

**UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER**  
**50 ROUTE 20, MILLBURY, MA 01527-2199**  
**BOARD MEETING MINUTES - BOARD ROOM/HYBRID MEETING**  
**March 27, 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		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		X	
Thomas Degnan	West Boylston	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

**ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES** – March 13, 2024

**Minutes** – Member Fink moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on March 13, 2024. Member Antonelli seconded, and approval of minutes as amended to say, “Further discussion ensued regarding Fitzgerald Brook and the IDDE program” 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; and Member Fink, yes.

**ITEM III - FINANCE**

**Warrants** – Member Traynor moved to approve the following warrants. Member Nelson 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 Nelson, yes; Member Fink, yes; and Member Cyganiewicz, yes.

Warrants	\$ 531,701.09	(03/15/2024)
	<u>\$ 412,639.98</u>	(03/22/2024)
TOTAL	\$ 926,341.07	

**Breakdown of Cash** – Ms. Sangrey said the balance in the money market account reflects the status of the cash flow for the fiscal year. Letters have gone out for the April assessments which are due by April 7<sup>th</sup>. Over five hundred thousand (\$500K) dollars have been recently processed for BAN account activity including

the RH White invoices which have been resolved; this will reflect on the March breakdown of cash. The investment accounts are doing well. Mr. Andrus said he has monthly, in-person meetings with Mike Petrucci and Chris Aguiar of RH White to review invoices for billing and payment accuracy.

**Aging Report** – Finance Manager, Diane Shea, has been diligently reaching out to customers to collect past due balances. She said she is making progress with Chase Harris and now has reliable contact information. Ms. Sangrey said balances remain for the dentists as they are billed once every two years, and they experience frequent staff changes. She said Upper Blackstone's pretreatment team are following up with the pretreatment industries in the 61–90-day column.

**Outside Revenue Position** – The outside revenue is broken into two reports: the first reflects hauled waste revenue in which the septage and sludge are ahead of this time last year and septage is behind budget for this year. Ms. Sangrey suspects this trend will continue and unless there is a septage surge this Spring, does not expect there will be a surplus at the end of this year. The second report shows the solar net metering net revenue is ahead of budget for the year-to-date, with the Hampden site expected to be on-line this summer. Ms. Sangrey and Ms. Shea will continue to work on the solar net metering report as it gets confusing due to the many moving pieces, which Ms. Shea explained in some detail.

#### **ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION**

**Integrated Planning Update** – Ms. Sangrey said an administrative order extension will be necessary by the end of April and counsel will be drafting a letter (following the March 5<sup>th</sup> telephone call) to establish a regular schedule of discussions regarding the extension. She does not foresee any indication of it not being granted.

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

**Regional Biosolids Study** – The project partners have completed their review of the multiple technical memos and once the memos are finalized, they will be merged into a final report. The final workshop on the project is scheduled for April 19<sup>th</sup>. Phase I is scheduled to be completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>, however it is unlikely that target will be met.

**Standby Power Design** – Discussions with SRF continue regarding timeline, purchase options and availability of grant funding. A letter has been drafted to SRF to reclassify from a project to a program to extend the timeline. The solar panels project may be reduced to ground-mounted panels due to difficulties with inter-connecting rooftops.

**Fleet Electrification** – Three electric off-road vehicles are available for the board members to test drive at the conclusion of the meeting. Upper Blackstone staff are being encouraged to test drive them as well and to complete a survey to provide input. Mr. Andrus confirmed the vehicles would be available for procurement under State contract.

**Plant Water Electrical Upgrades** – The preliminary design is complete, and the next step is to get the drawings from the architect.

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

- The Asset Management Risk Assessment will be started later this year and there will be a board action item (BAI) to vote on it at the next meeting.
- The HVAC improvements study for the solid's processing complex is proceeding; and Tighe & Bond is working on the most urgent task of designing a replacement for the heat exchanger.
- Presentation – Upper Blackstone Clean Water (UBCW) has prepared a public statement (included in packets) as required, to receive the one hundred eighty-one thousand (\$181K) dollars in grant money resulting from the completion of the admin chiller and belt filter press feed pump replacement projects (MA Gap grant for energy efficiency). Mr. Andrus confirmed the total cost of the project was two hundred twenty thousand (\$220K) dollars with Upper Blackstone paying a total of forty thousand (\$40K) dollars. He gave credit for the grant application and presentation to District Engineer, Denise Descheneau.

**Sub-Committee to Review Insurance – Next meeting 4/3-10:00 a.m.** – Ms. Sangrey said Peter Sullivan, of the Sullivan Group, will be attending the meeting and perhaps one other guest. Chairman Labovites said he spoke with Alexandra of the Worcester Law Department staff, and he will review the documents she sent. He

suggested having her on the call for the next meeting. Ms. Sangrey said discussions will involve whether changes will be made this year, including the possibility of switching companies.

#### **ITEM V – OPERATIONS**

**Flow Summary** – Ms. Sangrey said the flows have picked up, with the influent flow to the treatment facility nearing the 100 mgd mark, which is typically around 30 mgd. Despite the extra water in the system, no wet weather blending has been needed. Ms. Sangrey said Upper Blackstone has been coordinating well with the Quinsigamond CSO treatment facility. In a conversation with Deb Carey of Mass Audubon, Chairman Labovites said she mentioned that a river group was asking questions regarding CSOs and SSOs, signage and notifications. He said he will respond to her in detail when they speak next. Ms. Sangrey offered to assist the DPW with helping to educate the public. Adding, Upper Blackstone received a grant for up to ten thousand (\$10K) dollars to assist with public outreach on CSO notifications and intends to put a sign at the bikeway where the effluent meets the river. She will bring plan details to the board prior to installation of the sign.

**February Effluent Summary Report** – There were no exceedances in February.

#### **ITEM VI– COMMUNICATIONS**

**MCWRS** – Vice Chairman Guerin said a workshop will be held on Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at UMass Dartmouth which will focus on some of the new NPDES draft permits that have been released. Fall River will be doing a presentation.

- Comments have been received for the EPA headquarters' CSO guidance document and Vice Chairman Guerin will make them available to the members.
- The coalition will be represented at NEWWA's 2024 Spring Joint Regional Conference & Exhibition on Wednesday, April 3 and Thursday, April 4, 2024, at the DCU Center in Worcester.
- Yesterday the DEP released the final Intended Use Plan (IUP) for SRF funding in 2024 for new, clean water projects which will support forty-five (45) of the seventy-two (72) applications (63%) in the amount of approximately eight hundred eighteen (\$818M) dollars. The Vice Chairman added Worcester's application for six and one-half million (\$6.5M) dollars for the Holden Street pump station did not get funded, however Upper Blackstone, Cherry Valley and Holden got grants for a portion of their asset management projects. Thirty-one (31) of sixty-nine (69) applications (45%) on the drinking water side were approved in the amount of three hundred forty million (\$340M) dollars (or 38% of the requested amount), of which 42% of the funding is for PFAS. Vice Chairman Guerin said the funding is mostly based on loans and some of the federal infrastructure money must be in the form of grants, adding loan authorizations need to be approved by June. He was not sure how much of the money will go directly to earmarked projects but did say that in 2019, 98% of the clean water projects had been funded. Since that time, the amount of money available has increased as has the number of projects.
- Vice Chairman Guerin shared an item with the members from the Federal Register dated March 26, 2024, regarding the "U.S. Environmental Protection Agency POTW Influent PFAS Study Data Collection" and said he was not sure of the details but thinks it is worth investigating.

#### **ITEM VII – PERSONNEL**

**Postings, New Hires, Resignations** – Ms. Mailhot said we anticipate hiring two summer lab interns in the next couple of weeks. Also, we will be recognizing our Network Administrator, George Rodriguez, on Friday as he begins his retirement.

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

4/10 Annual Meeting, 4/24, 5/8, 5/22

#### **ITEM IX – ADJOURNMENT**

At 2:04 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