

Towanda Municipal Authority

August 19, 2024

The August meeting of the Towanda Municipal Authority was called to order by Mr. Walsh at 12:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Michael Walsh, Joseph Snell, Fred Johnson , William Shaw, Roger Hatch

ABSENT: Carmen Venezia, Katrina Murray, Mark Christini, Morgan Madden, Babst, Calland, Clements and Zomnir, P.C., Robert Williams-WTMA Chairman

OTHERS: Matthew Aikey, Superintendent; Eric Casanave, Stiffler McGraw; Brian Shura, Stiffler McGraw

Visitors: Aaron & Anna Mae Moyer

Visitors:

Mr. Moyer stated he wrote a letter to the Board; they purchased the property at 13722 Route 220; they were unaware that they had municipal sewer and hookup was required. They had the on lot septic system inspected before they purchased the property. When he was made aware of the requirement to connect to the municipal sewer the superintendent at the time came out to assess the situation and told him that we would have to mark the hookup point and determine whether it was actually feasible for a connection to the system to be made.

Mr. Moyer stated he never heard anything more on that. Due to a recent 811 call the sewer connection came back up. Mr. Moyer stated he had a contractor tell him due to the length and grade a holding tank and pumping system would need to be installed. Mr. Moyer is requesting an exemption be made to connect to the sewer system as he is financially unable to put the system in.

Ms. Maynard stated that Mr. Applebee the prior owner of the property did pay the tap in fee but never connected the Moyers as well as Mr. Applebee are being charged the ready to serve sewer rate. Mr. Johnson stated that they did encounter issues with Mr. Applebee on the connection and he is surprised Mr. Applebee paid the tap in fee. Mr. Johnson questioned who stated the elevation issue; Mr. Moyer stated that the plumbing goes through the basement floor; Mr. Johnson questioned if the plumbing can be changed; Mr. Moyer stated not without a financial burden on him. Mr. Casanave stated that 1st floor service should come into the conversation. Mr. Johnson stated we would like to see everyone connected to the sewer system. Mr. Moyer stated that he cannot financially afford that at this time; the contractor stated \$30,000.00; he would have to clear trees and tear up his driveway.

Mr. Moyer also requested if the ready to serve charges be the flat rate.

Mr. Walsh stated the Board will have to discuss this and get back to Mr. Moyer. Ms. Maynard requested the letter so that we can have that for record; Mr. Moyer did provide that.

Minutes:

The July 15, 2024 meeting minutes were approved as written and the special meeting minutes of July 29, 2024 meeting minutes were approved as written with a motion made by Mr. Shaw, seconded by Mr. Hatch, approved.

Mr. Walsh mentioned he received a call from Mr. Lowenstein regarding the merger.

Bills:

The July bills were approved on a motion made by Mr. Hatch, and seconded by Mr. Johnson, approved.

Water:

Mr. Aikey stated that the tank inspections were emailed to the Board; a copy of the inspections exist at the water plant, in his office and the Managers office.

We have the hatch on the Wilmot tank and Thomas Street tank that need replaced we had previously received a quote (\$18,000.00) for the Thomas Street tank but Mr. Aikey is looking to see if we can do it for less.

Mr. Aikey stated that some of the items that were found are not mandated repairs, the placarding can be purchased and installed in house.

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Mr. Walsh stated if Mr. Aikey wants to go out to bid on the repairs needed for the tanks; Mr. Aikey stated that he wants to research the prices on some of the equipment first.

Mr. Aikey stated we have an issue with alarming at the Water Treatment Plant; the Scada is still operating but the alarming has quit; Mr. Johnson questioned the capability of the sending out an alarm; Mr. Aikey stated yes. The alarms were wiped out of the verbatim; and the output is gone; the system is an auto dialer. Mr. Aikey stated we had IT on site and the IT and Cambria Systems are blaming the issue on each other. Martz Technology came in, they were able to find all the alarms and they found a corrupt file. Mr. Johnson stated we need to purchase a new verbatim; Mr. Aikey stated yes, the cost is \$8,345.00. The second option that Mr. Aikey suggests is to go to a WIN911 system; much newer technology, more remote login capabilities and the capability of setting precedence on certain alarms; for example, a chlorine alarm would continue to alarm until it is cleared. The WIN911 system is \$6,000.00; Mr. Johnson questioned the annual fee; Mr. Aikey stated it is a 3-year cost. The WIN911 system can then be integrated to our other systems as it has unlimited apparatuses. Mr. Walsh questioned if it can be used at the sewer plant; Mr. Aikey stated once the Scada is installed, yes. Mr. Walsh questioned if he needed a motion to purchase; Mr. Aikey stated he already purchased it.

Thomas Street PRV:

Mr. Casanave stated he received a quote from LB Water for the vault the cost is \$73,400.00 that includes the crane to drop it in the hole; that saves us on what is needed to be contracted out. The lead time is 6-8 weeks so we need to coordinate that with weather. Mr. Casanave stated that we will need to valve off sections and open hydrants to relieve pressure when this does go in. Mr. Casanave stated we surveyed the valve system but did not go further on what needed accomplished so that we did not have customers out of service for an extended amount of time. We need to work with Mr. Aikey to verify valves are operational and how this process is going to work. Mr. Casanave stated we can vote on this in our September meeting to get the project out to bid early next year to be completed prior to the expiration of the grant. Mr. Casanave stated he will send the diagrams to Mr. Johnson if he wants a copy to review; Mr. Johnson stated his only concern is the valves; Mr. Johnson reiterated we need to confirm the valves are in working condition.

Mr. Hatch questioned the location of this vault; Mr. Casanave stated that the Thomas Street tank is across 220 and this vault reduces the water pressure for distribution from the tank; Mr. Johnson stated it was installed in 1980 and has been a worry since that time. Mr. Hatch stated if this is going to correct something or is this a maintenance issue. Mr. Johnson stated it is going to fix this valve system; we have blown the main before with the amount of pressure; the new vault will give us access to our equipment which the current vault does not have much room to be able fix anything. Mr. Casanave thinks the grant was \$85,000.00 with a 15% match.

Sewer:

Mr. Aikey stated that the centrifuge panel came in this morning. The VFD, and surge protection is all awaiting installation. We are looking at Wednesday for installation; Mr. Johnson stated everything is being installed; Mr. Aikey stated it will be two weeks for the centrifuge but the VFD and surge protection should be this week.

Mr. Aikey stated that since Mr. Walker went out on medical leave the personnel at the sewer plant are new and learning, they are finding a lot of issues; both septage pumps are down one of each of the recycling pumps are down; Mr. Johnson stated he would not be surprised that there are no spares; Mr. Aikey stated there are no spares. Mr. Johnson stated everything should be working and we should have a spare on hand. Mr. Aikey stated that during the rain event last week 2 of the 3 raw pumps in the basement did not work. Mr. Aikey stated that Mr. Nagle and himself were rebuilding pumps and trying to teach the new personnel how to do so; they encountered issues with the valves that have not been exercised and they had to work them to get them working. This issue caused the interceptor to back up Elizabeth Street causing sewage to come out the manhole and sewage went into 2 Elizabeth Street basement; his vent on his property caused some of the issue with the issue in the basement.

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There was also a grease blockage; once that was broken up, we were able to get the flow back to normal. Mr. Johnson questioned if we are ordering the parts as needed; Mr. Aikey stated he has not ordered any pumps yet.

Mr. Shura stated because of the issues at the plant we might want to consider either adding equipment to our upcoming project or to start purchasing equipment out of our reserves. Mr. Aikey stated that with the power outage, equipment that was probably in the project was replaced with our insurance claim.

Mr. Aikey stated that Mr. Nagle has been phenomenal teaching personnel from the ground level from start to finish. He is teaching them how the plant is supposed to work.

Mr. Casanave contacted Mr. Aikey stating they are receiving data from pump station 1 that does not look correct; Mr. Aikey stated we use bubblers that are antiquated; they are not giving appropriate data. Mr. Casanave stated that they have flow meters to analyze Wysox's infiltration issue; the flow meter installed 2 manholes from pump station 1 was recording abnormal flows.

Mr. Aikey stated he would like to see a more robust Scada system to monitor everything in the plant, and also at our remote sites; like we have at the water treatment plant to monitor the entire system. Mr. Johnson stated that was the vision to happen down the road. Mr. Shura stated there was limited Scada to be put in the current project. Mr. Shura stated we can incorporate the complete Scada system now rather than waiting for the process project. Mr. Aikey stated we do use Guard Dog now, but the ability to be able to view everything is not there. Mr. Walsh questioned if the remote sites are not on the Scada; Mr. Aikey stated that they have Guard Dog now which is a local system; Mr. Johnson stated it is like a Scada System it sends alarms; Mr. Aikey stated it is more of an alarming system not a Scada. Mr. Shura stated we can encompass the Scada System in this project rather than waiting for the next project; we can also change out the bubbler system from the pump stations.

Mr. Aikey stated that Mr. Nagle is at the sewer plant one day a week and at the water plant one day a week; the personnel are learning, and classes start next week to obtain licenses. Two water and two waste water personnel are going to class.

College Run Sewer Lateral:

Mr. Aikey stated we have decided to keep this project in house. Mr. Johnson asked why was this project not done inhouse in the first place was it because of Mr. Miller; Mr. Aikey stated yes; if Mr. Miller does not want to do it, then the project would go outside; Mr. Johnson stated what changed; Mr. Aikey stated Mr. Kithcart and two other employees have agreed to do it so Mr. Miller will assist. Our new employee is also an operator can assist Mr. Miller.

Mr. Aikey stated we are still awaiting the second easement; Ms. Maynard stated we have been talking to the son; Mr. Aikey stated he has as well, and the son agreed to sign the easement; Ms. Maynard stated the mother lives in Virginia; both mother and son are on the deed.

Headworks Project:

Mr. Shura stated that the permits have been issued, the final design is in process; we need to add the items that have been discussed into the project, our plan is to have everything ready to go the Penn Vest in January. Mr. Shura stated that they met with Mr. Aikey this morning as there are unknown items in the project; the ATAD has not been cleaned; the goal was last fall or early this spring was to have the ATAD taken down, drained and have a contractor inspect the system to check the manifolds and nozzles; we incorporated a price in the project to replace the manifolds with the updated version which has individual air headers, which would make it easier to clean out. Mr. Shura stated the first time the ATAD was cleaned out they found the nozzles to be plugged. The ATAD should be cleaned out every seven years; it was to be done inhouse but that has not occurred. The

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cost of a manifold is in excess of \$200,000.00; the question is do you keep this in the project without knowing if it needs replaced or not. Mr. Shura stated without delaying the project it was decided to have the ATAD system clean out put into the project itself. The plan is to have the contractor clean out the system the ATAD will be pulled out and be a separate line item in the project. It will cost more money as we are not cleaning out the digestors inhouse, but at the end of the day they need cleaned out regardless. Mr. Walsh stated they are over 16 years old now; Mr. Johnson stated why don't we just replace the manifolds; Mr. Shura stated Mr. Aikey concurred; but we still have to drain and inspect the ATAD that has only occurred once in the past. Mr. Shura stated that we might find more issues and other items that need replaced once the ATAD is drained; Mr. Shura stated we incorporated spare parts in the project but we might find that the parts need replaced and a spare ordered.

The project should be completed by October 30th. We might want to add the Scada to this project as well per prior discussion. Mr. Aikey stated that the generator is not adequate either for the plant. Mr. Shura stated we can add the generator; during previous discussions the generator was to be repaired but that has not occurred. Mr. Walsh stated we might as well put everything in the project that we need to stay operational; Mr. Shura stated this project will get bigger and the next one will be smaller as some of the additions were already going to be incorporated in the next project.

Mr. Johnson made a motion to add the Scada and generator to the Headworks Project, Mr. Shaw seconded, approved.

Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Aikey needs to see what else needs purchased for the plant and check the budget to see if we have funds to purchase what we need.

DEP Violation:

Mr. Aikey read the letter from DEP for a violation of discharge; Mr. Aikey stated he received the call from DEP and contacted Mr. Walker who stated he was in Watkins Glen; Mr. Aikey questioned if Mr. Walker was aware of the issue at the plant, he sent Mr. Ackley to investigate; Mr. Johnson questioned why Mr. Ackley was called; Mr. Aikey stated he was the on-call person. Mr. Ackley stated yes that occurred. During a visit to the sewer plant with Mr. Nagle this was brought up and Mr. Stroud concurred that we are still doing this, Mr. Nagle and Mr. Aikey went to see, it is not solids. Since Mr. Walker confirmed the violation with DEP we were sent a notice. Mr. Aikey stated that education and sending the correct personnel to investigate needs to be done in the future. Mr. Johnson stated how could Mr. Walker confirm the violation when he was not in town; Mr. Aikey stated he is our operator and did. Mr. Aikey stated when DEP came to investigate, they found no evidence of solids being discharged. Mr. Aikey stated there is no fine but we have a violation on our record. Mr. Nagle is reaching out to DEP to see what can be done on this.

Mr. Aikey discussed the on-call schedule and having personnel respond to situations they cannot take care of.

Engagement Letter with Babst, Calland, Clements and Zomnir P.C.:

Ms. Maynard made copies of the engagement letter for Ms. Madden's new firm. Mr. Snell made a motion to sign the engagement letter with Babst, Calland, Clements and Zomnir P.C. for Ms. Madden's services, Mr. Shaw seconded, approved.

WTMA:

Mr. Walsh questioned what was found out about the merger; Mr. Aikey stated he talked with DCED and was referred to another colleague, they mentioned since we already do the work for WTMA they do not see that is should be much of an issue. Mr. Aikey stated we will not need a full feasibility study. Mr. Johnson questioned if we have a timeframe when this would be done; Mr. Aikey stated they referred the issue to another person and we haven't heard from them yet.

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Audit:

Ms. Maynard stated the 2023 Audit was sent to the Board, we need to approve and publicize the audit. Mr. Hatch made a motion to approve the 2023 Audit, Mr. Johnson seconded, approved.

Route 220 Easements:

Ms. Maynard stated that we discovered our Route 220 easements for the Monroeton project were never filed at the court house. Ms. Maynard stated she called the court house and the cost would be \$63.75 for up to a 4-page document. Mr. Johnson wanted to know the cost; Ms. Maynard stated she will get that amount. Mr. Walsh stated they need to be recorded. The Board approved to get these recorded.

Mr. Moyer:

Mr. Aikey stated the rules are the rules in connecting to the system. The Board discussed the issue. Mr. Walsh stated the first thing we need to do is mark the connection point, contact Ms. Madden in reference to enforcement. We will send a letter to Mr. Moyer once we get the answer to all our questions and we will give him a year extension to connect. Mr. Aikey questioned why we ran sewer in Monroeton; Mr. Walsh stated it was an ACT 537; DEP mandated abandonment of septic systems.

Local Shares Grant:

Mr. Casanave stated the Local Shares Grant has opened back up again; the Board discussed the previous projects we went for funding. The application deadline is November. Mr. Casanave stated he would email the Board the previous requests we submitted or gathered information on and we can decide from there.

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary