

LEHMUA
Regular Meeting

May 9, 2023

The regular meeting of the Little Egg Harbor Municipal Utilities Authority was held on May 9, 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; Kenneth Miller, Secretary; Peter Cicco; 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:

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 April 11, 2023 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 Mr. Miller, 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 Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve the operational account bills resolution as submitted. 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 began by thanking the Commissioners for acting on and adopting the proposed budget at the April meeting. He thanked everyone involved and appreciates their efforts. He apologized for missing the meeting but explained that he had a death in the family and the services were on the same day as the meeting.

Mr. Sutton stated that as a point of information there is going to be a Rate Hearing on May 31, 2023, here at the Authority office. It is not necessary that Board members attend but can if you choose. We will not need to take official action at the hearing. There will be a court reporter here. Again, it is open to the public and the public would have the opportunity to express their concerns, which of course would be handled accordingly.

2 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that bid packets were opened on April 13, 2023 for Emergency Repairs, Chemical Contract and Water and Sewer Plant Supplies. There are several recommendations for award that will be handled by Mr. DiFrancia on his report. If there are not specific contracts that are awarded today, the Authority has not made a final decision at this time. This year we will be potentially participating with Stafford Township Co-Op for the purchase of some additional chemicals. Their bid is going to take place later this month.

3 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that Resolution #2023-21 is being presented hiring Nicholas Schano for the position of Utility Worker.

Mr. Sutton stated that he had a telephone conversation with Mrs. Skelly along with Mr. Miller with regard to the recommendation of bringing Mr. Schano on as a full-time, permanent employee. As a point of reference Mr. Schano was previously employed with the Authority a few years ago. He left to go into the Marine Corps and returned and was very happy to come back and work with us. He has been working with us through his 90 day probationary period and has done very well.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to approve Resolution #2023-21 hiring Nicholas Schano as Utility Worker with the Authority. 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 as a point of information the annual CCR and newsletter were mailed out on May 4, 2023. Most people received them the next day or thereafter. It came out very good and is very informative. We have not received any calls which is surprising because we did notify people in the newsletter portion, that we would be having a rate increase.

5 – Mr. Sutton advised the Board that the Authority did attend the Annual Senior Expo last week. Thank you to Tonya Trettin and Vicky Albright for attending and helping with that. It wasn't super busy, but there were familiar faces as in the past years. There were some questions and we were there to answer them accordingly.

6 – Mr. Sutton stated that there was a letter of appreciation in the package with regard to Superintendent DiFrancia. It is commonplace with Mr. DiFrancia, as well as our entire staff that they really go the extra mile. But it is nice when a customer reaches out and shares their experience, acknowledging the good service provided. Particularly when she anticipated she was going to have nothing but negative action taken, and she saw how proactive we are.

Mr. Sutton stated that he did call her shortly after receiving the letter to thank her for her feedback and that it is appreciated. He thanked Mr. DiFrancia.

7 – Mr. Sutton stated that we do not have to stay after the meeting today to watch the video as required by the JIF, everyone has watched it, and he appreciates this. He reminded the Board that for each member that watched the video, the Authority receives a discount to our deductible.

8– Mr. Sutton stated that this next item, which can be confirmed by Mrs. Princiotti is getting out of control. The State is trying to make an effort to assist individuals at various income levels with payments that would have been in arrears during a specific window during COVID. They have made some payments to the Authority which have been a nightmare. They send payments without any indication of what account or homeowner it should go to and what it is for.

Mr. Sutton advised the Board that someone from the State sent an email in which over 300 people were copied on, informing utility companies that people have assistance available and that the Authority is required to assist customers in making payment arrangements. People replied and were frustrated with the State and the lack of information and forethought before implementing something such as this. We will always take the approach of not responding with comments and going back and forth. However, this program has received many negative comments.

Mr. Sutton stated that he can attest to the fact that the Authority has had limited people even attempt to enter into an arrangement, and those that have, defaulted.

Mr. Sutton stated that in his opinion this may have been a good idea to begin with, but with the lack of communication and information the program is not working and he doesn't see this getting better with time.

Mr. Sutton went on to remind everyone that once again, anyone 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 installment arrangements. In addition, there may be other programs available for Low-Income assistance.

9 – Mr. Sutton stated that there are no customer committee matters for this meeting and there is no need for Executive Session at this time.

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. Cicco to approve the Executive Director's Report as submitted. All in favor

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that there are resolutions being presented for the annual chemical contracts, emergency repairs, and water and sewer plant supplies. All bids were reviewed and there are recommendations of award.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mrs. Skelly to approve Resolution #2023-17 awarding Chemical Contracts No. 1,3 and 5 to various vendors. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve Resolution #2023-18 awarding Emergency Repair bid to Crest Construction Group, LLC. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve Resolution #2023-19 awarding water supply contracts to various vendors. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

A motion was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Cicco to approve Resolution #2023-20 awarding sewer supply contracts to various vendors. Roll call vote, Peter Cicco – yes, Kenneth Miller – yes, Marie Skelly – yes, Joseph Koptic – yes, Margaret DePergola – yes.

2 – Mr. DiFrancia advised the Board that the hydrant flushing project is still underway. It is anticipated to be finished at the end of May. This is where we flush the hydrants, and check for any deficiencies, and make the necessary repairs should there be any.

3 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that also in May we are continuing with the ISO flushing. We are down to two (2) hydrants. This is for the insurance policies for the fire districts. Once complete we will get that report to the ISO.

4- Mr. DiFrancia stated that per the DEP rules that changed, the Authority is required to submit a well vulnerability assessment. With help from the engineer we have received confirmation that the reports have been received and are currently under review. This is for the SOC Waiver for the periods of 2023 through 2025.

Mr. DiFrancia thank Mr. Dittenhofer for his assistance with preparing this.

5 – Mr. DiFrancia reminded the Board that he and the plant personnel have been busy rehabbing several of our facilities, doing about 90% of the work in-house. Most recently we have upgraded our lime pump at Well No. 6, on Great Bay Boulevard. We are putting another pump there as a backup pump next month as well.

6 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that Well No. 12 Water Treatment Plant has officially been released from quarterly sampling. Once the well went under the permit to operate, the State is very strict with their rules on sampling. After succeeding in quarterly sampling and meeting their requirements for over a year, we applied for reduced monitoring. Now, most sampling is required only once a year and some are 3-6 year terms. This is a huge help with time as well as a cost savings for the Authority.

7 – Mr. DiFrancia stated that his Work Order Management Report is included in the package. He reviewed all the items and thanked the clerical staff for staying up to date on the meter repairs.

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

ENGINEER'S REPORT

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that his report has been submitted and he would like to go over a few items.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that with regard to Phase II of the Mystic Island Water and Sewer Main Replacement, he expressed that he knows we have been over this before. We are still in review with the State for our New Jersey Division of Land Use Jurisdictional Determination. They have been very difficult to communicate with. We have elevated our communication to the New Jersey Attorney

General who serves as the DEP's attorney of record. We are hoping they will have the ability to shed some light on this. We have sent a lot of correspondence asking for clarification with no response.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that with regard to Phase III, his office has revised the design plans and is hoping to be able to submit application to the State soon. We do want to wait until Phase II is off the ground before sending these out.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that as mentioned by the Superintendent, his office assisted the Authority in the Well Vulnerability Assessment and submitted it to the State, and was able to finish it by the unanticipated submittal date.

Mr. Dittenhofer stated that was all unless there were any questions. There being none, a motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Koptic to approve the engineer's report as submitted.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mrs. Rumpf advised the Board that her report has been submitted and she would be happy to answer any questions at this time.


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

A motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to accept and file general correspondence. All in favor.

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

There being nothing further to come before the Board, a motion was made by Mr. Cicco, seconded by Mr. Miller to adjourn. All in favor.


Kenneth Miller, Secretary