

WESTERN MONMOUTH UTILITIES AUTHORITY

PUBLIC MEETING

April 14, 2020

Chairman Pernice requested that Brian J. Valentino open the meeting. Mr. Valentino called the Western Monmouth Utilities Authority's Public meeting to order at 7:00PM. It was announced that pursuant to the Open Public Meeting Act and N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., adequate notice of this meeting has been sent to the Asbury Park Press, The Home News and Tribune, Clerks of Manalapan and Marlboro Townships, and is posted in the lobby of the Western Monmouth Utilities Authority ("W.M.U.A.")

All present cited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Upon roll call:

Present (on the phone): Messrs. McEnery, Mendez, Pernice, and Rosen

Absent: None

Also in Attendance (on the phone): F. Borin, DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick & Cole LLP
G. Stankiewicz, Accountant
B. Valentino, CEO/Executive Director
J. Carr, Chief Operating Officer
K. Leatherman, Chief Administrative Officer

Please note that this meeting was done via video conference. Each attendee announced themselves as per Chairman Pernice's request. Mr. Valentino stated that he is the only one in the office and has opened the doors for the public. Chairman Pernice stated that we are conducting this meeting remotely because of the severe nature of the pandemic. Chairman Pernice requested that Frank Borin, the Authority Attorney state that we are in full compliance with the law because we are conducting this meeting remotely. Frank Borin stated that we are in full compliance with the open public meetings act. The Department of community affairs issued some guidance that we conduct these meetings via teleconference.

Chairman Pernice asked for a moment of silence to honor those who have passed away from this horrific pandemic and those who are currently ill, for them to have a full recovery and anybody in our WMUA family that have been impacted.

Mr. Valentino opened the meeting to the public and stated he is in the Administration Building and no public is present or on line. Chairman Pernice stated that we will now close the meeting to the public.

Chairman Pernice stated that we are going to move right to the discussion item.

Chairman Pernice continued with Discussion.

- Chairman Pernice asked if there was any comment regarding Employee Assistance Program. Mr. Valentino stated that this is 20-57; Authorizing the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to Employees of the WMUA and Their Families. He stated that we are not required to have an EAP but it is standard practice nowadays. The reason that he hasn't pursued it before this is because we have a limited selection of EAP Programs available to us through the State Health Benefits Plan. The Authority also has a substance abuse counselor which is part of our compliance program for the drug and alcohol testing. With the current emergency he thought it would be appropriate for us to make these additional services available to the WMUA staff. EAP's are very affordable given the menu of options you get. As per the Letter of Agreement he provided to the Commissioner, we interviewed a couple of different providers. Kathy Leatherman can update the Commissioners on the different providers. The most complete proposal came from Preferred Behavioral Health Group. This quote is for \$2,750.00 per year which doesn't require a vote by the Commissioners. He stated that he did ask for quotes. Mr. Valentino stated since this is a recent addition to the union contract; an employee benefit that was not negotiated he felt the Commissioners should be made aware by Resolution for the record. He stated he just didn't want the Commissioners to think he was trying to sneak things into the contract that weren't supposed to be there. Chairman Pernice asked if anyone had any questions. Mr. Stankiewicz stated as an auditor he appreciates money spent on record in a Resolution, he said better safe than sorry. There were no other questions.

Resolution:

20-57 Authorizing Employee Assistance Program to Employees of the WMUA and Their Families

Chairman Pernice asked for a motion for Resolution 20-57. Commissioner Mendez moved, seconded by Commissioner Rosen, all present voted aye.

AYES:	Messrs. McEnergy, Mendez, Pernice and Rosen
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None
ABSENT:	None

Chairman Pernice asked Mr. Valentino to confirm the Resolutions on the Consent Agenda; Resolutions 20-58 through 20-61.

Chairman Pernice asked if there was any discussion regarding the Consent Agenda. There was none. Chairman Pernice asked for a motion on the Consent Agenda for Resolutions 20-58 through 20-61. Commissioner Rosen moved, seconded by Commissioner McEnergy, all present voted aye.

AYES:	Messrs. McEnery, Mendez, Pernice and Rosen
NAYS:	None
ABSTENTIONS:	None
ABSENT:	None

Resolutions:

- 20-58 Approving Minutes of March 24, 2020
- 20-59 Extending and Revising Approval of Regent Park, Project #627
- 20-60 Authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer to Prepare Plans and Specifications, Advertise and Receive Bids for Paving and Sidewalk Repair at the WMUA Treatment Plant
- 20-61 Authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer to Prepare Specifications, Advertise and Receive Bids for the Purchase of Several Pumps for Various Pump Stations

Chairman Pernice asked if there were any questions on the bill list. There were no comments. Commissioner Mendez moved the bill list, seconded by Commissioner McEnery, all present voted aye.

Chairman Pernice confirmed that all the Resolutions were moved, the Consent Agenda and the Bill List. He stated he will turn the meeting over to Mr. Valentino for the the Chief Executive Officers report as well as Other Authority Business.

Mr. Valentino stated that he has a couple of items. Today the Commissioners received an email from Leslie Warshauer the Chief Financial Officer regarding the updated budget to actual numbers. He said that there is a little lag in those numbers just because the amount of time it's taking paper to rotate through the cycle and get inputted as far as purchase orders and other things. As far as the budget to actual is concerned it should be pretty close to the end of the month for March. Any questions can be emailed to either Leslie or Brian.

Mr. Valentino stated that we are still operating under a state of emergency. We had a Leadership Call on Monday and a full staff conference call this afternoon. Everything is going as good as can we can hope right now. Morale is exceedingly high, teamwork is off the charts and it is usually very high. Everybody has gone out of their way to make everything work. The little hiccups we have are nothing to be concerned about. We are starting to talk about bringing in a few more employees to time to time to start working on some of the deferred preventative maintenance programs that we knowingly put off. We now think that we can keep these additional employees socially distant to address some of these issues. We know that when we return to normal staffing that there will be a lot of maintenance to get caught up on. These will be big projects that routinely take a day or two to complete. The staff is coming up with list of things that they know need to get done to the managers at the same that the managers are coming up with other items and bringing it to the work force. We are really doing well under the circumstances. We are all anxious to get everybody back in and get our equipment up and running. Commissioner Mendez asked if we had any issues with the storm on Monday. Mr.

Valentino stated that our flow numbers were up significantly and the final clarifiers which do not like rain were coming close to flooding out of their operational area. They only operate at certain elevations of water and the more rain we get the higher the water comes up. It's a matter of valving, but the operators were on top of it. Other than the higher flow, no trees down and no damage was sustained to the plant. He checked first thing this morning.

Mr. Valentino stated that he has made phone to our Municipal and County partners since Monday. He spoke to the Administrators and the OEM Directors in both the towns as well our as colleagues throughout the county on the environmental. Everybody is basically in the same place. This is the new normal, but we are all working together to make it a success. He would like to congratulate Roger Brown. He received a frenzied phone call from the Middletown Township Sewerage Authority today. One of their computer systems was not working properly and Roger is an expert in that. Their regular vendor could not get out there to repair it. They called us hoping to borrow Roger got on a video conference with them and it was resolved in about 3 minutes. We were very happy to come to the mutual aid to one of our colleagues. This is why we do a weekly coordination calls between everybody in the environmental sector in the county.

The last thing he wants to report is that we do a weekly check on our Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Jim Carr our Chief Operating Officer did a great job assessing our supplies on Thursday. We have received an extra supply of surgical masks that the OEM Directors were able to give us. His report is complete and asked if there were any questions. Commissioner Rosen asked if he was aware if any of our staff is living alone or if we know of anyone need of any basic supplies, food etc. Mr. Valentino stated that he has three pieces of information regarding that. We do have employees that live alone and we are speaking to our employees every day or every other day. He stated that the people that live alone as far as he knows as are younger employees. The other piece of information is that Jenn Rivera the HR Officer is calling the entire staff at least once a week personally. He stated that he talks to everybody who is working on every shift every day when they are at work. He stated that they set up an informal unofficial Facebook page just for the employees to see if they need anything or surplus they want to share. The only thing that comes up is if anyone has extra masks or gloves. We do not share our official equipment from the office. Brian stated that he tries to purchase additional gloves and masks personally to share. Nothing is urgent and there is nothing that he is concerned about anybody's safety and wellbeing. . He said he thinks everybody feels well taken care of. He also wants to state that every employee wants to express their appreciation to the four Commissioners for the way that they have taken care of them with the scheduling. Every Authority is not having the same luck as we are as far as scheduling. Two of the Authorities in Monmouth County are having union problems because of their handling the emergency. This morning one of the questions was if anybody had amended their union contract in anticipation of the emergency. The WMUA was the only ones that did that and we are probably the only ones that didn't have to. We did it and took care of it. He thanked the Commissioners for their support but this is unusual and they have been extraordinary during this pandemic. Commissioner Mendez stated that they received a letter from George Kasternakis, the Plant Maintenance Manager thanking them for their support and they were very grateful for the letter!

Chairman Pernice stated that the second set of yearly bills went out recently, he was wondering if we have received any calls. Brian said he is in the office this week and he is answering some phones. He said after speaking to Jim, Kathy or Coleen, he doesn't think we are getting anything more than normal. He said a lot of people are not waiting for the message to finish before they hang up. He stated he spoke to Annie and she said she answers about 5 to 6 phone calls per day. We are not having significant issues. He said he answered some calls today some were about pay on lines or dropping off payments. Chairman Pernice stated that this sounds normal. Brian said that it seems like the public is dealing with this is as well. He said that he spoke with Judy today and she stated that she thinks that the bulk of the billing may hit tomorrow or Thursday. Chairman Pernice stated that he reached out to the Marlboro Council President, Carol Mazzola and told her what we are doing and how we are doing. He stated that she will probably share this information with the Council. He stated that the other Commissioners can share this information with their townships. Chairman Pernice asked Frank Borin, the Authority Attorney if he has anything to discuss in open session. Mr. Borin stated that he has nothing imperative. Mr. Valentino asked if he needed to go into Closed Session. He said he has nothing for Open or Closed Session. He stated that Closed Session is very difficult to create. Chairman Pernice asked if any other Commissioners need to discuss things. Commissioner Rosen stated that he thinks Brian is doing a great job and it was great to get that email from George Kasternakis. Brian stated that he would like Jim Carr to address the meeting.

Jim Carr stated that he really wanted to talk about the construction that is going on. The Governor signed the executive order that allows all utility work to continue. We are still moving ahead with all of our big projects. The concrete tank is being pre-stressed this week which means they are wrapping the tension wire around and pouring concrete over that. We found a few defects with the new pipe that the contractor installed on Route 79. He stated that the raw sewage pump station is just about finished. Commissioner Mendez asked Mr. Carr what type of defects. Jim Carr stated that a few sags in the new pipe. A gravity pipe is supposed to be perfectly straight on a pitch all going downhill. One section has settled or the contractor may have placed it too low and there is a pond in the pipe. This is not good for us, it will be a maintenance issue, and debris will stay stagnant and eventually cause a blockage. Most likely they will have to dig and replace that section of pipe. Commissioner Mendez asked about the GIS program that Maser was working on. Mr. Carr stated prior to the pandemic we had training schedule for April 1. We had to cancel the training because it is a face to face training with the whole. We will just wait until we are able to be in the same room again. Mr. Valentino stated that Maser is anxious to do a presentation for the Board, Jim Carr agreed. He stated that we may be able to that remotely. Chairman Pernice asked if there were any other questions or comments, there were none.

At 7:33pm Chairman Pernice asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Rosen moved, seconded by Commissioner McEnery, all present voted aye.

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