

**LEHMUA**  
**Regular Meeting**

**November 9, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Little Egg Harbor Municipal Utilities Authority was held on November 9, 2022, 12:00 PM at the Authority headquarters, 823 Radio Road, Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Margaret DePergola, Chairwoman; Joseph Koptic, Vice-Chair (via tele-conference), Marie Skelly, Treasurer (via tele-conference); Kenneth Miller, Secretary; Peter Cicco; 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; Alan Dittenhofer, Authority Engineer; Debra Rumpf, Esq., Authority Attorney

**THOSE ABSENT:** Kenneth Maxwell

**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 Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the minutes of the October 12, 2022 regular meeting. Roll call vote, Chris Filiciello – yes, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

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

**BILLS RESOLUTION**

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

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

1 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that as a point of information, the Authority personnel have been extremely busy, being pulled in many different directions due to repairs as well as a lot of ongoing paving projects performed by the County and Little Egg Harbor Township. This has not been easy for scheduling with vacation and limited staffing. The efforts of our staff are greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Superintendent DiFrancia with the coordination of everything.

Public safety is at risk with some of these projects, so the efforts of Mr. DiFrancia and our staff are very much appreciated.

2 – Mr. Sutton stated that as a point of information, an advertisement will be placed for an auction date with regard to the sale of the property at 102 East Shrewsbury Drive. This will take place in November 2022.

3 – Mr. Sutton stated that there is a resolution on the agenda authorizing the refund for an overpayment to a lien holder. It is recommended for adoption.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution #2022-65 authorizing the reimbursement to ProCap 8, LLC, lien holder for property affecting Block 325.27 Lot 10. Roll call vote, Chris Filiciello – yes, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

4 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that we were contacted by the owners of the Rams Head Inn in Absecon. The water tower which is on their site was originally given to them by the Authority several years ago and was originally located next to the wireless tower in Mystic Islands. It's been on their site for all of these years. We were contacted because they are set to demolish the building, and wanted to know if we wanted the tower back.

Mr. Sutton stated that he expressed an interest in getting the tower back but would have to get estimates on relocating it and restoring it as well. He hopes we can make this happen and preserve a little history, the tower is 110 years old, so this would be great and a really neat thing from a public relations standpoint if we were able to make this happen.

Mr. Sutton stated that we have contacted New Jersey Water Association and they will go out there with their drone and do a video of the tower itself to inspect its condition. Either way, he is happy they thought of us and reached out. He will keep the Board up to date.

5 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that we are in the process of evaluating several phone systems for the office. We have been notified by our current carrier that the phone system we purchased a little more than eight (8) years ago will no longer be offering support.

Mr. Sutton stated that once we get some pricing he will report back to the Board.

6 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that the blinds for the boardroom have been ordered and will be installed on November 11, 2022, Veteran's Day. He will be here in the office during the installation. This will be the finishing touch on the office renovation and we are very pleased with the outcome.

7 - Mr. Sutton stated that once again, he needs to add a reminder that anyone who is in arrears with their water and sewer charges between the period of March 9, 2020 and March 15, 2022, a person may contact the office to make an installment agreement. In addition, there may be other programs available for low-income assistance. To date there are now 11 customers who have submitted application to the State for this program. The State has now begun to pay directly to the Authority some of those individual's accounts that were in the arrears. We are still working through some of those details.

8 – Mr. Sutton reminded everyone that the final day to make a payment in order to avoid Tax Sale is November 10, 2022. The physical Tax Sale won't occur until December 21, 2022. This is due to publishing issues and other township's holding the tax sales as well.

Mrs. Princiotti stated that the State does not permit more than one tax sale being held per day, so clearly this can cause some scheduling issues.

Mr. Sutton stated that after November 10, 2022 those customers that need to make payment have to do so at the Township via cash or certified funds. We can no longer accept payments for delinquent accounts here at the office. It is out of our hands after November 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Sutton asked that the Board direct anyone who asks them about the Tax Sale to call the office. That way it avoids any issues as it relates to communication of the procedures.

Mr. Sutton advised that there is one issue as it relates to Customer Committee and we can act on that at this time.

Mr. Sutton explained that there was some water overage due to a necessary repair that was made. It is customary that we provide a one-time forgiveness of 50% of the excess charges. It is recommended that we accept those minutes and provide that one-time forgiveness.

Mr. Sutton stated that there is no need for Executive Session and that was all for his report unless there were any questions.

There being none a motion was made by Mr. Cicco seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Executive Director's Report as submitted. All in favor.

#### CUSTOMER COMMITTEE

Mr. Sutton reviewed the minutes of the Customer Committee with the Board and asked if there were any questions.

There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Cicco to approve the Customer Committee report as submitted. All in favor.

#### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that as mentioned by the Executive Director, we have been extremely busy. The Ocean County Road Department has been performing drainage pipe replacement throughout various locations along Radio Road, Center Street and Route 539. They have been installing the drainage pipe over top of our water mains. We have had our employees out there on site to ensure that when installing their drainage pipe, they are not damaging or breaking our water lines. One of the jobs at Playhouse and Radio Road was very critical and we had to be on site to stabilize our water main and the valve that was in the ground so that they could go underneath it. The job was completed and actually went very well.

Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that the Township also has a contractor performing drainage work as well. We are working with them too to make sure our water mains are not compromised.

2 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that the Notice to Proceed has been issued for the installation of water and sewer service connections along Stage Road. Work is scheduled to begin on or before November 9, 2022 and to be completed no later than December 12, 2022. This work has been expedited to facilitate projected road repaving for Spring 2023.

3 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that the Authority has completed the task of rehabbing all the piping within the wet well and coinciding by-pass chamber at Pumps Station No. 2. As the Director has previously mentioned, the work was extensive and saved our rate payers a substantial amount of money by the Authority's personnel performing this work in-house. The job is being finished today, and the by-pass pump is being picked up tomorrow.

4 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that his work order management report was included with the package and reviewed the items.

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. Miller, seconded by Mr. Cicco to approve the Superintendent's Report as submitted. All in favor.

Mrs. DePergola stated that we are going to postpone the tour of the Water Treatment Plant at Well No. 12 until everyone can be present.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that maybe it will be better to get some dates together from everyone for some time during the week and coordinate something that accommodates everyone.

Mr. Sutton stated that is a great recommendation. Mrs. Skelly was interested in seeing this facility and with her laryngitis wasn't able to physically attend the meeting today. Gathering some dates that work for everyone is a good idea.

#### ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Dittenhofer wished everyone well and stated the Engineer's Report has been submitted for review. He only has one update and unfortunately it is not a good one.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that with regard to Phase II of the Mystic Islands Water and Sewer Main Replacement Project, we are still struggling with the engineering permitting process from the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank. We are having difficulties obtaining authorization to advertise and it's unfortunate because it is the last item. We have gone back and forth several times and always receive the same response and comments. It is very difficult to work with them because many of the State workers still work remotely from home, so you're not able to contact them directly. We are hoping to set up a phone conference that would include the Authority and the State and get some sort of resolution.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that was all for his report and apologized for the bad news. He would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Sutton stated that this is unfortunate because we are almost two (2) years behind schedule and the rates for borrowing have gone up considerably, as well as material and labor costs. It has been very frustrating.

Mrs. DePergola asked if there were any questions for the Engineer. There being no questions, a motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Cicco 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 for approval.

Mrs. Rumpf stated that she feels the professional we appointed to handle the cell tower leases for the Authority is excellent and she is very pleased with his prompt responses and attention to detail.

Mrs. DePergola asked if there were any questions for our Attorney. There being none a motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Attorney's Report as submitted. All in favor.

Chairwoman DePergola asked if there were any matters to come before the Board? There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to accept and file all general correspondence. All in favor.

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

There being no public in attendance, a motion was made by Mr. Miller, 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. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to adjourn. All in favor.



Kenneth Miller, Secretary