**UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER**

**50 ROUTE 20, MILLBURY, MA 01527-2199**

**BOARD MEETING MINUTES - BOARD ROOM/HYBRID MEETING**

**July 19, 2023**

**ITEM I - CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Labovites called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Ms. Mancini, through a roll call, recorded those in attendance and all are noted below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Board Members** | **Title** | **Present** | **Absent** | **In- person** | **Virtual** |
| Matthew Labovites | Chairman | x |  | x |  |
| Philip Guerin | Vice Chairman | x |  | x |  |
| John Woodsmall | Secretary | x |  | x |  |
| Michael Traynor | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Joanna Paquin | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Donald Manseau | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Robert Antonelli | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Kevin Duffy | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Gary Nelson | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Jay Fink | Member | x |  | x |  |
| Austin Cyganiewicz | Member |  | x |  |  |

**Upper Blackstone Staff**

Karla Sangrey Engineer Director/Treasurer

Mike Andrus Deputy Director

Elizabeth Mailhot HR Manager

Denise Mancini HR Assistant/District Clerk

Diane Shea Finance Manager

Christine Kelley Interim Finance Manager

**ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES –** June 28, 2023

**Minutes** – Member Antonelli moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on June 28, 2023. Member Nelson seconded, and approval of minutes was noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, abstain; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Duffy, yes; Member Nelson, abstain; and Member Fink, yes.

**ITEM III - FINANCE**

**Warrants –** Member Traynor moved to approve the following warrants. Vice Chairman Guerin seconded, and approval of the warrants was noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Duffy, yes; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

Warrants $ 259,729.55 (06/27/2023)

$ 409,617.43 (07/03/2023)

$ 569,992.63 (07/11/2023)

$7,516,071.99 (07/14/2023)

TOTAL $8,755,410.99

Chairman Labovites took the following item out of order.

**New Finance Manager, Diane Shea** – Ms. Sangrey introduced the interim Finance Manager, Christine Kelley, and the new Finance Manager, Diane Shea, and commended Ms. Kelley on the work she has been doing. She said Ms. Kelley will be staying on through the FY2023 audit in early August. The Board members introduced themselves as well, and Ms. Shea provided information about her background and experience and said she is looking forward to working with everyone.

**Breakdown of Cash**  - The money market account balance is low; all but one of the assessments are in; and a debt payment was made by temporarily borrowing $1.7M from the operating fund investments with an additional $500K to be borrowed. Ms. Sangrey said there is $1.1M in the MMDT BAN account with a slight overage in the operations account as the BAN project work has not begun and the money has not been spent yet. Also, Worcester Advisors’ account numbers include all the interest earnings to the end of the fiscal year; a $500K deposit was made to the debt reserve account; and an investment was made to the OPEB trust in June, in accordance with the FY23 budget.

**Aging Report –** Ms. Sangrey said the items beyond 61 days are not of concern, and the Rutland assessment remains due, but she has been in contact with them and expects to see it in the coming weeks.

**Outside Revenue Position** **through June 2023** –The report is through the end of June and is a full twelve-month report. The septage charges are below budget and the sludge is on budget, which results in a shortfall of $348K, largely due in part to the upset last summer. There is a large, positive variance of $729K on the energy credit side, and some may have to be put aside for potential future liability as Upper Blackstone is not being billed at the correct rate.

**Draft Statement of Operations through June 2023** –The report shows the year-to-date (YTD) and annual budget numbers are the same, and Upper Blackstone is in a good position. There is a septage underrun of $368K, but overall, the revenue side is in the black, including dividends and interest on investment income. Adding, the Other Income is mostly energy credits; the expense side has extra money and there are significant overruns, mostly in chemicals and energy; and there is an underrun in debt service due to conservatively budgeting for additional borrowing that did not occur. Ms. Sangrey said preparations are being made for the upcoming audit. She anticipates this will be a significant effort as there has been no continuity of finance staff, and due to the problems with AccuFund reporting capabilities associated with the software transition to the cloud.

**ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION**

**Integrated Planning Update –** Ms. Sangrey said she has been in touch with the attorneys to ensure communications are continuing with the EPA, and Attorney Cox is working diligently to get answers by August.

**Capital Projects Updates, Mike Andrus, Deputy Director**

**Standby Power Design**– A meeting was held on July 13th with CDM Smith with the outcome that they are revising the size of the diesel generatorsand the planning for the solar projects. Mr. Andrus said based on capital costs and payback periods, the current plan is to install solar on rooftops and north of the primary clarifiers, but to delay the ash landfill until the biosolids project is finalized.

**Regional Biosolids Study** – A meeting was held on July 10th to review the evaluation criteria for the three final options. The criteria will then be used to score the options and to determine how to move forward.

**Disinfection System Improvements** – Mr. Andrus said the improvements are progressing; the programming changes are completed and have been implemented; and the equipment replacement/configuration is under design.

*Other In-House Projects* –

* Bids are being received today for an on-call electrical contractor.
* The headworks’ upgrade project is in preliminary design, and multiple screen manufacturers are being considered.
* A segment of the plant water piping system at the building wall is becoming unsafe due to the corrosion of the pipes. The engineering staff is preparing for the excavated repairs to the system to begin within the next three weeks. Ms. Sangrey said Mr. Andrus’ proactive approach to this project lowered the cost by $100K.
* The fuel tank relocation project is in design.
* Construction on the site drainage project will begin later this summer.
* Manufacturers of fiberglass and steel are being considered for the replacement of the launders on the final settling tanks. Mr. Andrus said the project looks promising.
* Mr. Andrus said Tighe & Bond have been selected as the design engineer for the HVAC improvements to solids processing complex project and the scope is due in a week.

**Control Systems Support (SCADA) Amendment No. 5, BAI#1** – Ms. Sangrey said the SCADA support services contract has been used for the programming portion of the ongoing disinfection upgrades as well as on-going small programming projects. The vote is to amend the agreement for an additional $20K of support. Member Nelson motioned to approve BAI#1, a motion to accept Amendment No. 5 to the CDM Smith contract for professional services on Control Systems Support in the amount of twenty thousand dollars, ($20,000), bringing the total contract price to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, ($120,000) without prior approval of the Board, and to allow the Engineer Director/Treasurer to execute the amendment on behalf of the District. Member Traynor seconded, and approval of BAI#1 is noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Duffy, yes; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

1:32 p.m. Ms. Sangrey left the meeting.

**Executive Director/Treasurer Review, BAI#2 –** Chairman Labovites said a formal evaluation was conducted. He said it consisted of constructive dialogue, was beneficial, a positive experience and resulted in recommending a three and one half (3.5) percent increase in salary. He also expressed his gratefulness. Member Woodsmall asked how the increase was determined. Chairman Labovites said it was based on the Union’s contract. Member Nelson made a motion, following the annual review of the Engineer/Director Treasurer, to upgrade Ms. Sangrey’s compensation by three and one half (3.5) percent retroactive to April 1, 2023. Vice Chairman Guerin seconded, and approval of BAI#2 is noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Secretary Woodsmall, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Duffy, yes; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

1:35 p.m. Ms. Sangrey rejoined the meeting.

**ITEM V – OPERATIONS**

**Flow Summary** – Ms. Sangrey said the rainfall has been unpredictable and high flow management has been practiced.

**June Effluent Summary Report** – Ms. Sangrey said there were no exceedances in June and the precipitation was up in both June and July. She said a CSO notification went out for blending from the July 3rd event, protocol was followed, and there was no feedback from it.

**ITEM VI – COMMUNICATIONS**

**MCWRS –** Vice Chairman Guerin said a Board meeting was held yesterday; the Agenda for the September 28th Symposium is almost final; the registration for the Symposium will be going out on August 1st; and the website will be up as well. He said Kishia Powell, CEO and General Manager of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission will be the keynote speaker, with a focus on affordability. He added there will be a member chat sometime in August regarding the Deer Island draft NPDES permit.

**Melissa Hoffer, MA Climate Chief, visit Upper Blackstone July 10 –** Ms. Sangrey said Ms. Hoffer was invited by Tim Loftus to have a tour of the facility. After the tour, a meeting took place between Ms. Hoffer, Mr. Loftus, Mr. Andrus, and Ms. Sangrey wherein a discussion was had regarding some of the projects Upper Blackstone is working on (standby power design, solar, battery storage, etc.). The regional biosolids crisis and PFAS were also among topics discussed. Ms. Hoffer listened, was very knowledgeable, spoke intelligently on PFAS and mentioned the legislature involved with it. Ms. Sangrey said she is a great connection to have and will be invaluable. Ms. Hoffer said she would like to bring the Governor to Upper Blackstone for a tour and she wrote to David Cash, Regional Administrator for EPA Region 1. Ms. Sangrey said she has since received a call from Assistant Regional Counsel of the EPA, Conner Kingsley, inquiring about Upper Blackstone’s projects.

**Deer Island Draft NPDES Permit Review –** Ms. Sangrey referred to the summary that was provided with the handouts. She said the co-permitee assessment is interesting, particularly the climate studies and recommended the member communities read that section. She added there is an extension for comments to the end of August and Upper Blackstone will be sending in comments. Chairman Labovites recommended this be put on August’s agenda.

**ITEM VII – PERSONNEL**

**Postings, New Hires, Resignations** – Ms. Mailhot welcomed Ms. Shea and then said Mark Chaplin transitioned to the Lab/Pretreatment Manager position and will be training with Mr. Loftus. She added Mr. Loftus’ last day is August 4th, but he will be working part-time for the foreseeable future.

**ITEM VIII - DATE(s) NEXT MEETING(s) AGENDA TOPICS**

8/16, 9/6, 9/20, 10/4

**ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT**

At 2:03 p.m. Member Manseau motioned to adjourn the meeting. Member Traynor seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

**Denise Mancini**  Denise Mancini, District Clerk