

SPRING-BENNER-WALKER JOINT AUTHORITY

REGULAR MEETING February 26, 2024

ATTENDANCE:

AUTHORITY MEMBERS:

Spring	Joseph Galbraith Rodney Maney Douglas McKee Chris McMurtrie
Benner	Brian Book Willis Houser, Jr. William Hughes
Walker	Dennis Brown Dennis McDowell

GUESTS: Emily McGrory & Rivka Wolin

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: N. Warren Miller

EMPLOYEES: Will Barton & Kelly Gill

CALL TO ORDER:

The February 26, 2024, 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:

Willis Houser, Jr., Secretary, took Roll Call, recording nine members present. 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 and Employees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Mr. McDowell asked the Board if there were any questions and/or changes to the February 12, 2024 meeting minutes as presented. Mr. Book stated that his comments were focused on the 2023 budget and the fact that our budget shows ~\$500K of retained earnings which include ~\$350K of Tapping Fee income. Mr. Book continued by stating we should understand that this budget surplus should not be thought of as our rates being too high and that the tapping fees are never guaranteed income. Mr. Book indicated that following the meeting he contacted the PA Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA) who gave the same opinion that Mr. Mix provided in his written memo at no cost to the Authority. Mr. McDowell asked Mr. Book what language he wanted modified in the meeting minutes. Mr. Book indicated it wasn't necessary to modify the meeting minutes since his statements made tonight will clarify things going forward. **Mr. Brown moved, seconded by Mr. McMurtree to approve the Minutes of the February 12, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented.** 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

CORRESPONDENCE:

Hawbaker Engineering - We received an email from Robert E. Myers, Hawbaker Engineering, requesting a revised letter of intent to provide sewer service for the proposed Larry Taylor subdivision. The proposed subdivision will be located along Nilson Road in Walker Township. ***Mr. Myers was provided with a revised letter of intent for 2.00 EDUs for the proposed subdivision in Walker Township on February 23, 2024.*** Mr. Miller indicated this was previously approved for 1.00 EDU, but the PA DEP rejected their planning efforts because they had to account for an alternative site for the existing home; therefore, the request now reflects a total of 2.00 EDUs for the new home and existing home.

Mr. Book asked if the Taylors were going to pay the Reservation of Capacity fee for the 2.00 EDUs to ensure capacity is available until they are ready to connect. Mr. Miller stated he wouldn't expect them to reserve sewer capacity, but he's not sure of their intentions. Discussion was then held about the Authority's reservation of capacity fee and how there is no guarantee that sewer service will be available unless the EDUs are being reserved while paying the required fee.

Email from Zach Gay- Mr. Miller referenced an email from a local surveyor, Zach Gay, that was included in the board packet as additional correspondence and indicated he would like to discuss the matter. Mr. Miller indicated Mr. Gay was completing some survey work for Ed Dunkleberger on tax parcel number 12-3-68 in Benner Township and came across two property pins along Buffalo Run which is where our Authority's right-of-way is. Mr. Gay indicated that he couldn't locate a recorded plan that was associated with those property pins and asked Mr. Miller for some details surrounding the property.

Mr. Miller explained that sometime in the past the Bellefonte Central Railroad obtained a right-of-way by land acquisition from property owners along Buffalo Run from Bellefonte west into Patton Township. The land acquisition consisted of various widths along the course of its path. The railroad discontinued its use of the railway at some point in the past. In the mid-1980s our Authority planned to extend public sewer within the Buffalo Run corridor and through negotiations the Railroad property was purchased. Since our Authority did not require the entire width of the land that was acquired from the Railroad, we offered to quit claim our interests in the additional land acquired by the railroad in exchange for the property owner's conveyance of a 20' wide easement to our Authority. This agreement with the affected property owners allowed them to own their property free and clear once again regarding the railroad right-of-way. This Authority no longer owns the property and only has a right-of-way, but for some reason the tax maps don't properly reflect the quit claim deed.

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: Mr. McMurtrie reviewed the financial reports for the period ending 01/31/2024. Mr. McDowell asked if there were any questions regarding the Treasurer's Report. **Mr. Book moved, seconded by Mr. Maney to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.** 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS:

Approval of Requisitions:

Revenue Fund Requisition 2020-91- Mr. McMurtrie presented the Board with Revenue Requisition #2020-91 in the amount of \$66,600.01. Mr. McDowell asked if there were any questions regarding the presentation of Revenue Fund Requisition 2020-91. **Mr. Book moved, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve Revenue Requisition 2020-91 payable to SBWJA in the amount of \$66,600.01.** 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

Semi-Annual 2020 Bond Interest Payment – Mr. McMurtrie indicated the Authority's semi-annual 2020 bond interest payment in the amount of \$109,193.13 was presented for approval at the meeting. Mr. McDowell asked if there were any questions regarding the bond payment. **Mr. Book moved, seconded by Mr. Maney to approve the semi-annual 2020 bond interest payment in the amount of \$109,193.13.** 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

GUESTS: There were no Guests wishing to address the Board.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Miller had nothing further to report.

OLD BUSINESS:

PA Game Commission (PAGC) Operation & Maintenance Agreement – The PAGC has submitted their Operation & Maintenance Agreement for their proposed facility as part of the Shiloh Road Sewer Extension Project. The next step will involve placing an advertisement in the Centre Daily Times to open a 30-day public comment period for the PAGC’s sewage facilities planning module for a minor Act 537 Plan update revision. **Mr. Book moved, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the operation and maintenance agreement for the PAGC’s proposed facility as part of the Shiloh Road Sewer Extension Project.** 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

Mr. Houser requested Mr. Miller provide an overview of the proposed route of the sewer facilities for the PAGC’s property on the Authority’s televising system.

NEW BUSINESS:

Deerhaven Phase 3B (14 EDUs) – Mr. Miller indicated Deerhaven Phase 3B in the amount of 14 EDUs has met all of our requirements and is ready for approval. **Mr. Book moved, seconded by Mr. Brown to approve the Agreement of Dedication for Deerhaven Phase 3B in the amount of 14 EDUs.** 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

Gravity Line to Zion Back Road Area (Pump Station – Deerhaven/Zion Manor) - Mr. Miller informed the Board that Tom Songer has contacted him and requested a meeting for later this week to discuss his property, which borders Deerhaven. Mr. Miller stated Mr. Songer initially asked if our Authority would consider extending the sewer across his property in coordination with the mainline extension across Walker Township’s property. Mr. Miller stated he would not recommend the Board proceed with Mr. Songer’s request due to having to pay prevailing wage and the precedent it would set for developers. At some point our Authority will need to have a conversation with Mr. Poole and Mr. Songer about the future of their developments and the elimination of the two (2) pump stations being proposed for their developments.

CPI Apprenticeship Program – The Authority was recently contacted by Guy Woodard, CPI, to see if we would be interested in participating in the state-approved water operator and wastewater operator apprenticeship program. The two-year program is funded by a state grant and is sponsored by CPI. New or current full-time, uncertified operators receive on-the-job training. Apprentices receive 288 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) at CPI (on average, two-days per month for the two-year program length) consisting of the following:

1. The RTI consists of relevant lectures and hands-on, skill building training, the majority of which is comprised of PA DEP-approved contact hours.
2. The RTI curriculum prepares apprentices for DEP certification exams.

3. The RTI can be applied to certification work experience requirements, which significantly reduces the length of time it takes for an apprentice to become a certified operator.
4. 100% of apprentice certification costs and 70% of the RTI cost is paid for by the grant.
5. 30% of the RTI cost is paid for by the participating employers and is placed in a program sustainability fund.
6. The RTI cost to the employer is \$2489/288 hours for each apprentice.
7. The employer may disburse payment for the \$2489 RTI cost across the two-year program duration.
8. Lunch is provided for the apprentice during RTI sessions.
9. At the end of the two-year apprenticeship program, apprentices will receive their federal and state Journey worker certifications.

Mr. Miller informed the Board that the Authority's most recent hire could be sent to CPI for the apprenticeship program and wanted to know the Board's thought on this. Mr. Miller stated he believed this was a good idea and indicated that CPI is very flexible with the scheduling of the hours. Mr. Miller stated the apprentice could go during normal work hours or after work, depending upon the Board's preference.

Mr. Galbraith indicated that he is in support of the apprenticeship program as he stated during previous board meetings. Mr. Book asked if the apprentice would attend CPI during this Authority's normal operating hours or afterwards and Mr. Miller stated that would be the Board's decision to make. Mrs. Gill stated that we would also need to determine if the apprentice would be compensated their normal hourly rate if attendance at CPI was during the Authority's normal operating hours. Mr. Book stated we would also need to determine if there would be a timeframe for reimbursement to this Authority by the apprentice if he/she terminated employment within a specified amount of time. Mr. McKee asked Mr. Miller if he approached the new hire to determine if he was interested in the CPI apprenticeship program and Mr. Miller stated not yet because he needed to determine if the Authority Board was going to support the program. Mr. Galbraith asked if this will be a mandatory requirement and Mr. Miller stated he doesn't believe it will be necessary to mandate the program. **Mr. Book moved, seconded by Mr. Hughes to approve the CPI apprenticeship program based on the following conditions:**

- **SBWJA will pay the \$2,489.00 tuition for the apprentice for a total of 288 RTI hours.**
- **The apprentice will attend CPI during normal operating hours of the SBWJA and be compensated for his/her regular hourly wage rate.**
- **The apprentice must sign an agreement and/or contract with SBWJA acknowledging that if he/she terminates employment with SBWJA within one-year from the date of completion of the apprenticeship, he/she will reimburse the SBWJA for the full cost of tuition paid to CPI.**

The Authority's personnel handbook will need updated to reflect the apprenticeship program. 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.** Mr. Galbraith suggested contacting the Authority's Solicitor to confirm the legality of a reimbursement contract.

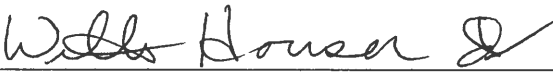
QUESTIONS FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Shady Lane Estates – Mr. McDowell inquired about the status of Shady Lane Estates in Walker Township. Mr. Miller stated he hadn't heard anything further. Mr. Barton stated last he knew they were proposing starting construction of Phase 1 later this year.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Galbraith moved, seconded by Mr. Houser to adjourn the meeting at 8:01 p.m. 9 ayes, 0 nays. **The motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Willis Houser, Jr., Secretary



Kelly J. Gill, Recording Secretary

CC: Benner Township _____
Spring Township _____
Walker Township _____