

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

October 19, 2023

Chairwoman Murphy called the regular meeting of the Mount Laurel Township Municipal Utilities Authority to order at 7:01 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
John Francescone	Member
Jim Kehoe	Member

Also in attendance were:

Pamela Carolan	Executive Director
Russell Trice	Operations Engineer
Jonathan Sears	Director of Finance
Diane Ordille	Administrative Assistant
William Long	Consulting Engineer
George Morris	Solicitor
William Giegerich	Mount Laurel Township

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 public in attendance

Minutes

Following a motion made by Mr. Knight and seconded by Ms. Capri the Board unanimously approved the minutes for the September 21, 2023, regular meeting, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, and Mr. Knight and Mr. Francescone.

Total votes: 3 ayes, 0 nays, 1 abstention, 1 absent

Developments/New Connections

Following a motion made by Ms. Capri and seconded by Mr. Kehoe, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2023-10-112 Resolution Authorizing the Release of Water and Sewer Performance Bonds Posted for Springhill Suites Hotel Project at 7000 Midlantic Drive, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Kehoe.

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

John Francescone arrived.

Operations

Water System Summary

Ms. Carolan reported there have been 3 water leaks since the last meeting, likely as a result of annual hydrant by flushing, and 1 private service water leak at the Turnpike yard/State Police Barracks.

Ms. Carolan added that hydrant flushing is on-going and should finish this weekend.

Ms. Carolan stated that the ASR cycle is finished, we recovered all 176 million gallons that was stored for this cycle.

Sewer System Summary

Ms. Carolan reported that 6 pump stations were working outside of normal parameters plus the 3 that have construction on-going.

Ms. Carolan stated that we did PFAS sampling at our wastewater treatment plant. We tested for 39 parameters and detected 16 at concentrations higher than in the drinking water. Ms. Carolan added that it's very concerning if the state imposes limits on our discharge or our biosolids.

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, with DEP approval.

Construction is 25% complete. The Library force main piping is being installed. Work on Millstream to start in October; proposed road closure, November 8, 2023.

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

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. On December 16, 2021, a contract in the amount of \$1,177,150.00 was awarded to Eagle Construction Services. Construction is 99% complete. Contractor addressing punch list items.

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. Construction is 99% completed on Pike Road. Working on Hartford Road detour plan with the County; road closure proposed for November 27, 2023.

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. Pre-con took place, work scheduled for October.

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. Authority comments addressed on plans and specifications. Plans and specifications to be submitted to Authority on October 23 or 24, 2023.

Air Release Manhole Improvements Union Mill Road M-180-390-000

No change in status. This project includes the replacement of a force main air relief valve at the intersection of Union Mill Road and the entrance to Signature Place. The project scheduled is to coincide with the Township project to improve Union Mill Road. Priority and construction schedule will be done when UMR is closed for improvements.

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

This project is to install a manual 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. Submitted plans and specifications to the Authority for review.

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

This project is 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. Advertised with bids to be received on November 9, 2023.

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

Sanitary Sewer System Modeling, Capacity Assessment and Master Planning (Engineer: Mott MacDonald)

No change in status. The hydraulic model has been completed and calibrated. Mott MacDonald used the model to develop and analyze alternatives for alleviating operational problems experienced in the system and to evaluate alternatives identified by the Authority in the initial SOW. Final report is now expected by the end of October, but some projects were already included in the Authority’s FY24 and subsequent years capital budgets. The Authority is pursuing relocation of the replacement plant headworks off-site in order to address high pressures in the primary force main.

Elbo Lane WTP HVAC Replacement (Engineer: Mott MacDonald)

This project includes the replacement and rehabilitation of the HVAC system at the Elbo WTP. Financing will be via the NJIB. MM is doing their final review of the bid documents and should have final documents submitted to the MUA and NJDEP later in October.

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. Delivery of the generator is still expected in November 2023.

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. Colliers anticipates submitting 90% complete plans and specs this month to us and DEP by the end of next week.

Chapel Hill Road and Trefoil Terrace Water Main Replacements (Engineer: ERI)

No change in status. This project included the replacement of approximately 1,020 feet of 6” and 8” water main and 45 services on Chapel Hill Road and Trefoil Terrace. Contract No. 2022-07-84 was awarded to CTX Infrastructure in the amount of \$430,673.50 in July 2022. Construction is complete. Final documentation needed before the project can be finalized.

Tricia Meadows Force Main (Engineer: ERI)

This project is 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, the low bidder in the amount of \$223,875 at the September 2023, meeting. Construction scheduled to start November 8, 2023.

Hartford Road WPCF Headworks Facility (Engineer: Mott MacDonald)

No change in status. Mott MacDonald performed an evaluation of the existing comminutors and grit removal facilities at the Hartford Road WPCF. The scope of work includes the evaluation of new screening and grit removal equipment technologies and the ability to construct new headworks at both on and off-site locations. The final report is anticipated to be received in November or December.

Closed Session

A motion was made Mr. Kehoe, seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved to pass Resolution 2023-10-113 to close the meeting to discuss Litigation and Potential Litigation which are exempt from open meetings under the Sunshine Law, at 7:14 p.m., with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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 7:41 p.m., following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Knight with unanimous agreement from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Contracts

Following a motion made by Mr. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Knight, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2023-10-118 Resolution Clarifying MUA Policy on Connection of Irrigation Systems to the Public Water Supply and Requesting that the Policy be included in the Authority’s Revised Rules and Regulations, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Following a motion made by Mr. Kehoe and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2023-10-114 Resolution Approving Change Order No. 1, with an increase of \$39,861.30, for the Replacement of Library Pump Station Force Main and Millstream Pump Station Force Main Connection, MUA Project No. 2022-06, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone, and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Following a motion made by Mr. Kehoe and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2023-10-115 Resolution Approving Change Order No. 2, with an Increase of \$18,300.00, for the Hartford Road Air Release Valve Replacement and Pike Road Isolation Valve Removal, MUA Project No. 2022-14, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Following a motion made by Mr. Kehoe and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2023-10-116 Resolution Authorizing the Release of Maintenance Bond for Hartford Road WPCF Clarifier Painting, MUA Project No. 2021-03, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Accounting and Financial

Discussion of Rates:

Mr. Sears presented the board with the option of raising the fixed rate portion of the water and sewer rates. Mr. Sears explained that this is the most consistent revenue we receive, we can't rely on connection fees any longer because Mount Laurel is almost built out. Mr. Sears added that this will also help with our capital projects, pay as you go, rather than borrowing. Mr. Sears said that the proposed increase will break down to approximately an extra \$2.00 per month on each fixed rate for water and sewer for a total of \$4.00 per month. Increasing an additional \$4.00 per month again in February 2025 and 2026.

Mr. Sears said this amount would generate the revenue that our financial advisor, Neil Grossman, advised was necessary in order to keep us in a good financial position, while continuing our capital projects.

Mr. Sears asked if any of the members of the board should have any questions or ideas, to email him directly to discuss. He added that everyone should think about this and be prepared at the next meeting to make a decision regarding how to proceed.

Ms. Carolan provided an example of where the proposed increase would fall within the rate comparison to neighboring towns, which was still in the lower portion of the fees.

Following a motion made by Ms. Capri and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved Resolution No. 2023-10-117 Resolution Approving the Mount Laurel Municipal Utilities Authority's Absorption of all Increases in the 2023/2024 Healthcare Benefits Premiums, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Following a motion made by Mr. Knight and seconded by Mr. Kehoe, the Board unanimously approved the Treasurers Report for August 2023 and Payment Plan Status Report for October 2023, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Following a motion made by Mr. Knight and seconded by Mr. Francescone, the Board unanimously approved Requestion #648 in the amount of \$771,592.68 for the Accounts Payable Vouchers, with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Francescone.

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. Francescone and seconded by Mr. Knight the Board unanimously approved Requisitions #5970 through #5995, in the amount of \$467,501.95 from the Renewal and Replacement list with affirmative votes from Ms. Murphy, Ms. Capri, Mr. Knight, Mr. Francescone and Mr. Kehoe.

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

Comments:

Mr. Sears commented that we have advertised for professional services on October 18th with a proposal opening date of December 8th; engagements will be awarded at the February 15th board meeting.

Mr. Sears stated that the audit is complete, and the exit conference is scheduled for October 30th at 3 pm.

Mr. Sears added that we were proposing to hold the rate hearing on December 7th, which is the first day of Hanukkah, so he'd like feedback on the board's thoughts on what date to hold it.

Ms. Carolan added that we should really hold it separately from the regular board meeting which falls on December 21st, unless the hearing is held immediately prior to the meeting.

Mr. Sears said that he would send out a doodle poll to determine the date for the rate hearing.

Mr. Giegerich reported that the Rancocas Woods redevelopment meeting took place with about 60% of residents, and they indicated that they want the ability to connect to public sewer.

Mr. Long added that there was a study done in 2008 by Alaimo and he's not sure if the town wants to resurrect that. Mr. Long said that at that time it was cost prohibitive.

Ms. Carolan mentioned that the issue back then was that the town wanted 75% to vote in the affirmative and only 65% agreed, and although the majority, it didn't meet the township's requirements to move forward.

Following a motion made by Mr. Kehoe and seconded by Ms. Capri and with unanimous agreement from the members, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 pm.