

**UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER  
50 ROUTE 20, MILLBURY, MA 01527-2199  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES - BOARD ROOM/HYBRID MEETING  
March 13, 2024**

**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:

<b><u>Board Members</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>	<b><u>Absent</u></b>	<b><u>In- person</u></b>	<b><u>Virtual</u></b>
Matthew Labovites	Worcester	Chairman	X		X	
Philip Guerin	Worcester	Vice Chairman	X		X	
John Woodsmall	Holden	Secretary		X		
Michael Traynor	Worcester	Member	X		X	
Joanna Paquin	Auburn	Member	X		X	
Donald Manseau	CVSD	Member	X		X	
Robert Antonelli	Worcester	Member	X		X	
Gary Nelson	Millbury	Member	X		X	
Jay Fink	Worcester	Member	X		X	
Austin Cyganiewicz	Rutland	Member		X		
Thomas Degnan	West Boylston	Member	X			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

**ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – February 28, 2024

**Minutes** – Member Antonelli moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on February 28, 2024. Member Nelson seconded, and approval of minutes was noted as follows: Chairman Labovites, yes; Vice Chairman Guerin, yes; Member Traynor, yes; Member Paquin, yes; Member Manseau, yes; Member Antonelli, yes; Member Nelson, yes; Member Fink, yes; and Member Degnan, yes.

**ITEM III - FINANCE**

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

Warrants	\$ 182,317.09	(03/01/2024)
	<u>\$ 654,435.63</u>	(03/08/2024)
TOTAL	\$ 836,752.72	

**ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION**

**Integrated Planning Update** – Ms. Sangrey said she and Member Fink attended an EPA meeting on March 5<sup>th</sup>. Also in attendance were Attorney Robert Cox, counsel for Upper Blackstone, Attorney Donald Anglehart, counsel for the city, Jeff Kopf, Todd Borci, Doug Koopman, and Chrisna Baptista, all representing the

EPA. When asked about the IDDE plan, Member Fink reiterated it was on track and said a report should be available by April. There was a subsequent internal meeting this morning on the IDDE pilot and Member Fink confirmed it was on track. Further discussion ensued regarding Fitzgerald Brook and the IDDE program. Other questions asked were regarding the long-term control plan (LTCP) update, and rate increases. Member Fink was also asked about whether missing reporting information had been transmitted. He responded that the questions on the LTCP have been asked and answered in the past. He asked if EPA had notified the city of missing reporting information, and EPA representatives said they had not, but had gathered the list in preparation for this meeting. Chairman Labovites recommended a conversation take place between Attorney Cox, Attorney Anglehart and Jeff Kopf to discuss the issue of the questioning that the program be made city-wide and the total separation alternative of the long-term control plan and whether this is going to be reviewed together and objectively assessed. Ms. Sangrey said the attorneys were supposed to draft a follow-up letter after the meeting, but she has not seen it yet.

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

**Regional Biosolids Study** – Progress continues; the project partners are in the process of reviewing the four technical memos that have been received and are still waiting for the cost analysis memo; and Phase I is nearing completion but may not be completed by the proposed date of April 30<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Sangrey said she is looking forward to sharing the concepts with the members and the feedback on the memos includes the suggestion they should be more readable by non-technical experts.

**Standby Power Design** – Ongoing discussions with SRF are taking place regarding the generators and classifying the project as a program. The solar panels and associated batteries project may be reduced to ground-mounted solar, as inter-connecting rooftops will be difficult.

**Fleet Electrification** – Electric “off road” vehicles will be brought to Upper Blackstone within a couple of weeks to test drive. Mr. Andrus said this part of the fleet will be replaced first based on needs, ease of charging (no new special chargers will be necessary), and the fact that the golf carts and gators do not need to be registered. Ms. Sangrey invited the board members to test drive the vehicles at the March 27<sup>th</sup> meeting and will add it as an item to the agenda. Mr. Andrus said the costs for the trucks and the schedule to replace them is being drafted.

**Plant Water Electrical Upgrades** – The plant water and architectural upgrades are progressing, with the process electrical moving ahead of the architectural improvements.

#### **Other in-house projects**

- The asset management risk assessment with Tighe and Bond is moving forward. As this is a two hundred thousand (\$200K) dollar project and Upper Blackstone will be responsible for paying fifty thousand (\$50K) dollars for it, Mr. Andrus will have an appropriation for the board to vote on at one of the upcoming meetings.

**Sub-Committee to Review Insurance** – Ms. Sangrey said preparations are being made for the 10:00 a.m. meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **ITEM V – OPERATIONS**

**Flow Summary** – Ms. Sangrey said flows have been up due to the amount of rain, but no wet weather blending was necessary.

### **ITEM VI – COMMUNICATIONS**

**MCWRS** – Vice Chairman Guerin said the stormwater webinar on February 29<sup>th</sup> had a good turnout with approximately forty (40) people in attendance; the numbers for the cost of the MS4 permits are eye-opening; and the new permit is expected to be issued this summer, which will cover two hundred fifty (250) communities, excluding Worcester. He said the coalition will be contacting the EPA soon to discern what is next. The Vice Chairman said a workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14<sup>th</sup> in Fall River (location to be determined) which will focus on some of the new NPDES draft permits that have been released. Fall River will be doing a presentation on what they perceive the issues with it are. Also, regarding the NPDES permit, Holyoak has appealed to the Environmental Appeals Board (EAB) on its wastewater permit on the grounds of adaptation planning and provisions on aluminum, copper and one other metal, in which the EPA is claiming an analysis was never

conducted. The Coalition plans to review the matter and will decide whether to comment. Additionally, there are two (2) other issues being considered for comment: A CSO guidance document for permit writers and communities for future permits, which includes a section on integrated planning, its benefits and how to incorporate it into a permit from the National EPA. Vice Chairman Guerin said the document does not provide specifics on anything and he will send a link to the members; and a DEP document on how to do Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), which historically have not been done well and don't have science or studies backing them. Chairman Labovites said TMDLs are the basis for policy decisions and expenditures on phosphorous removal.

Mr. Andrus said the Mass DEP has recently kicked off their biosolids master planning and through Tighe & Bond, the sludge surveys are being generated and distributed, including to Upper Blackstone. They are being sent to anyone who generates, accepts, hauls, incinerates and land accepts septage and sludge. The goal is to determine how much biosolids (including septage) are being produced in the state and what their fate is. He said the data collected from the surveys is going to be used as the basis for policies and needs to be as accurate as possible. The Vice Chairman said he will send a notification out to the coalition membership. When asked, Mr. Andrus confirmed to Chairman Labovites that it is worth sending notice to the coalition database of members and to impress upon them the importance of the survey. He added, it is anticipated that the septage haulers will be the most difficult group to get accurate data from as they are not used to generating reports. In response to Vice Chairman Guerin's question, Mr. Andrus is not sure, once the data collections have been completed and the master plan is started, what the working group is going to look like and if it will include a regulated community. Ms. Sangrey said DEP stated that a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be coming out for the next phase of this study. Mr. Andrus said it is a public RFP and may be worth looking at to anticipate what will be asked for, also that everyone in the working group recognizes there is a biosolids crisis in the state and there is a need for a plan.

#### **ITEM VII – PERSONNEL**

**Postings, New Hires, Resignations** – Ms. Mailhot said the new custodian, Matt Charron (formerly of the Grafton school system) started Monday; and former industrial electrician, Joshua Swears, will be returning to Upper Blackstone within a couple of weeks.

Ms. Sangrey said she and Ms. Mailhot were in a Work for Water New England meeting just prior to the board meeting and that the initiative is continuing to move forward. She added it is a hot topic and a slow process with a goal of trying to get a centralized initiative that draws on work across New England, and funding for the long-term has not been determined yet. Ms. Sangrey said New England Water Works Association (NEWWA) decoupling from American Water Works (AWWA) is a positive move as far as Work for Water as it allows the group agility to collaborate. The Vice Chairman said the Coalition will have a booth at the NEWWA trade show at the DCU center in Worcester on April 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup>.

#### **ITEM VIII - DATE(S) NEXT MEETING(S) AGENDA TOPICS**

3/27, 4/10 (Annual Meeting), 4/24, 5/8

#### **ITEM IX – ADJOURNMENT**

At 2:00 p.m. Member Manseau motioned to adjourn the meeting. Member Traynor seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Denise Mancini*

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District Clerk