

**LEHMUA
Regular Meeting**

June 14, 2022

The regular meeting of the Little Egg Harbor Municipal Utilities Authority was held on June 14, 2022, 12:00 PM at the Authority headquarters, 823 Radio Road, Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey and via tele-conference with the Commissioners.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Margaret DePergola, Chairwoman; Joseph Koptic, Vice-Chair; Marie Skelly, Treasurer; Kenneth Miller, Secretary; Peter Cicco, Kenneth Maxwell; Christopher Filiciello

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Earl F. Sutton, Jr., Executive Director; Michael S. DiFrancia, Superintendent; Nicole M. Princiotti, Executive Secretary/QPA; Trace Dittenhofer, Authority Engineer via tele-conference; Debra Rumpf, Esq., Authority Attorney, via tele-conference

THOSE ABSENT: None

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: None

Nicole M. Princiotti read the following statement:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Law, this meeting has been duly advertised in the Atlantic City Press and the Asbury Park Press, posted on the Authority bulletin board and posted and filed in the office of the Little Egg Harbor Township Clerk. Resolutions are posted on the Authority's bulletin board.

PRIOR MINUTES

A motion was made by Mrs. DePergola, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the minutes of the May 10, 2022 regular meeting. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret De Pergola – yes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve the Treasurer's Report as submitted. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

BILLS RESOLUTION

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve the operational account bills resolution. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Sutton began by stating that the Authority is required to have a hearing concerning the proposed budget that was previously submitted for July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. This is for both the water and sewer budgets which were separately introduced.

Mr. Sutton asked for a motion to open this portion of the meeting to the public for the purpose of holding the budget hearing on the Water and Sewer Budget for fiscal year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to open this portion of the meeting for the purposes of holding the Budget Hearing for the Water and Sewer Budget, fiscal year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

Mr. Sutton asked if there were any members of the public on the tele-conference? There were none and a motion was made by Mrs. DePergola, seconded by Mr. Miller to close this portion of the meeting to the public. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1 – Mr. Sutton stated that he is pleased to announce that we will resume live meetings starting with our July 6, 2022 meeting. The time will remain at noon, but will be held at the Authority office. Mr. Sutton reminded the Board that the meeting is the first Wednesday of the month.

Mr. Sutton advised the Board that the renovations are still moving along and will be completed before that meeting. The offices will also officially be open for business starting July 15, 2022.

2 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that we have previously introduced the budget for our next fiscal year starting July 1, 2022. We have received final approval from the State and there are two (2) resolutions on the agenda for consideration. Proper notification has taken place with regard to the newspapers for the budget hearing we just held.

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution #2022-45, adopting the water budget for fiscal year beginning July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve Resolution #2022-46 adopting the sewer budget for fiscal year July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

3 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that there is a resolution on the agenda for consideration with regard to the budget appropriation transfers as permitted by Statute. There was a subsequent follow-up from Mrs. Princiotti for one (1) additional transfer in order to pay a bill that came in last minute, requiring an additional transfer. It is recommended that this be adopted.

A motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution #2022-39 authorizing the transfer of appropriations in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

4 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that we attended an online auction concerning the proposed electricity rates for the future. The rates were not great.

Even with the energy costs skyrocketing, Mr. Sutton stated that he is willing to take the position of not accepting the rates today and give it a little bit of time as we head through the summer months with the high demands and current costs. We are locked in with Atlantic City Electric through July. He anticipates going out to auction again., but at this time recommends tabling Resolution #2022-40.

5 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that there is a resolution on the agenda for consideration with regard to the Non-Union Employment Agreement. This is for the employees that opted to not be members of the bargaining unit. The document has been reviewed and approved by Authority Counsel and has also been discussed and recommended by the Personnel Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution #2022-41 adopting an employment agreement for non-union members. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

6 – Mr. Sutton stated that again, he is required to mention that anyone who is in arrears with their water and sewer charges between the time period of March 9, 2020 and March 15, 2022, may contact the office to make an installment payment arrangement. There may also be other programs available for low-income assistance.

Mr. Sutton stated that this is just a point of information. We have approximately four to five of our rate payers that have set up a payment plan. He believes that four of the five ratepayers that have made a payment plan have not lived up to the arrangement and are in default, and therefore no longer eligible for an arrangement. Letters will be going out today notifying them of such.

Mr. Sutton explained that we will have to continue to make this announcement at our meetings for quite a while.

Mr. Sutton stated that there were no customer committee matters to come before the Board and there was no need for Executive Session.

Mr. Filiciello asked for clarification with regard to our next meeting being held on July 6, 2022 and that this is a Wednesday, and will our meetings moving forward be held on Wednesdays.

Mr. Sutton advised Mr. Filiciello that this particular meeting of July 6, 2022 is on a Wednesday due to a conflict in scheduling and that typically our meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. We publish our meetings for the year at the beginning of each year and at that time there was a conflict in scheduling.

Mr. Sutton asked if there were any questions with regard to the Executive Director's Report? There being none, a motion was made by Mrs. DePergola, seconded by Mr. Miller, to approve the Executive Director's Report as submitted. All in favor.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Mr. Sutton advised the Board that the minutes of the Personnel Committee are attached and items pertaining to these matters were previously addressed. At this time, he requested a motion and second for approval.

A motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Personnel Committee report as submitted. All in favor.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1 – Mr. DiFrancia welcomed everyone and hoped they have been doing well and staying healthy. He advised the Board that there are several resolutions on the agenda for consideration.

2 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that Resolution #2022-42 is on the agenda for consideration with regard to the annual Chemical Contracts, No. 2, 3, 4 and 6. These contracts were a re-bid and it is recommended for approval.

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Cicco to approve Resolution #2022-42 awarding Chemical Contracts No. 2, 3, 4, and 6 to various vendors. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

3 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that Resolution #2022-43 is on the agenda for consideration with regard to water plant supplies for the upcoming year. This is also a re-bid and it is recommended for approval.

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mrs. DePergola to approve Resolution #2022-43 awarding contract for the supply of water plant supplies to various vendors. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

4 – Mr. DiFrancia advised that Resolution #2022-44 is on the agenda for consideration with regard to sewer plant supplies for the upcoming year. This is also a re-bid and it is recommended for approval.

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve Resolution #2022-44 awarding contract for the supply of sewer plant supplies to various vendors. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

5 - Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that the decommissioning of Well #5 is underway. AC Schultes has completed the first part of removing the 6-inch sleeve that was inside the 8-inch casing on May 31st. The power, telephone and natural gas have all been decommissioned from the building as well, and the contractor is on schedule.

6 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that Well #6 is back online after a full rehabilitation of the filter and brining systems. The work was done by himself along with the staff in-house.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that they actually went a step further and rehabbed the entire brining system which aids the overall filtration system, and removed and replaced the stone in the bottom of the filter as well. This has saved the rate payers a substantial amount of money and it was very important this be done before our increased water demand during the summer months.

7 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that the hydrant flushing was fully completed. There were little deficiencies with the operation of the hydrants and any issues were immediately taken care of.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that as mentioned before, hydrant flushing is critical to the maintenance of the Authority's distribution system, and is required to be done at least once a year by the State.

8 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that we have finally received SED approval for Phase II of the Mystic Islands Water and Sewer Main Replacement Project. We are just waiting for authorization to go to bid. The Authority's Engineer will discuss this further.

9 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that the yearly lead and copper sampling is now taking place as required by the State. Thank you to all the residents who have cooperated with taking these samples and to the employees for picking them up and getting them to the certified laboratories.

10 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that the Work Order Management Report has been attached and reviewed the items on the report.

Mr. DiFrancia added that there were two sewer backups that ended up being sewer main collapses located in the area of the Phase II replacement project, actually on East Susquehanna Drive. Both jobs were very difficult and long but were done and completed by our employees in -house.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that was all for his Superintendent's Report unless there were any questions. There being none a motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Superintendent's Report as submitted. All in favor.

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Dittenhofer wished everyone well and stated he only had a couple updates to review today.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that as mentioned by the Superintendent, we have received our SED approval for Phase II of the Mystic Island Water and Sewer Main Replacement Project. This has been a very long time coming so we are pleased to be reporting this.

Mr. Dittenhofer advised the Board that we are waiting for approval to go out to bid, and once we have that, a new timeline will be provided.

Mr. Dittenhofer advised the Board that design is underway for Phase III, and that all permit packages have been completed, but we are waiting to get a little more ahead with Phase II before we actually submit the applications for Phase III.

Mr. Dittenhofer advised that the decommissioning of Well #5 is underway and once completed, we will be providing the necessary information to the DEP.

Mr. Sutton asked Mr. Dittenhofer if they have had any recent bid openings similar to that of the Mystic Islands Phase II Project and was curious to know how the pricing was?

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that the pricing has come in high, but if you are willing to substitute some of the materials it may not be that impactful. The biggest area of concern and what has been seen is with the fuel prices across the industry. However, he is fairly confident that even under these circumstances, we will be able to get some bids that will fall within our threshold.

Mr. Sutton stated that he hopes so and that this project is already substantially delayed and as mentioned by Superintendent DiFrancia earlier, we encountered some pretty substantial issues with the sewer mains in the area of Phase II. And as seen with our bid for the plant supplies, you can see the substantial increase to the cost of supplies.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that the increase cost of fuel, supplies and materials has made it very difficult for those on both sides of the table to budget and estimate the cost of projects in the current economy.

Mr. Sutton thanked Mr. Dittenhofer and asked if there were any other questions for the Engineer's Report? There being none, a motion was made by Mrs. DePergola, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Engineer's Report as submitted. All in favor.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mrs. Rumpf wished everyone well and stated that her report has been submitted and she would be happy to answer any questions at this time.

Mr. Sutton asked if there were any questions with regard to the Attorney's Report? There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Attorney's Report as submitted. All in favor.

Mr. Sutton asked for a motion to accept and file all general correspondence. A motion was made by Mrs. DePergola, seconded by Mr. Miller to accept and file all general correspondence. All in favor.

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Miller to open this portion of the meeting to the public. All in favor.

Mr. Sutton asked if there was any member of the public on the tele-conference? There being no public in attendance, a motion was made by Mrs. DePergola, seconded by Mr. Cicco to close this portion of the meeting to the public. All in favor.

With nothing else further coming before the Board, a motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mrs. DePergola to adjourn. All in favor.


Kenneth Miller, Secretary