

**BETHLEHEM AUTHORITY**

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting  
Of the Board of Directors  
October 12, 2023**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Authority (“BA”) was held on October 12, 2023, 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. Thomas Donchez, Secretary  
Mr. Carlos Almeida, Treasurer  
Mr. John Tallarico, Assistant Sec./Treasurer  
Mr. James Broughal, Esq., Broughal & DeVito  
Mr. John Filipos, CPA, Buckno Lisicky & Company  
Ms. Amy Heindel, Colliers Engineering & Design  
Mr. Stephen Repasch, Executive Director  
Ms. Sandra Zapf, Administrative Assistant  
Mr. Eric Yeakel, Police Officer In-Charge

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

S. Zondag moved and C. Almeida seconded to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2023, Regular Meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Mr. Ed Boscola, City of Bethlehem, Director of Water & Sewer Resources  
Ms. Michele Liberto, City of Bethlehem, Deputy Controller  
Mr. Steven Antalics, Private Citizen

**COURTESY OF THE FLOOR**

There were no comments during Courtesy of the Floor.

**CHAIR**

The Chair had no report.

**PROPERTY & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

**Watershed Management.** S. Repasch reported that several field trips to both reservoirs took place with the 7th grade science class from the Charter Arts Middle School. Everyone seemed to have a good time and they now know where their water comes from.

S. Repasch also reported that the development company that owns a lot of property in mostly the western states, DF Development LLC, is very interested in getting into selling Biochar and has had discussions with our forester regarding access, acreage and what materials are on the grounds on our lands and are preparing terms for our consideration if we want to move forward sometime in the future. S. Repasch also spoke with ANEW, they do not market Biochar but do market the carbon credit associated with Biochar, so this could be another revenue stream. Another telephone discussion is scheduled for next week to hear about a local company that uses the forest material and turns it into Biochar and will report at the next meeting.

S. Repasch reported that he is working with The Nature Conservancy for a site visit with Congresswoman Susan Wild for either the end of October or early November. She is interested in seeing the water source and watershed that provides drinking water to most of the municipalities she represents.

**Interconnection Evaluation.** S. Repasch reported that design proposals were received from our consultants. E. Boscola asked for a few revisions and then they were shared with both Eastern Suburban and Leigh County Authority for their review. New meetings are now being worked on to move this project along. S. Repasch feels that LCA is more ready to move forward than Eastern Suburban as they have not responded to several e-mails from. E. Boscola stated that the City does have the design work budgeted for next year.

**Wind Energy Project Zoning.** The hearing on the appeal was scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup> at Carbon County Court but on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, S. Repasch received a notice that the hearing is continued because the judge wasn't aware that the previous judge had heard these cases previously and he didn't feel it was appropriate for him to jump in at this time. No new date has been scheduled as yet.

**Consulting Engineer's Service Proposal.** S. Repasch presented Collier's Engineering proposal for another year of service and noted their fees are unchanged from last year.

J. Tallarico motioned and C. Almeida seconded to approve Colliers Engineering & Design service proposal. Motioned passed unanimously.

**Willowbrook Road Easement (Water Main Relocation).** S. Repasch presented an Easement Agreement for relocation of the 36" water main due to Northampton County needing to replace a bridge on Willowbrook Road.

S. Zondag motioned and T. Donchez seconded to approve the Easement. Motion passed unanimously.

**Willowbrook Road Water Service Agreement.** S. Repasch presented a Water Service Agreement between The City and County of Northampton to split the cost of the work 50/50 to relocate the 36" water main. The BA is party to this agreement for the sole purpose of agreeing to take ownership of the improvements when the project is completed.

T. Donchez motioned and S. Zondag seconded to authorize S. Repasch to sign the Agreement on behalf of the BA which states that the BA becomes the owner of the improvement. Motion passed unanimously.

**Northampton Area School District Easement Agreement (Water Main Extension).** S. Repasch presented an Easement Agreement for extension of the water main in East Allen Township at Seemsville Road to serve a new school being built.

C. Almeida motioned and J. Tallarico seconded to approve the NASD Easement Agreement. Motion passed unanimously.

### **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Investment Summary.** C. Almeida presented the Investment Summary as of October 1, 2023. In September, two CDs in the MRF matured and were reinvested. All investments fall within the guidelines of the investment policy.

C. Almeida also mentioned that the audit report for the BA was received and is currently under review. There were no adverse findings and he anticipates bringing it to the board for acceptance at the next board meeting.

**Controller.** J. Filipos' report for the month of September 30, 2023, was circulated and filed with regular interest and expenses recorded. November 15<sup>th</sup> is the next debt service payment of over \$4.5 Million.

**3Q23 Income and Expense Projections.** S. Repasch presented the report showing regular revenue and expenses through September 30, 2023. Revenue is at 97% of budget or \$670,220. Professional Service expenses are at 64% or \$60,737; Security & Property expenses are at 58% or \$37,235.00; Administrative expenses are at 40% or \$211,225. Total expenses are 45% or \$309,197. Projected Operating cash on hand at the end of December 31, 2023 is \$137,072. On the Capital Reserve side, total expenses through September 30, 2023, are at 91% or \$58,827, which represents the property purchase in January of \$26,013 and continued legal fees for wind energy zoning case. Total projected Capital Reserve cash on hand as of December 31, 2023, is \$320,484 and Total projected cash on hand on December 31, 2023, is \$1,391,397.00.

**Resolution 491 – Approval of Expenses.** D. Domchek presented Resolution 491 to the Board for expenses through October 12, 2023, from the General and Reserve accounts totaling \$38,165.38 and \$502,473.22 from the Construction Fund for Water Capital Expenses.

C. Almeida motioned and T. Donchez seconded to approve Resolution 491 as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

**2024 Budget.** S. Repasch reported that the majority of the operating budget is complete but is still waiting on some estimates for Capital expenses. One of the items is a new pick-up truck for the patrol force. He and E. Yeakel are working with Star GMC in Easton on building a truck that

will service our needs. S. Repasch expects to have the budget to the Finance Committee by next week for their review.

S. Zondag asked E. Yeakel if he anticipated the need for more trail cameras. E. Yeakel stated that there are some spare cameras and would only need to replace if the cellular network is updated and they no longer communicate with the older models.

### **GOVERNANCE & HR COMMITTEE**

**Governance Documents.** S. Zondag presented the final draft of the Governance Document that has been worked for six months and stated that this came about from a PMAA webinar that board members attended and was in fact the only thing that was not already in place. It summarizes all documents that are used to perform our work and a great resource for in-coming board members to better understand their role and responsibilities.

C. Almeida motioned and T. Donchez seconded acceptance of Governance Document. Motion passed unanimously.

**Employee Manual Revision.** S. Zondag stated that the Employee Handbook, that was established in 2018 with very few changes made along the way, did not establish when the annual employee review process should start; this was realized last year when it was not conducted in a timely manner. So, S. Zondag presented formalized language in the handbook that every year after the August board meeting the annual review process will begin.

C. Almeida motioned and J. Tallarico seconded the edit to the Employee Handbook regarding the start of the annual employee review process. Motion passed unanimously.

### **SOLICITOR**

J. Broughal had no report.

### **CONSULTING ENGINEER**

Consulting Engineer had no report.

### **SPECIAL POLICE**

Police report for the month of October was circulated and filed.

### **WATER REPORT**

The Water Report for the month of September 2023, was created and filed by E. Boscola. The reservoirs are at a combined capacity of 97.40% with Penn Forest a couple of feet below maximum but volume is of no concern at this point.

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

The Director's Report was filed and circulated reflecting financial status through September 30, 2023. In the Water Operating Fund, revenues are up from projections a little bit and

expenditures are down and there is plenty of cash in the accounts. There shouldn't be any problem making the debt service payments next month.

In the Water Capital Fund, there were over \$800,000 in disbursements in September and over \$4.6 Million year to date.

Lead service lines - project is wrapping up but will continue into next year.

Meter replacement – still on target to replace 4,000 meters this year.

Security Fence at Treatment Plant – work should start next week

2024 Budget – is in draft form; the Mayor will release it sometime in November.

Couple percent increase in the Operating Fund and \$8 Million in Capital Fund to stay in line with the 10-year Capital Plan.

Schedule another 4,000 meter replacements, water mains, finish up lead service lines, finish up fence and allocate funds at security based on Colliers' report from a year ago emphasizing on physical securities before getting into the electronics.

C. Almeida had some questions regarding the 2024 budget, future funding and the possibility of delaying refinancing till 2027; it was decided to have a meeting with the Finance Committee and E. Boscola sometime in the next couple of weeks.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

S. Repasch reminded the BA members about wanting to tour the watershed within the next two weeks. He will send out some e-mails with possible dates.

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

There were no comments during Courtesy of the Floor.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 9th, 2023, at 3:30pm.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

J. Tallarico moved and S. Zondag seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:12pm. Motion passed unanimously.

*Thomas Donchez*

Board Secretary

