

UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER
50 ROUTE 20, MILLBURY, MA 01527-2199
BOARD MEETING MINUTES - BOARD ROOM/HYBRID MEETING
September 20, 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:

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>In- person</u>	<u>Virtual</u>
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
Diane Shea	Finance Manager
Liz Mailhot	HR Manager
Denise Mancini	HR Assistant/District Clerk
Joe Parker	Plant Operations Manager

Guest

Terenzio Volpicelli	CPA, Roselli, Clark and Associates
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ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – September 6, 2023

Minutes – Member Antonelli moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on September 6, 2023. Vice Chairman Guerin 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; Member Nelson, yes; and Member Fink, yes.

ITEM III - FINANCE

Warrants – Member Woodsmall moved to approve the following warrants. Member Nelson seconded, and approval of the warrant 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	\$ 256,907.83	(09/05/2023)
	<u>\$ 297,889.55</u>	(09/11/2023)
TOTAL	\$ 554,797.38	

Breakdown of Cash – Ms. Sangrey said the statement is dated August 31st and going forward, financials will be presented through the end of the previous month, at the second meeting of the following month. She added with the change of staff, the reports are being revisited to produce them to be of help to management as well as the Board. The report shows there is significantly less money in the MMDT BAN account as that money has been transferred to the operating accounts to cover capital project expenses. She said the operating fund owes the investment accounts \$2.2M due to borrowing money from investments to help with the cash flow. Ms. Sangrey added much of this will be relieved with the receipt of the October assessments. She invited the members to make suggestions for presenting the information in a different way. Chairman Labovites suggested adding a note to indicate when the replenishment of the funds will be scheduled to memorialize it.

Aging Report – Ms. Sangrey said the report is generated by Accufund and is the same report that has been used right along. She said the item in the 90+ days column is being addressed and Ms. Shea added the cause was the customer not applying the payments properly. Ms. Sangrey said the second quarter assessments show current billings and Ms. Shea added one payment of \$300K has already been received.

Outside revenue Position – Ms. Sangrey acknowledged the Outside Revenue Report is still the same format. She said the septage is below the year-to-date budget, but more septage is currently being received and she will continue to monitor it. Regarding the sludge, there have been no interruptions and it is ahead of budget. There is one interruption scheduled for October for routine maintenance that requires an incinerator shutdown and therefore an interruption in outside sludge. Ms. Sangrey said \$315K in energy credits have been monetized from the National Grid utility bill and are way behind the budget from the energy consultants. She is working on this with them and explained when solar is not producing as much, we get fewer energy credits and therefore payout much less; that the contracts that are in place are set up to be net positive for UBCW. She is not sure why we are so far below budget and is investigating further and hopes to have some answers next month.

1:18 p.m. Mr. Volpicelli joined the meeting.

FY2023 Audit Report – Terenzio Volpicelli, Roselli, Clark and Associates – Ms. Sangrey said the audit report was emailed on Friday. Copies of the letter of the audit findings were handed to the Members to read and were returned. Mr. Volpicelli joined the meeting and introduced himself and said he had been engaged to perform the financial statement audit on May 15th, 2023. He referred to the audit letter and gave a summary which included the allowance for uncollectible accounts, the estimated useful lives of Upper Blackstone's capital assets, the net pension liability and the net OPEB liability (which were all determined to be reasonable). Mr. Volpicelli said there were no significant difficulties, disagreements, or internal control matters to report and the transition within the Finance Department was managed well with some assistance from Robert Half. He concluded his presentation by providing a summary of the financial highlights found in the audit report. He added the present estimate of the free cash amount is lower than previous years', and the final amount will be available once DLS certifies it. Ms. Sangrey said some of the free cash money is tied up due to the liability for energy because of under billing for solar; this liability will be carried until the issue is resolved. She added the free cash is only spent on reserve funding and capital.

1:26 p.m. Mr. Volpicelli left the meeting.

ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION

Integrated Planning Update – Conversations among the City, District and EPA attorneys are continuing towards agreeing on language in the draft order. Once there is a revised draft order, a briefing of the board will be scheduled.

Capital Projects Updates, Mike Andrus, Deputy Director

Standby Power Design – Upper Blackstone is meeting weekly with CDM to finalize the generator

design. The project is being funded by the SRF 2023 Intended Use Plan (IUP). The plans for the generator portion will be submitted by October 15th. The solar panels and associated batteries will be a separate project, likely with different funding.

Regional Biosolids Study – The project partners met with the design team on September 11th and we are waiting for more final documents for review. Ms. Sangrey anticipates moving to Phase II.

Fleet Electrification – Waiting for the final recommendation report from National Grid before moving forward with JK Muir to establish a plan for the purchase of vehicles and chargers.

ITEM V – OPERATIONS

Flow Summary – Ms. Sangrey said despite a decent amount of rain there has been no wet weather blending. Chairman Labovites asked if there had been any blending during the summer and Mr. Parker confirmed there was one occurrence during the weekend of July 4th.

August Effluent Summary Report – Ms. Sangrey said there had been one soft exceedance of the permit in August which was low dissolved oxygen. She referred to the letter in the handout and spoke about the grabs that were taken and the times they were taken. Chairman Labovites asked how long it had been since there were exceedances. Mr. Parker confirmed there had been no permit violations this year and no dissolved oxygen exceedances for quite some time as it is not common. He also said there is not much control over it. Ms. Sangrey referred to the report and pointed out the precipitation in August was 5.88 inches compared to 2.56 inches last year. Member Woodsmall commented that the period from mid-June to mid-September is the wettest period on record for the City. Ms. Sangrey referred to the performance of nitrogen and phosphorus shown in the report, and said she is pleased with the performance, and its success is the reason for being permitted to delay the nutrient upgrade projects.

Ms. Sangrey said a sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) form was submitted in August. Mr. Parker confirmed the overflow was on August 25th and an estimate of less than 10K gallons of partially treated sewage were lost, based on observations and calculations that were made. He gave an overview of the step feed process to explain how the failure occurred. Mr. Parker said the corrective actions for this incident include updating the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the senior operator responsible for the error will be taking a wet-weather preparedness class, and the alarm set points are being re-viewed, especially to try and avoid nuisance alarms. Ms. Sangrey said public notification was not required. The overflow of diluted primary effluent was contained to the pavement and some grass areas. She added there are many high alarms with heavy flow and a critical alarm list is being generated. Mr. Parker said tools will also be improved to minimize the chance of a reoccurrence.

ITEM VI – COMMUNICATIONS

MCWRS – Vice Chairman Guerin said the agenda for the September 28th Symposium is finalized and there is still time to register for it. Ms. Sangrey said Upper Blackstone will register any board members who are interested in attending. Vice Chairman Guerin said three awards will be given at the Symposium: the Joseph Superneau Leadership Award will be presented to Mikey Nowak, retired executive director of the Massachusetts Water Environment Association (MAWEA) for his leadership on the biosolids issue and the impending growing crisis on it; the Robert Moylan Project of the Year award will be presented to the Westfield DPW for their PFAS water treatment plant; and an award will go to Kate Barrett of Regina Village Association for her years of contribution as a key staff member of the Coalition.

The Vice Chairman said the Pacheco Bill, which is a bill filed by Senator Pacheco with the Massachusetts Legislature will ban any new air emitting facilities that have PFAS emissions from being permitted. A hearing was taking place today at the State House. The Coalition plans to prepare written testimony to be submitted to vote against the bill. He added the same bill was filed at last year's session with no results.

ITEM VII – PERSONNEL

Postings, New Hires, Resignations – Ms. Mailhot said there is a new laborer starting next Monday and that he is the brother of one of our operators. She also mentioned that she and Ms. Mancini attended a job fair at Polar Park last Friday and it went very well with a good turnout. Ms. Sangrey said a picture of Upper Blackstone’s table can be seen on the website.

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

10/4, 10/18, 11/1, 11/15

ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT

At 2:10 p.m. Member Manseau motioned to adjourn the meeting. Member Duffy seconded, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Mancini

Denise Mancini,
District Clerk