

**LEHMUA  
Regular Meeting**

**January 10, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Little Egg Harbor Municipal Utilities Authority was held on January 10, 2023, 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 (via tele-conference); Kenneth Maxwell (via tele-conference) 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; Debra Rumpf, Esq., Authority Attorney

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 Mr. Miller, seconded by Mrs. Skelly to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2022 regular meeting. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco - yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A motion was made by Mrs. Skelly, seconded by Mr. Miller, 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 Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller, 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.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1 – Mr. Sutton asked Mr. Cicco if he had taken the oath at the Township upon his re-appointment?

Mr. Cicco stated that he had not, and Mr. Sutton asked Mrs. Rumpf to swear Mr. Cicco in at this time.

Mrs. Rumpf swore Mr. Cicco in, and the meeting resumed.

Mr. Sutton thanked Mrs. Rumpf and congratulated Mr. Cicco. He thanked Mr. Cicco for his continued support of him and his entire staff at the Authority, it is a pleasure working with him through the years.

2 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that Resolution #2023-1 is on the agenda re-appointing professional services for Dynamic Testing Services for our drug and alcohol testing company for the ensuing year. It is recommended that we adopt this resolution.

A motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution #2023-1 authorizing the re-appointment of professional services to Dynamic Testing Services for CDL random drug and alcohol testing. 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 Resolution #2023-4 is on the agenda for consideration. This resolution is for his re-appointment as the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the Authority for the ensuing year. It is recommended that we adopt this resolution.

A motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Cicco re-appointing Earl F. Sutton, Jr., Executive Director, as the Public Agency Compliance Officer. 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 Resolution #2023-5 is on the agenda for adoption. This resolution is for his re-appointment to Fund Commissioner, and Mrs. DePergola as Alternate Fund Commissioner. It is recommended that this resolution be adopted.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve Resolution #2023-5 appointing Earl F. Sutton, Jr., as Fund Commissioner and Margaret DePergola as Alternate Fund Commissioner pursuant to Article III of the By-Laws of the New Jersey Utility Authorities Joint Insurance Fund. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco - yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

5 – Mr. Sutton stated that as a point of information, we were able to get an excellent CD Rate of 4.25% for an 18-month term at Lakeland Bank. He thanked Mrs. Princiotti for handling this.

6 – Mr. Sutton advised that the certified letters have been mailed to all residents on Stage Road where water and/or sewer service connections were placed at the curb. The letter stated that each homeowner will have one (1) full year from December 12, 2022 to run the mandatory connections to their respective homes. If they fail to do so, there could be fines and penalties assessed by the Township.

Mr. Sutton thanked Mrs. Rumpf for her assistance with the letters.

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.

Mr. Sutton stated that a few people made payment arrangements, but subsequently did not adhere to what was agreed upon, therefore defaulted on their agreement.

Mr. Sutton stated that the Governor continues to extend courtesies and make exceptions, but this impacts our cash flow as we aren't able to obtain that money right away, and we aren't able to assess any interest for those who don't pay on time.

Mr. Sutton stated that there were no customer committee issues and no executive session for this meeting.

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

### SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1- Mr. DiFrancia wished everyone a Happy New Year and congratulated Mr. Cicco on his re-appointment to the Board.

2 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that Resolution #2023-2 is on the agenda for consideration with regard to Change Order No. 1 for CTX Infrastructure and the Stage Road Project. The change order represents a decrease to the original contract amount. A letter from our counsel is attached as well.

A motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Cicco approving Resolution #2023-2 with regard to Change Order No. 1 for CTX Infrastructure for the water and sewer main tapping, water services and sewer laterals at various locations. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco - yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

3 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that Resolution #2023-3 is on the agenda for consideration with regard to the release of the performance bond, subject to the posting of a maintenance bond for CTX Infrastructure. A letter from our legal counsel is attached as well.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mrs. Skelly to approve Resolution #2023-3 authorizing the release of the performance bond by CTX Infrastructure for the water and sewer tapping, water services and sewer lateral at various locations. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco - yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

4 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that the required UCMR5 sampling will be completed by the end of this week, beginning of the next. We will have to repeat this testing in six (6) months and if all is good, we won't have to sample again for another three (3) years.

5 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that the Authority is working cooperatively with Ocean County while paving Radio Road, Center Street and Mathistown Road. Our personnel have been going behind them to ensure that the manholes and valve boxes are to grade each day. With the manpower this takes, we are looking forward to this being completed.

6 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that his work order management report has been attached and reviewed the items.

Mr. Sutton asked Mr. DiFrancia to explain what he and the plant personnel went through with regard to the freezing and the water issues during the extremely cold weather we encountered around the holiday.

Mr. Sutton stated that we try to be proactive and we sent out a global call to about 7000 of our customers warning them of the dropping temperatures and how to prepare their home and water lines from freezing and breaking.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that the DEP sent out notification of the extreme weather temperatures we were about to have and warned us to be prepared. What happens is with freezing temperatures, the ground freezes and pushes down on our lines and causes breaks in the system. We were prepared and took every action we could. Through the global call we warned people of potential freezing at hose bibs, crawl spaces etc. Even with that, we had an astonishing number of leaks, around 45-50 in that first 24-hour period. On that Friday, our employees were going from leak to leak shutting water off and trying to get a hold of customers. The office personnel were running high use reports and flagging accounts for the plant personnel to check. We had personnel in around the clock shutting water off that was pouring out of homes. By Tuesday of the next week when the weather started warming up, we had even more breaks. When the pipes freeze like this they expand, and then split, and as water begins to melt, the leaks appear. We were flagging any account that used over 1,000 gallons of water in a 24-hour period and calling the homeowner to see what was going on before we shut the water off. Houses where water is pouring from the house, and we don't have a phone number for, we automatically shut the water off at these houses. We go to extensive means in gathering phone numbers when we don't have them in the system.

Mr. Sutton stated that most people are reasonable but some question the charge to turn the water off. A majority of them are thankful we are able to contact them and assist them.

Mr. Sutton stated that even with many of our residents being seasonal, they have not prepared their homes in advance for temperatures like this.

Mr. DiFrancia added that with our GIS System, we are able to easily locate the valve boxes during this time. And if something doesn't come up on the GIS, many of the customer accounts have triangulations uploaded in the system. Between this and the telephone we were able to really help our rate payers during this freeze.

Mr. Filiciello asked Mr. DiFrancia what lessons we learned from this and if there was something we could do better next time?

Mr. DiFrancia stated that with all the technology we have at the Authority, along with the experience, knowledge and dedication of our plant personnel, we are far more advanced than most Authorities. A lot of the time, our plant personnel have to have the knowledge and experience to make the call on whether water should be turned off or not. For example, we don't want to be turning water off at a home where the homeowner has purposely left a sink running in order to prevent the freezing from occurring in the first place. We have to make that judgement call.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that we aren't able to prevent breaks, but we also are very proactive in notifying our ratepayers. As the Director mentioned earlier, we send out global calls as a way to provide people with information on how to prepare for events such as this. With that, our personnel are prepared as well, whether it is driving up and down streets watching for outpouring water, or dropping blue cards in doors and making phone calls.

Mr. Sutton stated that when he first came to the Authority we had almost no phone numbers for our ratepayers. We have worked diligently over the last several years to make sure we have telephone numbers and email addresses for events such as this. When we send out the yearly

newsletter we are sure to mention the importance of updated contact information as well. We also provide information on preventing breaks and leaks in the home, such as properly winterizing the homes, using heat tape, etc. We even have stickers on our meters regarding freezing. The system works, but unfortunately, we can't always prevent leaks and breaks from happening, but we will always take a proactive approach.

Mr. DiFrancia stated that was all for his 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.

#### ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Dittenhofer wished everyone a Happy new Year and congratulated Mr. Cicco on his re-appointment to the Board of Commissioners. His report has been submitted and he has only one update to mention.

Mr. Dittenhofer advised the Board that with regard to Phase II of the Mystic Water and Sewer Main Replacement, Remington and Vernick, along with the Authority's Administrative Staff have worked together to prepare the jurisdictional determination to the State. That is almost ready to be submitted. Once submitted we are hoping we have a fast turnaround and can move forward with advertisement.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that there are no other actionable items on his report, but would be happy to answer any questions. There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the Engineer's Report as submitted. All in favor.

#### ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mrs. Rumpf wished everyone a Happy New Year, and congratulated Mr. Cicco on his re-appointment. Her Report has been submitted for review and she would be happy to answer any questions.

There being no questions, a motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve the Attorney's Report as submitted. All in favor.

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

A motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Koptic 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. Koptic, seconded by Mr. Miller to adjourn. All in favor.

  
Kenneth Miller, Secretary