

**WESTERN BUTLER COUNTY AUTHORITY  
607 MARKET STREET  
ZELIENOPLE, PA 16063  
PHONE: (724) 452-5501**

**Regular Meeting Minutes - June 13, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

A quorum was reached, and after reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Thomas Tomayko called the June 13, 2019 meeting of the Western Butler County Authority Board of Directors to order at 7 p.m.

**PRESENT ON ROLL CALL:**

The following board members were in attendance:

- Ed Eckenrode
- Paul J. Kremer Jr.
- Tim Kenney
- Ron Lutz
- Greg Such
- Thomas Tomayko
- Dave Weber
- Thomas Zinkham

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

- Manager Autumn Heckathorn
- Solicitor Matt Racunas
- Consulting Engineer Chad Hanley
- Dylan Casey of HRG

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

No members were absent.

**VISITORS:**

The following visitors were in attendance:

- Joy Moyer, Harmony Borough
- John Moyer, Harmony Borough

- Tom Thompson, Zelienople Community Park Association
- Dave Szakelyhidi, Harmony Borough
- Bryan Seibel, Zelienople Community Park Association
- Allen Bayer, Zelienople Borough
- Ron Goehring, Zelienople Historical Society

Joy Moyer spoke about sewage backup in her finished basement during heavy rains in May, and that it has happened four times since 2012. In 2014, a check valve was installed. She said her neighbors also experience flooding of this kind. She asked that the situation be resolved, so that this doesn't continue to happen in her neighborhood. John Moyer said it costs \$5,000 to \$6,000 to repair the damage each time their basement floods.

The Manager explained that the Authority does not have control over storm water management, that May's significant rain event affected many homes in the service area, and that the Board and its consultants planned to discuss the matter during the meeting.

Ron Goehring spoke about significant flooding at Zelienople Historical Society during the same event. He said 16 inches of water filled the basement. He said he heard rumors that the Authority operates at 60% percent of capacity on a normal day, and during the past couple of heavy rain events, that it hasn't been able to handle the sewage. He said he would like to see a moratorium on tap-ins until the Authority can handle excess flows. The Manager said that there was no excess of sewer flow, but that the storm water backed up into homes' lateral lines.

Mr. Goehring asked whether Indian Brave Campground's lines could be blocked during a heavy rain event. The Manager said that was not possible, because the line is tied in with others, but that the Authority is in the midst of an Act 537 study and that a solution such as establishing a common connection or installing a gate valve could be examined.

Tom Zinkham questioned if a plug or valve was installed, whether the water from the campground would back up into Harmony. Mr. Goehring said it would go into the creek, which would be better than sewage backing up into people's basements. The Manager said that might not solve the problem that simply, and that the more effective the public sanitary system functions, the more inadequate the public storm system becomes. She explained that during a rain event, the sanitary system acts as a storm system. As tight as the system can be, the laterals are not going to be as tight, because much of the borough lines were built in the 1920s. The only way for the system to be 100% tight is for new laterals to be installed throughout the system. The Engineer said that during an event such as the one that occurred in May, there would have been numerous sources causing the flooding, not just the campground.

Bryan Seibel of Zelienople Park Association and Tom Thompson of Zelienople Borough discussed the community pool tap-in fee, requesting that the EDU count be reduced to two and that a proposal be prepared in time for the next park board meeting for approval.

The Manager updated the Board on recent discussions with members of the Association. The Manager and Engineer reviewed drawings indicating that the pools can be drained into the

sanitary sewer system. Options were discussed to determine EDU counts. A proposal for hour metering would have been cost prohibitive to the Association, and so two alternative ideas were considered: two magnetic flow meters on discharge lines at a cost of \$6,000 each (approximately the cost of two EDUs); and a flume meter, which requires the installation of a manhole, at a cost of \$20,000 to \$25,000. Either way, the metering costs more than two EDUs. In addition, tap fees are recalculated every year and would cost more at the end of the five-to-10-year lookback period.

The Manager and the Engineer explained the piping and pump set-up and concluded, based on total volume, a total of four EDUs. The Department of Environmental Protection sent an e-mail that indicated what the Association proposes for pool water disposal is not against the law.

Mr. Thompson said the park board officially requested that it be assessed only two EDUs, based on anticipated flows from the pool backwash of 72,000 gallons. It acknowledges additional flows could occur without its or the Authority's knowledge. The Manager said the Authority's assessment was a compromise, because it is based on a one-time discharge. The Engineer concurred and said the Authority was forgiving with the EDU calculations. The calculations take into consideration the flow over a three-month period, annualizes it across the year, but the treatment facility has to treat the flow on the day it is received. The Manager added that when Harmony Water Authority sends its backwash to the waste treatment plant, WBCA surcharges for such a large volume. The Engineer said that the Authority has reduced the EDU count from the original assessment of eight. The Manager said that there is no guarantee that the pool association doesn't discharge more often than it proposed. Mr. Thompson said that the pool could advise WBCA if additional discharges take place and reassess the tap-in fee.

The Solicitor said his concern, from a legal perspective, is the future when others are in authority that might not adhere to the agreement. The additional EDUs or the metering are the only way to protect the Authority. Mr. Thompson proposed including a procedure in the agreement by which the Association would report to the Authority if discharge needed to enter the sanitary sewer system. Greg Such asked about a proposed remedy for noncompliance. Mr. Thompson said they could inform the Authority and pay an assessed fee at that time.

Ron Lutz recommended the issue be addressed later in the Board meeting under old business.

## **MINUTES:**

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Ron Lutz, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the May 9, 2019, Regular Meeting Minutes, as amended.

## **BILLS AND COMMUNICATIONS:**

A list of bills in the amount of \$63,336.56 was presented to the Board of Directors in the form of an Expense by Vendor summary with checks dated June 13, 2019. Manager Autumn Heckathorn answered questions that board members had regarding the bills.

In a motion made by Ed Eckenrode and seconded by Dave Weber, the Western County Authority

Board of Directors unanimously approved all of the bills for payment as presented by the Manager in an Expense by Vendor summary with checks dated June 13, 2019. Tim Kenney voted aye to pay the bills, with the exception of State Pipe Services, from which he abstained.

#### **REPORT OF THE SECRETARY:**

The Secretary had nothing to report.

#### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEES:**

##### ***Personnel Committee***

Three employees earned their tank endorsement for their commercial driver's licenses: Adam Wright, Blaine McConnell, and Jack Scholl.

Tom Tomayko made a motion to give employees who earn the tank endorsement of the commercial driver's license a .50 cent per hour pay raise, seconded by Tom Zinkham. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

##### ***Finance Committee***

Ron Lutz presented the final audit report.

The Manager said a recommendation for debt pay down will be discussed during the July meeting.

##### ***Facilities Maintenance Committee***

The Committee had nothing to report.

##### ***Administrative Review Committee***

The Committee had nothing to report.

#### **REPORT OF THE SOLICITOR:**

The Solicitor highlighted the following report items:

- Worked with the Manager and Engineer to review DEP regulations relating to possible discharge issues at Zelenople Park pool; also communicated with the park Board's attorney, Phil Lope, regarding these issues.
- Reviewed with the Manager and Sippel's attorney regarding future maintenance of the development until the Authority can take over the lines.
- Reviewed an easement agreement for the Jackson Crossings development.

- Received a refund check from the magistrate for two collections where service could not be obtained. Collection was not able to be made on one account, and their service was shut off.

## **REPORT OF THE ENGINEER:**

The Engineer highlighted the following report items:

- **Zelienople pool:** Observed the disconnection of the backwash and reconnection of the bathrooms.
- **Herman Pump Station replacement:** Met with ATI and WBCA staff to discuss the project; representatives asked to relocate protected storage, but favor the project. Also contacted adjacent property owner, BNZ Materials, in regard to placing the force main on their property. They pointed out a gas line right-of-way, which will require further investigation because Columbia Gas did not mark it. Made progress on design and permitting.
- **ACT 537 Plan:** Meters were in place for May heavy rain event.
- **Route 19 Sewer Extension:** Began project cost estimate and scope of the project.
- **Foxwood Trail Pump Station:** Reviewed revised planning module and provided comments. Will submit Part II permit as soon as it has been approved.
- **Flow monitoring study:** The monitors captured a heavy rain event in late May, which was the goal of the study. This resulted in at least nine of the meters being submerged during the flooding. An agreement was reached with the meter provider that the Authority would not be billed for any lost meters, but they would be charged for the month they were installed even if the data was lost.

## **REPORT OF THE MANAGER:**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE**

- The flow monitoring study is complete. It was extended through May and recorded a significant wet weather event. All 11 flow meters were retrieved intact with recorded data.
- Statement of Financial Interests and the results of the audit were advertised in the Butler Eagle on May 28, 2019, per the Department of Community and Economic Development.
- Summarized highlights of the May 28, 2019, flooding that occurred in Harmony and Zelienople, including water rising within three inches of destroying the generator at

Harmony Junction and visible bubbles caused by air leaking from the treatment plant air headers.

- Summarized customer accounts of flooding and sewer drains backing up into their basements. Customers who contacted WBCA requested recommendations, monetary assistance, or information regarding what the Authority is doing to resolve the issue.
- The Manager and Engineer spoke about how research conducted in the process of completing the Act 537 Plan will aid in mitigating high flows caused by heavy rain events, and addressed some of the questions posed by visitors earlier during the meeting.
- Ed Eckenrode made a motion to reopen the Sippel escrow account, seconded by Ron Lutz. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.
- Paul Kremer made a motion to open the Belsterling escrow account, seconded by Tom Zinkham. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.
- **Public Relations Campaign/Sump Pump Loan Program:** The Manager proposed that the Authority fund and manage a sump pump loan program where customers can sign out a sump pump during normal business hours. A sump pump waiver would be filled out prior to picking up the pump, acknowledging that damage to or failure to return the pump would be billable to their regular WBCA customer account. The proposal entailed the purchase of eight ECO-FLO  $\frac{3}{4}$  horsepower, 6000 gallons per hour pumps at \$150.09 for \$1200.72 plus hosing to kick off the program. The Board discussed the matter and made additional suggestions to help the community when it experiences basement flooding, which includes providing the public with information about check valves.

Greg Such motioned to purchase 10 sump pumps, hoses, and extension cords with a ground plug, with the stipulation that WBCA manage the dispersal and release, seconded by Ed Eckenrode. The motion carried with a unanimous vote, and the Solicitor was directed to draft an agreement.

#### SEWER SYSTEM REPORT

- In a motion made by Ron Lutz and seconded by Ed Eckenrode, the Board unanimously voted to Jackson Trails Release Request #1 in the amount of \$67,993, with the total set-aside amount being \$203,123.25, leaving a remaining balance of \$135,130.25.
- Updated the Board on an issue in the Spring Valley development between the contractor/developer and homeowners regarding water well.

#### PAST DUE ACTIVITY

On May 17, 2019, a total of 35 customers failed to respond to the 30-day past due notification and were posted for water shut-off. Payment was due on or before May 30, 2019. Only

customers on a public water service are included for shut off. Customers with a balance in excess of \$20 who are 60 days past due are included.

	Zelienople	Jackson	Lancaster	Harmony	Total
April 2019	\$24,323.78	\$6,945.72	\$710.83	\$5,298.73	\$37,279.06
May 2019	\$30,757.23	\$11,421.71	\$992.50	\$7,403.80	\$50,575.24

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

The Board went into an executive session at 8:55 p.m. and exited at 9:29 p.m.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Ron Lutz motioned to charge Zelienople Park Association four tap fees for the pool and that the line be televised, seconded by Ed Eckenrode. The motion passed in a unanimous roll call vote.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

The customer residing at 209 S. Green Lane in Zelienople requested that WBCA cover their \$500 insurance deductible after sewage backed up into their basement as a result of heavy rains on May 28, 2019. Paul Kremer cautioned the Board about setting a precedent, because the Authority did nothing to cause the backup caused by a rain event. The Solicitor said the Authority has immunity, because there was no prior notice.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

As there was no further business to discuss, Ron Lutz motioned to adjourn, seconded by Tom Zinkham, and the June 13, 2019 Regular Meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Pfeffer, Recording Secretary  
Western Butler County Authority