**UPPER BLACKSTONE CLEAN WATER**

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

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

**September 6, 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

Diane Shea Finance Manager

Denise Mancini HR Assistant/District Clerk

**ITEM II - APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES –** August 16, 2023

**Minutes** – Member Antonelli moved to approve the minutes of the meeting on August 16, 2023. Member Paquin 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**

**Warrant –** Vice Chairman Guerin moved to approve the following warrant. Member Traynor 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.

Warrant $ 430,225.29 (08/21/2023)

**FY2023 Audit Completed –** Ms. Sangrey said the audit with Roselli & Clark has been completed and a communication letter is available and will be shared at a later date. She is still working on the calculation of re-cash, which comes directly after the audit process is completed. Ms. Shea said the auditor commented that he was very happy with the audit and the preparedness both before and after. He also mentioned that Upper Blackstone was the first client to complete the audit for this fiscal year. Ms. Sangrey said the auditor is hoping to give a presentation at the September 20th meeting and she will provide the final financials well in advance. Chairman Labovites recommend a virtual presentation and Ms. Shea agreed that is the auditor’s preference as well.

**ITEM IV ADMINISTRATION**

**Integrated Planning Update –** Member Fink said internal conversations with the attorneys have been taking place, as well as ongoing conversations with the EPA. He said the EPA is struggling with some language regarding moving forward and the city are taking the opportunity to provide language for them and to tout the things that are being done with pilot programs for the Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) as well as other things. Also, the city is proposing a SEP as opposed to paying a penalty and there has been much talk back and forth on how to proceed with the next steps. In answer to the Chairman’s question, Member Fink said the total value of the project is $120K, with the SEP being $80K. Chairman Labovites asked for clarification on the language issue. Member Fink responded by saying the span of the integrated plan is ten years and the question is how to not memorialize within the consent order, rather how to incorporate it as an IDDE project. (He confirmed that communication is ongoing between Don (?), Bob Cox, and Jeff Kopf.

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

**Standby Power Design**– Mr. Andrus and Ms. Sangrey met with CDM Smith last week and have another meeting today to discuss finalizing the generator design. Mr. Andrus said the deadline for the SRF application is October 15th.

**Regional Biosolids Study** – The study is being restarted.

**Fleet Electrification** – The project is moving forward and the final recommendation report from

National Grid is due within the next couple of days. The next step will be to work with JK Muir to formulate a plan for purchasing vehicles and chargers.

**Disinfection System** – The improvements are progressing, and the equipment replacement/reconfiguration is under design.

**Other In-House Projects**–

* The mechanisms for primary clarifiers #3 and #7 are being purchased for installation later this year.
* The headworks project is in preliminary design and the report will be available in a couple of weeks.
* The fuel tank relocation project is almost completely designed, with some geotechnical issues being resolved.
* The site drainage project is nearing 100% design.
* HVAC improvements – in slight negotiations with Tighe & Bond over contract language but should begin very soon.

Ms. Sangrey said she will be rolling over $2M from the BAN account and adding another $2M as materials are starting to come in and need to be paid for. She added the debt service is already accounted for in the budget plan and the investments have done well and will continue to be reviewed each year.

**Board Compensation, BAI#1** – Chairman Labovites said upon a review of the Boards’

compensation, there has been no increase in the past fifteen (15) years. He said this vote is to approve a ten percent (10%) increase in Board compensation, retroactive to July 1, 2023. Vice Chairman Guerin motioned to approve BAI#1, wherein the board of directors has reviewed the enabling legislation (Update of Chapter 752, Acts of 1968) at Section 5 regarding board member compensation by the District. Whereas board members’ compensation has not increased since 2008, a period over which the Consumer Price Index increased by over 40%, the board has therefore conducted a review of its compensation and that of other comparable bodies. Based on the results of this review, the board votes to increase board compensation by 10% effective July 1, 2023. Member Nelson 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, abstained.

Member Woodsmall asked if this was a conflict of interest and Member Traynor confirmed that it is not as it is done through the Enabling Act. Vice Chairman Guerin requested a discussion of how the compensation is distributed take place at a future meeting. Ms. Sangrey questioned if it was a matter of editing the By-laws and that being the case, Chairman Labovites agreed a discussion is warranted.

**ITEM V – OPERATIONS**

**Flow Summary** – Ms. Sangrey said there have been a couple of rain events, with a gap in between; the temperatures are up; there have been no changes in the process; the bio one reactor is empty; and the operations department is doing a great job in maintaining the short-term high flow events. Chairman Labovites inquired of the anticipated weather events for the upcoming weekend. Ms. Sangrey responded that operations is prepared for it all with two (2) lab personnel on call and operators on standby. She added communication remains open between the treatment facilities.

Ms. Sangrey mentioned the DEP was at the facility on August 17th for their periodic inspection and there is no report yet. She said Plant Operations Manager, Joe Parker, reported the inspection passed with flying colors.

**2023 Incinerator Stack Testing Completed –** Ms. Sangrey said the stack testing has been in place since 2011; an outside contractor is hired to do the testing; it cost six (6) figures to conduct; and was completed in two (2) separate weeks in August. The results showed the exhaust was below seventy-five percent (75%) of our standards and will not need to be tested again for three (3) years. She said Dennis Lowe, our Regulatory Compliance Engineer, is responsible for organizing, managing, and hiring the outside consultants to procure testing. Ms. Sangrey confirmed the position is a relatively new one as it has been expanded and changed to include many compliances since Mr. Lowes’ predecessor left. She said she reviews Mr. Lowes’ submittals, and he briefs the team weekly. Adding both her and Mr. Andrus are responsible for internal enforcement of compliance. Ms. Sangrey indicated the SCADA alarms are currently being revisited for them to make more sense and to distinguish between nuisance alarms. Vice Chairman Guerin asked if air emissions require PFAS testing. She said there is chatter about it but in speaking with a consultant at Epsilon, there is nothing in place yet.

**ITEM VI – COMMUNICATIONS**

**MCWRS –** Vice Chairman Guerin said the Symposium is scheduled for September 28th from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Devens Common Center; the keynote speaker, Kishia Powell, CEO and General Manager of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, will speak on the topic of financing sustainability. There will be a panel on operational challenges impacting rates and affordability as well as one on weight setting strategies; a legal and regulatory update; a professor from WPI will be talking about their water resources center; a presentation on the Buzzards Bay Wastewater Treatment Facility project; NACWA will be communicating on rates; and a Coalition update will be provided. Vice Chairman Guerin said participants can register at MCWRS.org and encouraged all to attend.

**ITEM VII – PERSONNEL**

**Postings, New Hires, Resignations** – Ms. Mancini said there were no new hires and there are postings for an industrial electrician, IT support specialist, SCADA specialist and Wastewater Operators. Chairman Labovites asked how many operator vacancies there are. Ms. Mancini replied two, but we are looking forward to two people retiring in the near future.

Member Duffy inquired as to whether the member communities received notice of Reliant’s Occupational Health Centers closing. All were aware and suggestions for alternative resources were made. Ms. Mancini will continue to research options and will share the findings.

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

9/20, 10/4, 10/18, 11/1

**ITEM X – ADJOURNMENT**

At 1:45 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