**UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER**

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

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

**May 10, 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 |  |

**Upper Blackstone Staff**

Karla Sangrey Engineer Director/Treasurer

Mike Andrus Deputy Director

Elizabeth Mailhot HR Manager

Denise Mancini HR Assistant/District Clerk

**ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES –** April 26, 2023

**Minutes** – Member Antonelli moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on April 26, 2023. Member Nelson seconded, and approval of minutes 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; and Member Fink, yes.

**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; and Member Fink, yes.

Warrants $ 1,082,331.51 (05/01/2023)

$ 188,391.58 (05/08/2023)

TOTAL $ 1,270,723.09

Ms. Sangreyreferred to the May 8th warrant and said a payment in the amount of $47,364.34 has been submitted to Control Point Mechanical, Inc. for all but three invoices, as no back-up documentation was provided. She believes the account is settled.

**ITEM V – ADMINISTRATION**

**Integrated Planning Update –** Chairman Labovites said an internal strategy meeting is going to be held tomorrow, May 11th and an EPA meeting will be taking place on May 18th. Ms. Sangrey said all three parties will be at the EPA meeting and all agree that the main area of contention is going to be the stormwater permit conditions included in the draft order. Her hope is to settle on a small penalty and a reasonable Supplemental Environment Project (SEP). Chairman Labovites pointed out that the EPA is primarily focused on stormwater management in Worcester and that the proposed penalty is for the city, not Upper Blackstone.

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

*Standby Power Design –* Mr. Andrus said a meeting with CDM was held on Monday, May 1st to discuss options and costs and they issued their draft preliminary design report on Monday, May 8th. He said the current project cost estimate is $47M for all pieces and phases including generators, solar, battery storage and switchgear. However, CDM and Upper Blackstone engineers are reviewing the proposal, which is conservative in terms of redundancy and that the cost may be reduced by grant funds as well as a reduced scope. He added that there needs to be a $10M Board appropriation of by June 30th to advance the SRF funding application process. Chairman Labovites recommended having CDM give the Board a presentation at the June 7th meeting. The Chairman also asked if there will be rate impacts and both Ms. Sangrey and Mr. Andrus said there are financing options available such as grants and other incentives for solar and battery projects through National Grid, as well as State and utility-based funding that will all have to be considered to then make rate impact estimates.

*Regional Biosolids Study* – Mr. Andrus said the monthly meeting was held Monday, May 1st and the project is progressing in the technology selection process to determine finalists.

*Other In-House Projects* – A kick-off meeting was held last week for the headworks project which is in the preliminary design stage. The fuel tank relocation project is under design and proceeding with General Services Administration (GSA) procurement. The on-call projects are in the planning stage and the Engineering department meets weekly to review all the current projects.

Mr. Andrus said a meeting was held last week with National Grid and Jen Muir of consultant JK Muir to discuss the purchase of vehicles (as Upper Blackstone is looking to standardize our fleet for maintenance purposes), and to learn about National Grid’s Fleet Electrification Guidance Program. He said this is a hot topic and incentives are available now. Ms. Sangrey added there is new legislation to try to get public entities signed up so the timing for this effort seems excellent for this effort.

Mr. Andrus also reported that he will be submitting a response to the DSL safety inspection report including some items completed and some for which we will request an extension of time to complete.

**ITEM VI – OPERATIONS**

**Flow Summary** – Ms. Sangrey said there has been no wet weather blending and April’s toxicity passed.

**ITEM VII– COMMUNICATIONS**

**MCWRS –** Vice Chairman Guerin said the members’ annual meeting is going to be held on Wednesday, June 14th via zoom. Also, the planning for the September 28th Symposium at Devens continues.

Ms. Sangrey said she will be attending the “Water’s Worth It” event at the State House on May 11th. She said prepared packets were made available with a list of talking points and she is going to speak about PFAS and biosolids. When asked for suggestions on key points to communicate, Vice Chairman Guerin said the perception is that money is no object and he recommended dispelling the myth that Federal dollars are taking care of everything. Ms. Sangrey added that the current funding does not nearly address infrastructure needs that have been documented since 2012. The Vice Chairman added another point to address is that the government is playing on the public’s fear that their loved ones’ cancer has been caused by PFAS in the water.

**ITEM VIII – PERSONNEL**

**Postings, New Hires, Resignations** – Ms. Mailhot said there are eight jobs currently posted and no new ones. She said there have been active interviews for the Finance Manager position and we should have it filled before the next Board meeting. Also, the new Laboratory Technician will be starting on May 30th and the two interns will start in May as well. There are no resignations to report.

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

5/24, 6/7, 6/28, 7/19

**ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT**

At 1:49 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