

Towanda Municipal Authority

September 16, 2024

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

PRESENT: Michael Walsh, Joseph Snell (via phone), Fred Johnson , Roger Hatch, Carmen Venezia

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

OTHERS: Matthew Aikey, Superintendent; Morgan Madden, Babst, Calland, Clements and Zomnir, P.C.; Eric Casanave, Stiffler McGraw; Stacy Schoonover, Borough Manager

Visitors: None

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None

Minutes:

The August 19, 2024 meeting minutes were approved as written with a motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Hatch, approved.

Bills:

The August bills were approved on a motion made by Mr. Venezia, and seconded by Mr. Johnson, approved.

Water:

Mr. Aikey stated that DEP will be here on October 3, 2024 to do the water inspection. Mr. Venezia questioned if Mr. Aikey will be in attendance; Mr. Aikey stated that yes as well as Mr. Nagle.

Mr. Aikey stated that Mr. Haight presented an invoice for 11 Mix Ave; he is claiming that when we replaced the water main on William Street it caused the PRV to clog up and it had to be replaced. The Board decided that that is not anything we will cover.

Mr. Aikey stated that calibrations have been set up for September 30th for all our billing meters for water and sewer. The bulk water station, the interconnect meter for Wysox, and New Albany meter have been added to the list. That service will be done by WG Walden.

All the alarming has been rectified at the WTP, we purchased the Win911 system and it is operational.

Thomas Street PRV:

Mr. Casanave provided the quote from LB Water on the vault and sketch of what the vault looks like. This is the complete vault but we would need to hire a contractor to make the connections. Mr. Walsh stated the price looks good; Mr. Casanave stated it is under the grant amount; we do have a match and he verified with Ms. Schoonover that we have the funds. There is a 6–8-week lead time so we need to order it closer to the time of construction as we have nowhere to store it; we can ask LB Water if they can store it, but Mr. Casanave suggests we wait until closer to spring. . Mr. Casanave stated we have until June 30, 2025 to complete the project per the grant. There is sales tax on the quote but we are tax exempt; there are materials that are not tax exempt, and that might be the case here. Mr. Johnson made a motion to accept the quote from LB Water on the Thomas Street PRV vault, quote #1982460 for \$73,399.52, Mr. Snell seconded, approved. Mr. Casanave stated he will contact LB Water on the tax.

Mr. Hatch questioned the next step; Mr. Casanave stated we will put the project out to bid early next year in order to get the vault in place.

Towanda Municipal Authority

September 16, 2024

Mr. Johnson questioned if we will have to order the materials needed to connect the system; Mr. Casanave stated that will be part of the project bid, we do need to reduce the pipe size. Mr. Hatch questioned the impact to customers; Mr. Casanave stated that Mr. Strickland and himself investigated the impact to customers and the system. The tank serves the high and low points in this section of town, we did map out a lot of valves on Thomas and Third Street. Mr. Casanave, suggest we spend time locating and ensuring the valves are operational, and to verify we are shutting off the correct valves. Mr. Casanave stated that Mr. Strickland thought opening hydrants to relieve the pressure in the system, but that was not investigated any further than that. We might have customers without water for maybe a day. Mr. Walsh questioned if the specifications of the installation will be clarified in the contract; Mr. Casanave stated it will be spelled out in the contract and we should be able to get local contractors to do the work.

Sewer:

Mr. Aikey stated that our issue we had with the interceptor caused sewage to back up into the basement of 2 Elizabeth; Mr. Dan Bell provided us documentation of what had to be replaced due to this issue. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Bell needs to turn it into his insurance; we have paid the deductible in the past depending on circumstance.

Mr. Aikey stated that the surge protection was installed as well as the centrifuge panel. We have one bill we are awaiting to finish the insurance claim. Mr. Johnson stated everything has been fixed, repaired or replaced; Mr. Aikey stated yes.

Mr. Casanave stated that Ms. Sipes their environmental scientist is coming up on Friday, she will be bringing up a microscope they have so that the sewer plant can use it for a couple of months and see if they like it; this if for them to complete the analysis they need to be completing at the plant; they will be trained on the use of the microscope. In the afternoon Ms. Sipes will sit with Ms. McLinko and Ms. Maynard to review the EPA Service Line spreadsheet; that is due to DEP in October. She will review with them the DEP spreadsheet; according to what Mr. Casanave has been told the spreadsheet for Towanda is almost complete; Mr. Aikey stated that Mr. Nagle stated we do not need to use the DEP spreadsheet. Mr. Johnson questioned clarification on the subject; Mr. Casanave stated that the EPA mandated that every service line be inventoried to identify lead service lines. Mr. Walsh stated we started this awhile back; Mr. Aikey stated we found out last week that there was a DEP spreadsheet we should have been using, it has 15 categories we should have been checking we only checked 6; Mr. Johnson stated that he thought that that was being done; Mr. Aikey stated the field work was being done, it is not being correctly documented; with 2200 lines that would be impossible to enter into their spreadsheet in less than a month. Ms. Maynard stated that Ms. McLinko mirrored the DEP spreadsheet with the information we gathered instead of reentering everything from scratch. Mr. Nagle thinks that we will be okay using our own spreadsheet. Mr. Casanave stated that what they have found that other Authorities are having issues with the documentation that needs addressed inside the residence as customers are having an issue with letting personnel in their residence; Mr. Johnson stated we are doing that correct; Ms. Maynard stated that yes, with the meter changeouts Mr. Benjamin is documenting that information. Mr. Casanave stated we will know more about our process when Ms. Sipes comes in on Friday. Mr. Walsh questioned the meter change out progress; Ms. Maynard stated when she ran a report a couple of months ago, we still had 600 to complete; Mr. Johnson questioned if we are still doing the changeouts; Ms. Maynard stated yes. Mr. Johnson requested the time frame on the grant; Ms. Maynard stated three years; Mr. Johnson asked if we are recording Mr. Benjamin's time; Ms. Schoonover stated yes, we do not get reimbursed for that, as that is considered our match.

College Run Sewer Lateral:

Mr. Aikey stated this project should begin this week.

Towanda Municipal Authority

September 16, 2024

Headworks Project:

Mr. Casanave stated that as requested last meeting we are adding the Scada and generators to the Headworks project. We should be ready to go to Penn Vest in October. Mr. Johnson questioned when will they award or when would we know if they are going to fund the project; Mr. Casanave stated deadline is November and they award in January. Mr. Casanave stated we should be in construction May-June of next year. Mr. Walsh questioned how long we keep bids open; Mr. Casanave stated a couple of months; if we get the award in January we will advertise immediately, and award in May or June. Mr. Casanave stated everything is still on track.

DEP Violation:

Mr. Casanave stated that Mr. Nagle sent a letter on behalf of the Authority due to the DEP violation we received in August due the incident July 4th weekend, the letter was sent to Mr. Michael Jordon at DEP. Mr. Aikey stated that we sent a letter but that we still have a violation on record.

Exposed Water Line:

Mr. Casanave was contacted by Mr. Aikey that he was informed that we have an exposed water main; due to erosion the Eilenberger main on the west side of South Towanda Creek has been exposed; approximately 150 feet. Mr. Casanave, Mr. Nagle, Mr. Aikey, and both Paul and Pat Maynard went to look at it. It is our 10-inch main; we have photos of the pipe and it is leaking water, it is not the abandoned pipe. The location is at 2444 route 220, south of Brocktown; rocks have come down on the pipe and moved the piping. Mr. Johnson questioned if this can be repaired inhouse; Mr. Aikey does not think so. Mr. Casanave has a call to DEP to see if we can consider this an emergency to get the line repaired, he has yet to hear from someone. Mr. Walsh stated it has been brought up about the cost of maintaining twelve miles of pipe from the Eilenberger Springs; Mr. Casanave stated the spring still provides 50% of our water; the new wells cannot maintain the system on their own; pipe size and everything else involved, we are not able to provide water without the Eilenberger water source. Mr. Johnson questioned if we can bring in equipment to repair the line; Mr. Casanave stated it will take some doing and we have two options, we can armor it in place, fix the joint that is leaking, and rip rock and fortify the line, or we can move the line from the creek bank and tie it back in where it goes back under ground. There are wetland concerns.

We are looking at an emergency permit to get everything done now, then go after permitting after the work is complete. Mr. Johnson stated that there are more exposed sites as the water line as it follows the creek. Mr. Walsh questioned if this is coming out of our operating funds, Mr. Casanave stated yes. Mr. Johnson stated that he thought that last time we went to the Conservation District for an emergency permit; Mr. Casanave stated yes, we did and it was forwarded to DEP. Mr. Hatch made a motion to have Stiffler McGraw pursue the wetland delineation on this property, Mr. Snell seconded, approved.

Mr. Aikey stated that there is still \$200,000.00 in the FEMA grant; Mr. Casanave stated the line was walked with PEMA/FEMA and they identified areas of wash out this is not one of them. Mr. Casanave stated we can ask if we can move the funds to cover this location; the locations identified were inaccessible without an expensive access road. Mr. Aikey questioned if we have a contact number for someone at FEMA; Chris Evans is the name mentioned; Mr. Aikey will reach out to him.

WTMA:

Mr. Walsh questioned if we found out anything further on the merger. Mr. Aikey stated we were referred to an attorney within DCED. They stated our next step in the process would be to retain an attorney which we reached out to Ms. Madden to see if her firm would be able to be the attorney in regards to the merger. DCED stated a resolution would have to be entered by both parties involved; then the merger would be done. Ms. Madden stated the merger process is straight forward it is like one business taking over another. We would need to get a list of their assets and obligations and a detailed map of their infrastructure. Ms. Maynard stated that it was mentioned that the entity

Towanda Municipal Authority

September 16, 2024

merging takes on the rules and regulations of the existing entity. Mr. Walsh questioned if Wysox is aware of this; Mr. Aikey stated we have not had a meeting. Mr. Johnson stated he thought there would be more involved on the merger that would tell us the pros and cons of merging. Mr. Aikey stated DCED stated we are already entwined, we do not need to do any other thing, if both parties are interested. Mr. Johnson stated we are going to have a different rate due to their debt. Ms. Madden stated that debt council would still have to sign off on the merger. The Board continued to discuss the issues in merging the Authorities. Mr. Johnson stated we need to discuss the internal issues. Mr. Walsh requested if we want to come up with an agreement for both parties to go further with the merge.

Local Shares Grant:

Mr. Casanave provided the Board with the list of projects that we have tried to submit in the past. Ms. Madden stated she has submitted more than one grant application for the Local Shares Grant you just need a cover sheet stating which projects you are prioritizing. Mr. Johnson stated we do not have the funds if all projects get funded; Ms. Madden stated you can decline part of the funding if that is the case. Mr. Casanave stated the Board can email him what they think is a priority or what project they want to submit.

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary