

## **BETHLEHEM AUTHORITY**

### **Minutes of the Regular Meeting Of the Board of Directors April 10, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Authority ("BA") was held on April 10, 2025, in the Conference Room B504 at City Hall, Bethlehem, PA and remotely via Microsoft "Teams". The meeting was called to order at 3:30pm by Mr. Dennis Domchek, Chair.

Also in attendance were:

Ms. Sharon J. Zondag, Vice Chair  
Mr. Carlos Almeida, Treasurer  
Mr. Ian van Halem, Secretary  
Mr. Ronald Donchez, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer  
Mr. James Broughal, Esq., Broughal & DeVito  
Mr. Ron Madison, PE, Colliers Engineering & Design  
Mr. Stephen Repasch, Executive Director  
Ms. Sandra Zapf, Director of Administration  
Mr. Eric Yeakel, Officer-In-Charge  
Mr. Ed Boscola, City of Bethlehem, Director of Water and Sewer Resources

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

S. Zondag motioned and R. Donchez seconded to approve the March 13, 2025, Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Mr. Steve Antalics, Private Citizen  
Mr. Pat McElhenny, The Nature Conservancy (Participated Remotely)

#### **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

There were no comments during Courtesy of the Floor.

#### **CHAIR**

D. Domchek announced that an Executive Session will be held after the regular meeting regarding a personnel matter with no action being taken.

D. Domchek reported on last week's PMAA board training presentation attended remotely by himself, R. Donchez, I. van Halem and S. Zapf. His key takeaways were the following: On finance, the Authority is responsible for the infrastructure of the water system and identified some of the documents that the board members really need to understand. They include the Audit, Operating Budget and Trust Indenture all of which are posted and available for board members' review. The presenter emphasized that legislation for Asset Management Planning is coming and all Authorities will have to deal with this. D. Domchek's understanding is that it involves assessing the life and status of your

infrastructure and developing a plan to replace it overtime. The presenter stated that the goal should be to fund your depreciation from internal generated funds, which D. Domchek feels is a rather ambitious target and noted that the BA's annual depreciation range is between five and six million dollars a year. We are just reviewing the Capital Plan and spending around \$7 Million from two sources – Capital Appropriations and Debt. But what is interesting is that as our debt goes down, the amount of money that E. Boscola will be appropriating from the Operating Budget to Capital Budget does go up significantly. Regarding insurance, the presenter asked if your insurance covers potential identified risk? D. Domchek didn't know the answer; S. Repasch said he would speak with Eric Evans at The City to address this concern because the BA is under the blanket policy of the City. R. Madison stated that during their annual review they check that the City has insurance coverage but they do not do an in-depth review. He suggested using a third party to review the insurance policy. Regarding the HR portion, the message was to keep the handbook updated and D. Domchek stated that S. Zondag is doing a great job with that.

## **PROPERTY & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

### **Watershed Management:**

**Prescribed Fire Plans.** S. Repasch introduced Pat McElhenny from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to address some concerns the Board had regarding the prescribed fire plans for 2025. Units 3 and 5, roughly 114 acres in the Long Pond area, are scheduled for controlled burns in 2025. Pat explained that a lot of planning goes into a prescribed burn. A written plan consisting of about 25 pages is prepared and submitted to the DCNR and DEP for review and they have 25 days to review and approve. The training is very stringent, the State standards are very high and the personnel come with a lot of experience. S. Repasch noted that the five-year burn agreement will be up for renewal at the end of the year.

**GIS Project.** I. van Halem reported that although he missed the last meeting and the GIS presentation, S. Repasch forwarded the presentation to him and he was able to review. Although there was a lot of information covered, a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow with Colliers to go over some minor technical issues and project-based questions. Colliers submitted a proposal for the next step of GIS services and I. van Halem recommends approval.

S. Zondag motioned and R. Donchez seconded to approve Colliers Engineering GIS Services 2025 proposal. Motioned passed unanimously.

**Forestry Activity.** S. Repasch reported that a timber sale that is anticipated to occur in 2025, most likely with Justick & Justick, is pending because the contractor's main market for product is located in Canada and is unsure if the tariffs will affect the sale.

S. Repasch also reports that our forester, R. Smith, last year obtained a grant from the Rough Grouse Society to clear small underbrush at the Osprey Gate timber sale from last year. Rankin spent several weeks of clearing at a cost of \$7,000.00 which is covered by the grant.

**Carbon Credits.** S. Repasch reported that in 2021, our previous forester, R. Wildermuth, had done a boundary adjustment for our property lines as part of the carbon project. There

were several hundred acres that were excluded from the beginning and that information was given to the verifiers and they agreed it was valid so those acres were added back into the project that should have been included in the first place. By doing that, in 2022 the total credits increased to approximately 64,000 and will be continually calculated going forward.

**Wind Energy.** S. Repasch reported that following the BA appeal of the Carbon County decision from January 2025 we recently received the Carbon County Court's reply to our appeal. The PA Appellate Court will set up a time-table for briefings. After that, they will schedule arguments and then make a decision, hopefully by Fall of this year.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Investment Summary.** C. Almeida presented the Investment Summary as of April 1, 2025. One CD matured in the MRF and reinvested in a CD with 4.25% rate for 18 mos. All investments fall within policy limits.

C. Almeida also presented the updated Investment Summary for approval. There were a few minor tweaks on language and dates but nothing material.

R. Donchez motioned and C. Almeida seconded to approve the updated Investment Summary. Motioned passed unanimously.

The annual update to the Accounting Control document also took place but no action is needed. This document outlines the internal controls that the external auditor uses for his audit.

**Controller.** J. Filipos' report for the month of March 31, 2025, was circulated and filed with regular interest and expenses recorded.

**1Q25 Income and Expense Projections.** S. Repasch presented the report showing regular revenue and expenses through March 31, 2025. Revenue is at 12% of budget or \$123,941.00; Professional Services expenses are at 16% of budget or \$13,905.00 with most of that for the Consulting Engineer's Annual Report; Security and Property expenses are at 16% or \$11,097.00 with the bulk of that being truck maintenance. New tires for one truck were purchased and will show up in next month's report; Administrative expenses are 19% or \$168,586.00. Total expenses are 18% or \$193,588.00 of budget. Operating Cash on Hand projected for 6/30/2025 is \$76,717.00. On the Capital Reserve budget, no expenses for March. Total Capital Account projected cash on hand as of 6/30/25 is \$78,880.00. Total projected cash on hand for all funds as of June 30, 2025, is \$1,320,313.00.

**Resolution #510 – Approval of Expenses.** D. Domchek presented Resolution #510 to the Board for expenses through April 10, 2025, from the General and Reserve Accounts totaling \$36,557.73.

C. Almeida motioned and I. van Halem seconded to approve Resolution #510. Motion passed unanimously.

### **GOVERNANCE & HR COMMITTEE**

S. Zondag reported that updates to the Governance Documents, specifically in the Finance Section, the Investment Policy and Internal Controls; In the Committee Description, Section under Property and Infrastructure, a line was added for GIS work and also replaced the word “management” to “oversight” since the role of our board members as it relates to their committee responsibility is not of managing. All dates were updated throughout

### **SOLICITOR**

Solicitor had no report.

S. Repasch did visit the BA property site in Freemansburg and found out that the City has sewer line facility on the property, which the BA purchased back in 1959.

### **CONSULTING ENGINEER**

R. Madison distributed the final draft of the annual report dated March 31, 2025, which includes adjustments to the recommendations, for board’s review. S. Repasch provided a more detailed list from E. Boscola to R. Madison regarding security improvements over the last couple of years and will prepare the same outline showing security improvements to date and improvements scheduled for completion in the next couple of years.

### **SPECIAL POLICE**

Police report for the month of April 2025 was circulated and filed.

### **WATER REPORT**

The water report for the month of March is as filed. E. Boscola reports that the bend in the water level curve is moving in the right direction and Penn Forest is slowly coming back to normal.

### **CITY OF BETHLEHEM DIRECTOR OF WATER AND SEWER RESOURCES**

The Director’s Report was filed and circulated reflecting financial status for first quarter of the year 2025. A little behind in Revenue but that is typical for this time of year and usually catches up as the year progresses. Cash balance is \$16.6 Million.

#### **On the Capital side:**

Meter replacement project started this month and appointments are scheduled out to June.

Tank replacement design is progressing; will be submitting a site plan to Lower Saucon Twp.

Interconnect with LCA – need to get final design next month.

Doing two water main repair projects at the Freemansburg bridge and Rt. 378 in the next month or two.

E. Boscola also reported that the updated five-year risk and resilient assessment was submitted to the EPA for review and the good news is that the Utilities Resilience Index went from 52% to 60%.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

S. Repasch requested the Board consider a \$250.00 sponsorship to the Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference; he has attended this conference for over 20 years and finds it very informative and important. S. Zondag agrees that this is a very worthy conference.

C. Almeida motioned and I. van Halem seconded to sponsor \$250.00 for the Lehigh Valley Watershed Conference. Motion passed unanimously.

### **COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

Mr. Antalics asked if the City had any plans to continue or discontinue adding fluoride to the water system based on the strong recommendations from the current Federal Health and Human Services recommendations? E. Boscola responded that fluoridating drinking water is voluntary and the COB has been adding it since around 1970 on the recommendations from the CDC, ADA, PA Health Dept. and would defer to them to determine whether that should continue.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2025, at 3:30pm.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

R. Donchez motioned and C. Almeida seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:37pm and go into Executive Session. Motion passed unanimously.

***Ian van Halem***  
Secretary

