substantially complete. We are currently working through the alarm issues related to these stations.

Air Release MH Improvements 101 Hartford Rd & Isolation Valve Removal Pike Rd M-180-392-000

The project includes the replacement of the air relief valve at 101 Hartford Road and the removal of the valve and fittings for the Pike Road isolation valve. A contract No. 2022-14 in the amount of \$599,670.00 was awarded to J.F. Kiely Construction, Inc. at the March 2023 meeting. Both valves have been replaced.

Water Main on Hainesport-Mount Laurel Road County Bridge #B4.71 M-180-393-000

This project is for repair of a leaking 12" water main which is strapped to the side of the County bridge. A contract was awarded to JVS Industrial and Commercial Contractors, Inc. in the amount of \$109,000.83 during the July 2023 meeting. The water main is installed, but the bacteria test failed, so the main has not been placed in service, and the project will not be completed until next week.

Ms. Carolan added that change order number 1 is being presented for approval tonight for installation of a blow off related to disinfection. She added that next month CO #2 will be presented, which is related to an existing isolation valve which is not holding.

Well No. 4 Redevelopment-M-180-395-000

This project was for the redevelopment of Well no. 4, including removal and rehabilitation of the existing pump and well piping, redevelopment of the well and installation of Authority supplied pump and well piping. This was awarded to A.C. Shultes, Inc. in the amount of \$117,600.00. The well is operational and the removed parts are still being rehabilitated.

Active Projects in Design

Pump Station Monitoring System, M-180-365-000

No change in status. This project includes updating the alarm system at 29 of the Authority's 41 sewage pumping stations. In addition, condition monitoring will be included with the system. The Authority authorized the start of design work with a construction completion of March 2021, which was not met. Financing for this project was originally planned for NJIB bundle #1 but the Authority was able to get I-Bank approval to move this to a separate financing so the remainder of bundle #1 can go to loan closing. The plans and specs have been resubmitted to DEP and have been there a while now.

Manual Transfer Switch Installation-81 Elbo Lane M-180-394-000

This project is to install a transfer switch with the capability of connecting an existing portable generator to it when needed, at the Authority's Engineering Office Located at 81 Elbo Lane. The contract is advertised and bid opening was held on April 11, 2024. Staff had additional questions to be resolved before recommending to award the contract.

Air Release Manhole Improvements Union Mill Road M-180-396-000

This project is for replacement of 3 air release valves along Union Mill Rd. Design has started.

Library Pump Station Upgrades M-180-397-000

This project includes rehabilitation of the pump station which was originally installed in the 1980's. Work includes replacement of electrical controls, emergency generator, addition of a flow meter and addition of an electric building as an alternate. Design is currently underway.

Ms. Carolan reported on the following projects as they are being designed by firms other than Alaimo Associates:

Elbo Lane WTP HVAC Replacement (Engineer: Mott MacDonald)

No change in status. This project includes the replacement and rehabilitation of the HVAC system at the Elbo WTP. Financing will be via the NJIB. Plans and specs were uploaded to DEP. Waiting for comments back from the DEP.

Ramblewood Pump Station Generator Replacement (Engineer: Remington & Vernick)

No change in status. This project includes the replacement of the existing standby generator at Ramblewood Pump Station. A contract was awarded to Lee-Way Electrical in the amount of \$173,400.00 at the February 17, 2022, meeting. The generator is installed and operational, we are waiting on close out documentation and as-builts.

HRWPCF Sludge Dewatering Equipment Replacement (Engineer: Colliers)

This project includes the replacement of the sludge handling and dewatering equipment in the sludge dewatering building which was originally constructed in 1996. We have received comments from the DEP. We plan to receive bids in June.

Tricia Meadows Force Main (Engineer: ERI)

This project was for the replacement of a section of the Tricia Meadows force main from the vicinity of the PS to Moorestown-Mt Laurel Road. A contract was awarded to CTX Infrastructure, in the amount of \$223,875 at the September 2023 meeting. Construction is complete. Close out information including as-builts remains.

Cornwallis Drive and Carteret Court Water Main Replacement (Engineer: ERI)

Project includes replacement of 1000 feet of 8” water main on Cornwallis Drive and 570 feet of 6” water main on Carteret Court. A contract was awarded to A-to-Z Site Contractors in the amount of \$540,165.00 at the December 21, 2023, meeting. Construction is likely to start in late May.

Closed Session

A motion was made by Mr. Francescone, seconded by Mr. Gray, the Board unanimously approved to pass Resolution 2024-03-43 to close the meeting to discuss Litigation and Potential Litigation which are exempt from open meetings under the Sunshine Law, at 7:33 p.m., with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Litigation, Potential Litigation and Regulatory Matters – SEE CLOSED PORTION OF MEETING

The meeting was re-opened at 7:53 p.m., following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Gray, with intent to return to closed session when Ms. Murphy returned to the meeting with unanimous agreement from Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Contracts

Following a motion made by Mr. Gray and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously revised the motion made at the previous meeting regarding 607 Union Mill Rd to waive costs charged to the homeowner, with affirmative votes from Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Knight, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2024-04-56 Resolution Authorizing the Authority to enter into a Shared Services Agreement with the Board of County Commissioners of the county of Burlington to Perform Certain Work/Repairs, with affirmative votes from Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Following a motion made by Mr. Knight and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2024-04-57 Resolution Approving Change Order No. 1. Contract No. 2023-02. Hainesport Mt. Laurel Road Water Main Replacement, with affirmative votes from Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Gray, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2024-04-58 Award of Contract Following Receipt of Competitive Bids for Contract Year Three. (Contract 2022-05 Sludge Hauling Services), with affirmative votes from Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 4 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 1 absent

Mr. Sears explained that this is an extension to the third year of the existing contract.

Accounting and Financial

Discussion Regarding 2024 Appropriation to Mount Laurel Township

Mr. Sears informed the board that because we have two entities, water and sewer, each year we complete form F-8 on the State Budget forms to show that we don't create a deficit by granting Mount Laurel Township an appropriation; after completing form F-8 for the water division, we confirmed giving from the water division would cause a deficit.

Mr. Sears added for the sewer division resulted in an appropriation available in the amount of \$400,000 which has been communicated to the township.

Chair Murphy returned at this time, having had to step out during closed session.

Discussion of Authority Water & Sewer Budgets

Mr. Sears presented the annual budget to the board.

Mr. Sears explained the process of introduction and approval of the budget which includes that the budget needs to be to the state by May 1st, with any changes over 10% variance requires a notation. In May we will do the adoption if the state is ready. Mr. Sears added that reporting the budget is electronic now, so the state is more responsive and timelier than in the past.

Mr. Sears noted that the budget included a 5.5% increase to the union contract, an increase in overtime and an increase to pension expense.

Mr. Sears continued that pension costs keep growing and the number is given to the MUA in August. He added that purchase of water and chemicals has also increased as well. Additionally, connection fees are starting to dry up, and that we have cash on hand for capital projects and a good interest rate, so our interest income is increasing.

Mr. Sears believes that the proposed budget is fair and balanced.

Mr. Francescone questioned the increase in printing.

Mr. Sears explained that the budget line has gone up from outsourcing the bills, but we are saving in different areas that would not be reflected on this budget, in man hours and equipment not needing to be replaced.

Mr. Francescone asked why the Trustee costs are increasing.

Mr. Sears explained the MUA had a bond offering, so while there was an increase this year, we expect it to go back down next year.

Following a motion made by Mr. Gray and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved the Approval of Authority Budget for Water and Sewer Service and Facilities for Fiscal Year from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, with roll call of members. Ms. Murphy-aye, Ms. Capri-aye, Mr. Francescone-aye, Mr. Knight-aye, Mr. Gray-aye.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Following a motion made by Mr. Gray and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved the Resolution No. 2024-04-60 Endorsing Modification to Renewal and Replacement Reserve Fund, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Mr. Sears explained that the modification to the R&R budget was made to reserve the required amount of 120% rounded to the nearest \$10,000. Mr. Sears added that this resolution resets those required amounts as dictated by our policies and bond covenant, it also gets sent to the Trustees to establish the flow of funds.

Following a motion made by Ms. Capri and seconded by Mr. Knight, the Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report of January 2024 and Payment Plan Status Report for March 2024, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Following a motion made by Ms. Capri and seconded by Mr. Gray, the Board unanimously approved the Treasurer's Report of February 2024 and Payment Plan Status Report for April 2024, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Following a motion made by Mr Francescone and seconded by Mr. Knight, the Board unanimously approved Requisition #654 in the amount of \$435,696.48 for the Accounts Payable Vouchers, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

There were no bills from the Acquisition and Construction Bill List

Following a motion made by Mr. Knight and seconded by Mr. Gray, the Board unanimously approved Requisitions #6079 through #6106, in the amount of \$598,903.20 from the Renewal and Replacement list with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Re-entry into Closed Session

A motion was made by Mr. Francescone, seconded by Mr. Gray, the Board unanimously reenter closed session now that Ms. Murphy returned to the meeting approved to continue Resolution 2024-03-43 to close the meeting to discuss Litigation and Potential Litigation which are exempt from open meetings under the Sunshine Law, at 8:11 p.m., with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Litigation, Potential Litigation and Regulatory Matters – SEE CLOSED PORTION OF MEETING

The meeting was re-opened at 8:21 p.m., following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Gray, with unanimous agreement from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Francescone, Mr. Knight and Mr. Gray.

Total votes: 5 ayes, 0 nays, 0 abstentions, 0 absent

Open Session

A motion was made by Mr. Gray and seconded by Mr. Francescone to waive the remaining charges for the 607 Union Mill Rd repair, with concurrence from all members.

Mr. Francescone voiced his extreme displeasure that the MUA did work on another service line and is footing the bill. He added that he would not support this again in the future and that the MUA needs to make changes regarding how we address these situations.

Mr. Francescone continued stating that we need to be proactive and clear on the website, including graphics; we should also suggest that owner explore their insurance coverage.

Mr. Francescone added employees need to be trained in issuance/signatures of the responsibility forms, and that the forms be reviewed by Mr. Morris, who concurred.

Mr. Francescone confirmed that he wants full disclosure as soon as it is viably possible and if we provide the information to customers beforehand about their responsibilities, they will be more prepared.

Mr. Sears added that homeowners may have bought homes with these lines without even knowing; it may not have been disclosed in the selling process.

Mr. Gray asked what the alternative was to these types of lines?

Ms. Carolan reported that septic systems would be an option.

Mr. Sears added that attaching to gravity is also an option if it is in the area.

Mr. Morris asked what happens when the homeowners' septic fails, and they are near the high-pressure line?

Ms. Carolan explained that neither DEP nor BOH will require connection to pressure mains, only gravity if available.

Mr. Gray asked if it is easier with a new connection to have full disclosure?

Ms. Carolan answered that it is, but we are dealing with the builder who may not relay that information to the buyer.

Mr. Morris added the deed should record those new construction connections.

Mr. Gray reiterated that at the next meeting two notices will be created for all homeowners in town that explains the responsibility of the owner including the explanation of lines and where their responsibility ends, and the second to ejector lines (high-pressure line) owners advising of potential increased cost related to repairs.

Ms. Carolan confirmed that we will prepare those, but issuing the high-pressure ones will be an issue because we do not have an exact list. We will send to everyone we believe has a high-pressure line, which may include some that don't have it and some may not get the notice that have high-pressure lines.

Comments:

Ms. Carolan reminded all that financial disclosure forms are due by the end of the month and we are unable to view if they are complete or not.

Ms. Carolan advised that a copy of the MUA's Quarterly Report for 4th Quarter 2012 is in folders tonight. when I read the list, it was apparent to make the board meeting shorter, which is newer and to give you more information it took longer. In your packet you will find a report that I haven't done for 12 years, and I can resurrect this type of report to get you the information you need. If you don't like the idea, it's fine.

Mr. Francescone responded that it is worth considering but it does not need to be this long.

Mr. Knight did not support reactivating the report.

Ms. Carolan added that she will wait to hear from members as to whether or not a report similar to this is suggested and if so what should be contained in it.

Ms. Murphy asked the board to get suggestions to Ms. Carolan by the next meeting.

Ms. Carolan reported on the update to MUA reorganization, noting that she and Jon have not been able to meet.

Mr. Francescone added that the meeting needs to happen as a decision will be made at the next meeting.

Mr. Sears thanked the Board for passing the introduced budget.

Mr. Gray noted that it was good to receive some updates between meetings to know what was going on, it helps and please keep doing so.

Following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Gray, and with unanimous agreement from the members, the meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm.