

# SPRING-BENNER-WALKER JOINT AUTHORITY

## REGULAR MEETING

October 11, 2021

### ATTENDANCE:

<b>AUTHORITY MEMBERS:</b>	<b>Spring</b>	Toby Dashner Joseph Galbraith Christie McMurtrie Vacancy
	<b>Benner</b>	Dan Hoffman Willis Houser, Jr.
	<b>Walker</b>	Dennis McDowell Joseph Swanderski

**GUESTS:** John Kostas – Grove Park

**CONSULTING SOLICITOR:** Robert Mix, Esq.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:** N. Warren Miller

**EMPLOYEES:** Will Barton, Tasha Dutton & Kelly Gill

### CALL TO ORDER:

The October 11, 2021, Regular Meeting of the Spring-Benner-Walker Joint Authority was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Dennis McDowell, Chairman. Mr. McDowell thanked everyone for attending and stated that the meeting would be recorded for transcription purposes.

### ROLL CALL:

Joseph Swanderski, Secretary, took Roll Call, recording seven members present. It was also noted that there is a Board vacancy in Spring Township. Mr. Book was excused from the meeting. Mr. McDowell, Chairman, noted that with a quorum present, the Spring-Benner-Walker Joint Authority was permitted to conduct business under the laws of Pennsylvania.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mr. McDowell, Chairman, led the Board members, Employees and Guests in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

Mr. McDowell asked the Board if there were any questions and/or changes to the September 27, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. **Mr. Galbraith moved, seconded by Mr. McMurtrie to approve the Minutes of the September 27, 2021 Regular Meeting as presented. 7 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 vacancy. The motion carried.**

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

**Gregg Heny** – We received a copy of Gregg Heny's letter of resignation from the Authority Board effective immediately. The original letter was sent to Spring Township Supervisors on 9/27/2021.

**APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS:**

Approval of Requisitions:

**Revenue Fund Requisition 2020-37** – Mr. McMurtrie presented the Board with Revenue Requisition #2020-37 in the amount of \$75,565.45. Mr. McDowell asked if there were any questions regarding the presentation of Revenue Fund Requisition #2020-37. **Mr. Galbraith moved, seconded by Mr. Dashner to approve Revenue Requisition 2020-37 payable to SBWJA in the amount of \$75,565.45. 7 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 vacancy. The motion carried.**

**GUESTS:**

**John Kostas** – Mr. Kostas indicated he had nothing to present to the Board at this time.

**SYSTEM OVERVIEW REPORT:**

Will Barton, Maintenance Crew Leader, provided an overview of the work completed on the sanitary sewer system for the month of September 2021.

**In-Home Inspections** - There were 22 in-home inspections completed in the month of September. Mr. Barton stated there was an HVAC connected to the sewer as an illegal connection and it has been corrected.

**Sewer Permits and/or Lateral Inspections** - Our maintenance department completed six (6) sewer lateral inspections. The office staff received six (6) new sewer permit applications in the amount of 8.50 EDUs for the month of September.

**System Maintenance** – The maintenance staff met with several homeowners that had multiple issues ranging from sewer backups, grinder pump alarms and locating private sewer laterals.

An aeration system was installed at Pump Station #7 (Zion Ridge) and will require Envirep's assistance to interface it with the pump control panel.

The maintenance staff crack sealed the parking lot of the office and at Pump Station #6 (Rockview). There were also several areas throughout the system that were crack sealed due to previous repairs being made by our staff. Mr. Barton indicated the entire office parking lot was sealed by B & B Sealcoating and the parking stalls were then painted by our staff.

We excavated and repaired a 6" X 4" reducer at 491 Millgate Road, which had a broken fitting.

The ceiling at P.S. #6 (Rockview) was repaired and we completed painting projects at the pump station as well. The Meter Guy calibrated the influent and effluent meters due to a substantial difference of the amount of flow coming in and going out of P.S. #6 (Rockview).

We witnessed the removal and capping of an unused 6" sewer lateral in Rosewood Cove and we also met with Steve Yarrison, on-site, to mark the remaining laterals in the development to help with future design.

On September 27, 2021 we performed the start-up of P.S. #18 (Village of Nittany Glen). There were a few issues noted and they have been repaired. Mr. Barton stated the pump station is fully operational except for the generator and transfer switch being installed due to the availability of the materials.

A chlorine gas regulator was replaced at P.S. #5 (Mingoville) and all floats and level sensors throughout the system were cleaned.

The maintenance staff repaired the fence at the ballfield, next to our shop, that was damaged by a tree that had fallen during a storm.

Our maintenance department began upgrading Pump Station #10 (Valley View) last week; however, the project was put on hold due to other time sensitive issues that came up.

**Video Truck** – Our personnel completed 4,234 feet of video inspection work at the Village of Nittany Glen Phase IV prior to our acceptance of the lines.

**Sewer Extensions** – Our staff performed vacuum, video and mandrel testing at the Village of Nittany Glen Phase IV and we continue sewer mainline inspections at Deerhaven and Steeplechase Townhomes Phase II. We reviewed and approved the record drawings for the Village of Nittany Glen Phase IV and reviewed and redlined the construction drawings for the Benner Pike Shopping Center.

**Call Outs/ PA One Calls** – There were no callouts for the month of September. Mr. Barton reported a total of 90 PA One Calls being located in September.

**Benner Township Water Authority** – The monthly analytical testing was performed and we met with two (2) homeowners to investigate high water usage and low water pressure. A chlorine feed pump was repaired at the Hampton Hills well house and staff completed the quarterly blow offs to both systems. There were five (5) PA One Calls located in September on the water system.

**Logan Greene Phase 1A.1** – Mr. Galbraith asked if the sewer mainline alignment at the Logan Greene Phase 1A.1 was corrected. Mr. Barton stated we were able to accept the line as is because the run is over 400 feet long and is off 16 inches horizontally; therefore, it will not affect the flow.

**Work Zone Safety** – Mr. Houser stated that he has encountered the SBWJA crew working at Pump Station #10 (Valley View) and Pump Station #11 (Jenny Gap) multiple times and had indicated the work zones were not properly equipped with safety signs or traffic control. Mr. Barton indicated he will ensure the work area is properly signed in the future.

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**Letter of Support Water/Wastewater Operator for CPI** – Mr. Miller stated that he provided a letter of support to the Central Pennsylvania Institute of Science and Technology (CPI) for the establishment and pursuance of Water and Wastewater Operators to be licensed or registered at their facility. It was noted that CPI is applying for grant monies and accreditations for the program.

**O & M Agreement for Private Sewer Extensions/Belle Rose Townhomes** – The Authority has been discussing PA DEP’s requirement of having an Operation & Maintenance Agreement (O & M) executed between the property owner, Richard Payne, of Belle Rose Townhomes and SBWJA due to Mr. Payne wishing to keep the sewer facilities of Belle Rose Townhomes privately owned.

Mr. Mix stated the PA DEP’s regulations indicate an O & M agreement must be executed between a property owner and the municipality or designated local agency that is providing sewer service. Essentially the agreement indicates the landowner is responsible for operating and maintaining their sewer system and if they fail to do so the sewer Authority may enter the property and make the repairs at the landowner’s expense.

Mr. Miller indicated the Authority has never executed an O & M agreement in the past and this is the first time PA DEP has required this agreement prior to plan approvals. Mr. Mix stated that PA DEP has provided us with a general O & M agreement, which he modified to include our Authority is not responsible for on-going inspections and maintenance of the privately owned system; however, the Authority agrees to repair the system if the landowner is negligent. Mr. Miller stated the O & M agreement modified by Mr. Mix will be used in the future.

**Mr. Hoffman moved, seconded by Mr. Swanderski to approve the Operation and Maintenance Agreement for Belle Rose Townhomes as presented. 7 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 vacancy. The motion carried.**

**Rules & Regulations** – Mr. Miller indicated there are a few modifications that he would recommend be made to our rules and regulations due to recent construction issues.

**Typical Drawing #26:** OSHA regulations currently require a platform be installed in a manhole that is 15 or more feet deep to prevent a person falling from the top of the manhole to avoid injury. Our Authority currently requires a 4’ cone be installed onto the top of a 6’ diameter manhole that is 15’ or deeper; however, this causes difficulties in mobility within the manhole. Mr. Miller suggests the manhole be 6 foot in diameter to the top of the manhole. Mr. Johnson will revise our typical manhole with platform drawing #26 to reflect this change and then it will be presented to the Board for approval.

**Rubber Riser Rings:** For over 20 years our Authority has used rubber riser rings to raise the casting on the cone of a manhole. Currently, our rules and regulations allow for any approved riser ring to be used on our system, which includes concrete. The SBWJA maintenance department prefers utilizing the rubber riser rings due to the installation being easier and more effective. Mr. Miller informed the Board of the downfalls of installing concrete and plastic rings. Mr. Miller spoke with Mr. Johnson regarding this matter and Mr. Johnson agreed the rubber riser rings would be acceptable. Mr. Johnson was provided with the appropriate industry standards and will be writing a new construction spec for our Authority.

Several Board members expressed their approval to make the changes to the Authority's rules and regulations. Mr. Mix suggested a written description of the Authority's specs be presented to the Board for approval.

**Deerhaven** – The Deerhaven development in Walker Township will soon reach the breaking point of the developer being required to install a pump station to serve the remainder of the development. It was noted that it is possible to serve the remainder of the development with gravity sewer; however, the line would be deep within Walker Township's property. Mr. Miller indicated the gravity sewer could be installed from the Northeastern end of the development and extend to Zion Back Road near Sand Trap Drive and tie into the Pump Station #5 (Mingoville) system. The closest gravity line is an estimated 4,000 feet away. Mr. Miller indicated a pump station would require a life time of maintenance, which would make the gravity sewer system more appealing to SBWJA.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:** Mr. Mix had nothing to discuss.

**ENGINEER' S REPORT:** Mr. Johnson was excused from the meeting.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Village of Nittany Glen Phase IV** – The gravity portion of the Village of Nittany Glen Phase IV is completed and ready for approval. Mr. Dashner moved, seconded by Mr. McMurtrie to approve the Agreement of Dedication for the gravity sewer main and related facilities for the Village of Nittany Glen Phase IV. The pump station is currently functioning properly but will not be accepted until it has the required backup emergency power source. 7 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 vacancy. The motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**LSC RP, LLC (Fishburn Hill Road) Sewer Easement Agreement** - Mr. Miller stated this sewer extension will be off of Fishburn Hill Road. Gary Wilt had purchased approximately three (3) to four (4) acres, which he subdivided and plans to construct two (2) duplexes for a total of four (4) units. The right-of-way will follow the street into the cul-de-sac and our sewer would be constructed within this right-of-way. Mr. Mix indicated he had reviewed the sewer easement agreement and did not see a problem. Mr. Swanderski moved, seconded by Mr. McDowell to approve the sewer easement agreement for LSC RP, LLC as presented. 7 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 vacancy. The motion carried.

**Healthcare Benefits** – Mrs. Gill indicated the Authority’s healthcare broker recently provided the Authority’s renewal rates for the existing Geisinger plan and additional options available to this Authority. Quotes were obtained from Capital Blue Cross Gold PPO 500/0/25, Highmark Blue Shield Premier Balance PPO \$500 and Geisinger Funding Alternative. The contract renewal cycle will be from December 1, 2021 to November 30, 2022.

The Authority currently has the Geisinger Extra PPO 10/60/500 plan which is \$11,183.25 per month and includes a \$500 employee and \$1,000 family deductible. A Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) is also funded by the Authority to cover 100% of the employee/family deductible.

Our renewal rate for our current plan, Geisinger Extra PPO 10/60/500, has increased from \$11,183.25 to \$13,483.64 per month, which is approximately a 21% increase.

Mrs. Gill indicated a new plan, Geisinger Funding Alternative, has been offered to the Authority due to a healthy pool of employees and low number of high-cost claims. This plan’s premium is not based on age banded rates but instead on fixed group rates. The Geisinger Funding Alternative for the current number of employees being covered would be \$11,517.70 per month. This new plan would be a premium increase of approximately 3%. Mrs. Gill stated that a self-funding plan could provide the Authority an opportunity to have a portion of the paid premiums refunded back to our bank account depending on the number of claims in a year. If the Authority would have a high number of claims for the year, the premium would increase the following year and at that time we would have the opportunity to go back to an age banded plan. Mrs. Gill reviewed the schedule of benefits that the Geisinger Funding Alternative would provide. Mrs. Gill highly recommended the Board approve the Geisinger Funding Alternative plan for the contract renewal cycle effective December 1, 2021.

Mr. Galbraith asked if he could have a copy of the schedule of benefits to review. Mr. Galbraith asked if the Authority has ever tried to negotiate premiums with Geisinger directly and avoid a broker. He stated the Titan Federal Credit Union deals directly with the insurance agencies to obtain quotes for health insurance premiums. Mr. Galbraith stated that he believes a broker gets paid for their services; therefore, maybe we could save money by cutting out the middle man. Mr. Houser stated he believes the health insurance companies pay the brokers for their services. Mr. Galbraith asked if Mrs. Gill could call Geisinger directly to verify the premiums wouldn’t be cheaper.

Mr. Miller stated that he will base the 2022 budget on the Geisinger Funding Alternative premiums at this time. Mr. McDowell indicated the Board will review the information and make a decision at the next meeting.

**2022 Rate Increase** – Mr. McDowell requested the Board provide their opinion about increasing the sewer rentals by \$5.00 per quarter per equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) for 2022. Mr. Miller indicated the Rate Study provided by Rettew Associates projected the Authority have a rate of \$95.00 per quarter per EDU by the year 2038. Mr. Miller proposes a \$5.00 per EDU per quarter increase every three (3) years. The Board and employees indicated there are less complaints with smaller rate increases. Mr. Galbraith indicated he was worried about a rate increase at this time due to customers currently struggling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Galbraith stated he would like to have a work session with the Board and Mr. Miller, only, before the 2022 budget is discussed. Mr. Galbraith also stated that he would like to have a heart to heart to discuss SBWJA being in the water business as he feels this is the time to remove ourselves from the water. Mr. Miller reminded the Board that we are here to provide a service to the community. Mrs. Gill indicated our meeting schedule is advertised in the local newspaper and it states a work session may be held before each regular meeting and will begin at 6:00 p.m. The Board agreed to hold a work session prior to the October 25, 2021 meeting. Mr. Mix reminded the Board that a written rate resolution will be required if the Authority approves a rate increase. Mr. Miller stated that he will base the 2022 budget on a \$5.00 per quarter per EDU increase.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel & Community Relations Committee:** Mr. Hoffman had nothing to report.

**Facilities Committee:** Mr. Book was absent from the meeting. Mr. Dashner and Mr. Houser had nothing to report.

**Financial Committee:** Mr. McMurtrie had nothing to report.

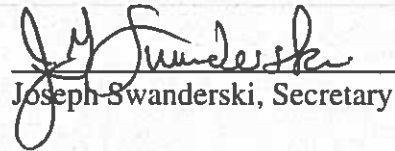
**EXECUTIVE SESSION** – Mr. McDowell recessed the Board for an Executive Session at 8:06 p.m. to discuss litigation. The meeting reconvened at 8:20 p.m.

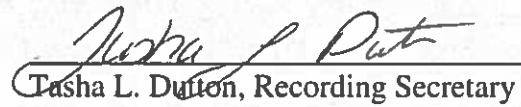


**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Mr. McMurtrie moved, seconded by Mr. Dashner to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. 7 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 vacancy. The motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Joseph Swanderski, Secretary

  
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Tasha L. Dutton, Recording Secretary

CC: Benner Township \_\_\_\_\_  
Spring Township \_\_\_\_\_  
Walker Township \_\_\_\_\_