

BETHLEHEM AUTHORITY

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Of the Board of Directors
March 13, 2025**

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Authority (“BA”) was held on March 13, 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. Ronald Donchez, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer
Mr. James Broughal, Esq., Broughal & DeVito
Mr. John Filipos, CPA, Buckno Lisicky & Company
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 C. Almeida seconded to approve the February 13, 2025, Minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Ms. Michele Liberto, City of Bethlehem, Deputy Controller
Mr. Steve Antalics, Private Citizen
Ms. Julia Wolanski, Colliers Engineering & Design
Ms. Suzanne Zitzman, Colliers Engineering & Design (Participated Remotely)

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were no comments during Courtesy of the Floor.

CHAIR

D. Domchek reported that Ronald Donchez has officially rejoined the Board again and will hold the position of Assistant Secretary and Treasurer; he will also join the Finance Committee along with C. Almeida and S. Repasch. D. Domchek will move to the Property and Infrastructure Committee along with I. van Halem and S. Repasch.

On March 4th, the Board and J. Broughal met with L. Kurtz, BA Bond Council, to review the key provisions and take-aways from the Trust Indenture and the Lease with the City.

D. Domchek also reported that an Executive Session will not be held after this meeting.

PROPERTY & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

Watershed Management:

GIS Project. S. Repasch introduced J. Wolanski and S. Zitzman from Colliers Engineering & Design who gave a presentation on the GIS project for the BA and the COB highlighting what has been done in the past and where they hope to go in the future.

J. Wolanski recapped the BA's portion: In 2019, the basic GIS program was put together including drone implementation and has been on-going and building consistently through training, documentation and new tools. Last year natural gas pipeline data, water and transmission lines were added and the platform was updated to the new on-line web version. In the last couple of months, the Storymap, that is part of the website, has been updated. J. Wolanski also shared some ideas for future goals: tracking environmental resources, more training initiatives, field collection tools, survey forms for feedback, historic resource mapping, and custom base maps and graphic design.

S. Zitzman recapped the COB portion: In 2016, Colliers was brought in to be an outside source that could give opinions and recommendations on the existing GIS program. At that time, we reviewed the existing program, inventoried all the hardware and software being used. We had recommendations for areas that could be enhanced to be made more efficient, training, and costs associated with this all rolled up in a what we called an "Implementation Plan" and what is still being used today. In 2019, E. Boscola asked Colliers to update the water and sewer resources data within that assessment and so we updated the workflow for water, storm water and sewer using existing data with the intention of using this and creating a "record master data". In 2022, the ESRI software and server hardware were upgraded in the City and Standard Operating Procedures were created. In 2024, all the data collected was used to create the "Master" data sets for Water Distribution, Sanitary Sewer Collection System, and Storm Water System. Colliers also implemented a public facing water distribution system application by property location; it's user friendly, has directions, and the public can enter information that they know about their water connection.

S. Zitzman shared some future goals: confirm and field validate data of all three systems to create a final "Master Data Set"; perform another update to ERSI software and applications and fill in data gaps and reference materials. The ultimate goal is to connect the BA's and the City's GIS water system data platforms.

Carbon Credits. S. Repasch reported that he had a meeting with ANEW several weeks back and found out that only a portion of the 2022 and 2023 carbon credits have been sold, 54,752 tons which amounts to around \$767,523.00 gross minus roughly \$40,000.00 for 3rd party verifier expenses, net revenue will be between \$550,000.00 and \$600,000.00. This still leaves 47,948 tons to market plus 26,300 for 2024 for a total of 74,248 tons available for sale. Next week, S. Repasch will have another meeting with ANEW regarding some minor nuances and it was also decided to have quarterly meetings to keep the BA updated on activities with sales.

Prescribed Fire Plans. S. Repasch reported that a meeting was held last week between PA Game Commission (PGC) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) regarding the prescribed fire

plans for 2025. There are two plots on BA property (115 acres on Plots 3 and 5 in Tunkhannock Twp.) that they do plan to burn soon. The burn agreement between TNC and BA expires at the end of 2025 and will need to be renewed.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Investment Summary. C. Almeida presented the Investment Summary as of March 1, 2025. Three CDs matured in February and were reinvested with rates between 3.8% and 4.2%. One CD will mature at the end of March. All investments fall within policy limits.

C. Almeida stated that roughly \$4.2 Million is in the Construction Fund and is looking forward to reducing that to close to zero. The Investment Policy is in the process of being reviewed and R. Donchez will be in the loop in the process.

C. Almeida commented on the review with E. Boscola on the preliminary 10-year Capital Plan that, in principle, BA should be looking at the ability of the spending plan between 2025 and 2027 to be met within exiting cash or reserved money that is in excess requirements. Then to meet the plan going forward, BA will likely go into the Capital Markets in 2028 for roughly \$10 Million as a bridge loan to address capital needs prior to the retirement of the 2028 Capital Appreciation Bonds.

Controller. J. Filipos' report for the month of February 28, 2025, was circulated and filed with regular interest and expenses recorded. In the Operating Account, \$91,250.00 was received from the COB for first quarter operating expenses and in the Construction Fund \$51,704.81 was paid for Water Capital invoices.

1Q25 Income and Expense Projections. S. Repasch presented the report showing regular revenue and expenses through February 28, 2025. Revenue is at 11% of budget or \$114,902.00, we did receive the 1st Qtr. Operating Funds from the City and the yearly lease from the new agriculture lease for land near the filtration plant. Professional Services expenses are at 12% of budget or \$10,031.00 with most of that for the Consulting Engineer's Annual Report; Security and Property expenses are at 10% or \$6,665.00 with the bulk of that being equipment maintenance and anticipating \$2,500.00 in truck repairs; Administrative expenses are 44% or \$144,269.00 which includes \$90,000.00 transferred to our Reserve Account. Total expenses are 33% or \$160,965.00 of budget. Operating Cash on Hand projected for 3/31/2025 is \$55,663.00. On the Capital Reserve budget, very minimal expenses of \$1,745.00 in legal fees. Total Capital Account projected cash on hand as of 3/31/25 is \$78,870.00. Total projected cash on hand for all funds as of March 31, 2025, is \$1,295,719.00.

Resolution #509 – Approval of Expenses. D. Domchek presented Resolution #509 to the Board for expenses through March 13, 2025, from the General and Reserve Accounts totaling \$35,151.44 and \$36,125.00 from the Construction Fund for COB Water Capital Invoices.

C. Almeida motioned and R. Donchez seconded to approve Resolution #509. Motion passed unanimously.

GOVERNANCE & HR COMMITTEE

S. Zondag reported that an updated position description for the new position of Director of Administration and expanded position description for Executive Director have been completed. The Employee Work & Benefits Guide was also revised and updated and requires approval.

C. Almeida motioned and S. Zondag seconded to approve the updated Employee Work and Benefits Guide. Motion passed unanimously.

SOLICITOR

J. Broughal reported that S. Repasch recently discovered that BA owns property in Freemansburg and requested a title search be done. The tax maps indicating that the BA owns 84.506 acres in the Borough of Freemansburg. After visiting the Northampton County mapping department, it was discovered that the BA only owns ½ acre that was acquired in 1959 on a tax claim. Since it doesn't have anything to do with the BA mission, J. Broughal asked the Board what they would like to do with the property. It was decided that S. Repasch will reach out to the Borough Manager and report back.

CONSULTING ENGINEER

R. Madison reported he prepared his requisition letter for the Water Capital Invoices for engineering services for the 2mg tank replacement. On March 6th, Colliers received all the data needed from The City to finish up the annual report and anticipates having a first draft available in two weeks to the board for review before the April meeting.

SPECIAL POLICE

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

WATER REPORT

The water report for the month of February is as filed. Combined reservoir level dropped below the drought watch line in March. The last time this happened was Feb-Mar 2017, but quickly recovered in spring of that year. This continues to be a watch area and we recommend no further action at this time although we are looking at options in case the trend continues. The state issued a drought watch last November. We will post a reminder on The City web-site.

CITY OF BETHLEHEM DIRECTOR OF WATER AND SEWER RESOURCES

The Director's Report was filed and circulated reflecting financial status for two months of 2025. There is nothing out of the ordinary and still catching up with capital invoices since December 2024. Next month's report should capture all capital spent to date.

Some other items:

US EPA conducted a system wide inspection February 24-26, 2025. This is a relatively new program called the "National Enforcement Compliance Initiative". EPA's goal is to conduct inspections of large water systems over a period of several years.

They toured the watershed, filtration plant, all tanks and pump stations, and reviewed documentation. PA DEP also participated. They will issue a report in 2 to 3 months but a

summary of their findings includes the following which we will address as resources allow:

- a. Security – they offered several recommendations on securing drinking water facilities (both physical and cyber)
- b. Maintenance – they recommended development of a more comprehensive corrective and preventive maintenance program
- c. Policies/Procedures – a few recommended improvements to the emergency response plan, risk and resilience assessment, and SCADA management

We will be executing a construction contract to repair water mains at 2 difficult crossings:

- a. Freemansburg bridge across the Lehigh River
- b. Eaton Ave main that runs under Rt 378

Design effort for the following continues:

- c. 2 mg reservoir replacement
- d. LCA interconnections

S. Repasch also mentioned that he and E. Boscola had a meeting with a solar developer who is looking at the water filtration plant as a potential site for a solar project. His initial proposal looked interesting and S. Repasch shared it with D. Domchek and I. van Halem. The developer needed some more information in order to fine tune his estimates and proposal and expect to receive that in the next two weeks.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

COURTESY OF THE FLOOR

There were no comments during Courtesy of the Floor.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 10, 2025, at 3:30pm.

ADJOURNMENT

R. Donchez motioned and C. Almeida seconded to adjourn the meeting at 4:55pm. Motion passed unanimously.

Ronald J. Donchez
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

