

Towanda Municipal Authority

December 20, 2024

The December meeting of the Towanda Municipal Authority was called to order by Mr. Walsh at 12:02 p.m.

PRESENT: Michael Walsh, Joseph Snell, Fred Johnson, Carmen Venezia, Mark Christini, Roger Hatch

ABSENT: William Shaw, Katrina Murray, Robert Williams-WTMA Chairman

OTHERS: Matthew Aikey, Superintendent; Morgan Madden (via phone), Babst, Calland, Clements and Zomnir, P.C.; Stacy Schoonover, Borough Manager

Visitors: Thomas Bradford; William Them-WTMA Secretary/Treasurer; Rhonda Vanderpool

Visitors:

Mr. Bradford and Mr. Them stated they were here to observe.

Ms. Vanderpool addressed the Board in reference to her letter to connect to the water and the timeline of 90 days. Ms. Vanderpool is having a hardship with the 1,100.00 tap in fee and the cost to connect to the water. Mr. Walsh questioned if she spoke with Ms. Maynard on a possible payment plan; Ms. Vanderpool stated no because the 90 day timeline is impossible with her current financial situation; she works two jobs and her husband has been informed his job will be eliminated at the beginning of the year. Ms. Maynard stated the notice to connect gave Ms. Vanderpool 90 days to connect to the water and the 1,100.00 water tap in fee. Mr. Johnson stated there was a curb stop installed that was done during the Bridge Street project. Mr. Johnson informed Ms. Vanderpool that the Board will make a decision and get back with Ms. Vanderpool with our decision. Ms. Vanderpool left the meeting.

The Board discussed the connection. Mr. Johnson stated he was aware at the time of the Bridge Street Project that the occupants could not financially tie into the water system that is why a curb stop was put in. Mr. Hatch questioned the \$1,100.00 fee; Mr. Aikey informed him it is the tap in fee for water. Mr. Johnson suggested our personnel can do the work and bill her for time and material and set her up on a payment plan. Mr. Walsh stated to inform her of the decision to do this inhouse and set her up on a 2 or 3 year payment plan; see if she can afford that. Mr. Hatch questioned if our tap in fee was ever waived; Mr. Johnson stated only if the project outlined waiving the tap in fee; that was the only time it was waived.

The Board went on to discuss the other well in the Municipality; M's Market; Ms. Maynard stated that it was found in the minutes that Mr. Pruyne sent notification to Mr. Applebee to abandon his well back in February of 2021. Mr. Aikey sent Mr. Benjamin to the property then Mr. Pat Maynard; Mr. Maynard stated that the well does not enter the property currently occupied by tenants; the property is under contract to be sold; the utilities to the well are shut off and are housed in the greenhouse that has no utilities currently. Mr. Walsh stated maybe we need to contact Mr. Applebee and ensure that the abandonment of the well is put in the closing of the property. Ms. Maynard will contact Mr. Maynard or Mr. Applebee for information.

Minutes:

The November 18, 2024 meeting minutes were approved as written with a motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Christini, approved.

Bills:

The November bills were approved on a motion made by Mr. Venezia and seconded by Mr. Hatch, approved.

Non-Compliance Fee:

The Board was given correspondence from two customers and Mr. Christini had a customer contact him as well about the fee. The letter that was sent in the packet Ms. Maynard stated that

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she did not answer the door for her scheduled appointment; she has three months of non-compliance fees. Ms. Maynard stated we have rescheduled that appointment for December 27th. Mr. Johnson requested if we can accommodate the working residents with a weekend schedule; Mr. Aikey stated he is not sure with the union contract; Mr. Johnson stated we can change their work schedule; Mr. Aikey stated he would look into it; in Williamsport they had customers appoint a representative to accommodate their inspections. Ms. Maynard stated Ms. O' Connor also requested the non-compliance fees waived. Mr. Walsh questioned how many non compliant customers do we have; Ms. Maynard stated we have 4 customers receiving the fee and not responding; one of which is the other customer correspondence we received; that customer did have a scheduled appointment that they cancelled. Mr. Aikey stated they are in New York but should have someone in the area looking after the property. The Board requested we inform the customers receiving the fee; Ms. Maynard stated the notice of non compliance was both mailed and posted prior to us adding the fee to the customers account. Mr. Aikey questioned if he should call the customer from New York; Mr. Walsh stated yes, we should and inform them to have an appointment set up with whomever is looking after the property.

Mr. Aikey stated the decision was that they get the noncompliance fee; if they take care of it in the month they are billed for, the fee it is waived.

Mr. Walsh questioned how we are doing with meter changeouts: Ms. Maynard stated she is in Monroe Borough; we have noncompliance in Towanda Township; New Albany Township is getting their second notice as well as Monroe Township; after Monroe Borough, the only changeouts left if our noncompliant customers and North Towanda.

Ms. Maynard wanted clarification on the noncompliance fee; if they comply within the first month the fee is placed on their account it is waived; the other customers receiving the fee will only have the fee waived in the month they complied; the Board agreed.

Mr. Johnson stated we need to send a certified letter to the customers still receiving the noncompliance fee.

Licenses:

Mr. Aikey stated we are still getting personnel trained. Five employees went down for testing and four personnel passed; we have two for water and two for sewer. Our next step is to apply to DEP for our licensure. We have one of our personnel who needs to take classes to cut his time down. Mr. Walsh questioned the timeline on getting their operating licenses; Mr. Aikey stated one at wastewater will be good; the other needs time; our water needs more classes to shorten his time.

Mr. Nagle has cut back time he is here, he only comes up every other week, instead of weekly.

Mr. Aikey stated he did receive Mr. Walker's resignation.

FEMA:

Mr. Casanave stated he is in contact with FEMA to see if the additional funds given the Authority can be redirected to other places; Mr. Casanave hopes to have an answer next month. The funds were to repair parts of the Eilenberger line that are inaccessible.

Headworks Project:

Mr. Them questioned the amount Wysox Township Municipal Authority would be liable for; Mr. Casanave stated that this is a 7.7 million dollar project; we have to wait until Penn Vest decides what is grant vs loan. Mr. Walsh stated that this would not be completed until 2026; Mr. Casanave stated yes we would not owe until 2026. Mr. Them also questioned the rate increase this year; Mr. Walsh stated that would be discussed.

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2025 Meeting Dates:

Mr. Walsh stated the only change to our meetings is the meeting in December it was changed back to the third Monday of the Month. Mr. Venezia made a motion to advertise the following meeting dates for 2025; Mr. Johnson seconded, approved.

January 20 th	February 24 th	March 17 th
April 21 st	May 19 th	June 16 th
July 21 st	August 18 th	September 15 th
October 20 th	November 17 th	December 15 th

2025 Engineering Agreement:

Mr. Christini made a motion to enter into Agreement with Stiffler McGraw for 2025, Mr. Snell seconded, approved.

2025 Budget:

Mr. Walsh requested that we put engineering costs for projects in a separate line item in the future; Mr. Casanave stated that it is reimbursable cost. Mr. Johnson questioned the equipment numbers in sewer; Mr. Aikey stated that should have been reimbursed by the insurance claim.

Mr. Johnson questioned if the budget was a team effort with Mr. Aikey and Ms. Schoonover; Ms. Schoonover stated yes.

Ms. Schoonover stated she reviewed budget with Ms. Maynard and the metered sales came into question with what was budgeted last year; Ms. Schoonover took the average of the last three years and came up with a corrected amount to put in the budget. The water treatment personnel services are increased due to having 2 persons in that department now; Mr. Hatch questioned if TMA pays them; Ms. Schoonover stated that the Borough pays, TMA reimburses. Mr. Johnson questioned if extra personnel was budgeted, Mr. Johnson stated that last year Ms. Hotaling budgeted for two new personnel; have we put the new personnel in the budget?

Ms. Schoonover stated she has a reduction in engineering cost as we will have licenses this year so we will have a reduction in that category.

Ms. Schoonover does not think we need to raise rates until we see what the funding from Penn Vest will be.

Mr. Walsh mentioned water revenue being down; Ms. Schoonover mentioned that goes back to the number entered in last year's budget, it was overinflated; the number in for this year's budget is more realistic.

Mr. Johnson questioned the base rate and the break down for water and sewer; Ms. Maynard stated it is currently set at \$16.40 of which \$9.02 goes to water and \$7.38 to sewer; Mr. Johnson thinks more should go to sewer; Ms. Maynard stated we can also change the percentage. Mr. Johnson thinks the base rate should increase to \$20.00; if we increase rates customers tend to conserve. We do not think we want to hit our customers with a rate increase if we are already collecting some of the revenue already. Mr. Hatch questioned how often we change the budget; Ms. Maynard stated that this is the budget once it is approved it is desimated to the appropriate agencies. Ms. Madden stated that any significant change we would need to readvertise the budget; there is a threshold; she will get the guidelines to Ms. Maynard.

Mr. Walsh stated that Ms. Schoonover mentioned splitting the gas royalties amongst the reserve accounts; all royalties go to the water reserve. Mr. Hatch made a motion to have the gas royalties

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split between water and sewer capitol reserves.

Mr. Hatch made a motion to approve the 2025 budget with the increase in $\frac{3}{4}$ and 1" base charge of \$3.60, Mr. Johnson seconded, approved.

WTMA:

Mr. Walsh stated that since Mr. Them is at the meeting if the Board wanted to discuss the possible merger. Mr. Hatch stated he has yet to reach out to the auditors on this. Mr. Them requested if Mr. Hatch wanted him to assist in this; Mr. Hatch stated he still needs to contact them.

Payment Plan:

Ms. Maynard requested the Board allow Ms. Masterton an extended payment arrangement; she was the customer with a service line leak; Mr. Johnson stated it should be fine to take her out past a year. Mr. Aikey questioned if we have a table that states if you owe a certain amount, you get this much time to pay it; Ms. Maynard stated no; if she sets up a payment plan with a customer, they have 6 months to pay it if they request more than 6 months it is given to administration they are authorized to extend to a year; anything beyond that is brought to the Board. Mr. Aikey stated that some of the stuff is operational and wants to know how much the Board wants to be bothered with these items; Mr. Walsh questioned if we wanted to put that in our rules and regulations to have a guideline; Ms. Madden stated that we should avoid putting that in our regulations and continue what we have been doing, to avoid any potential legal problems; do it case by case.

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary