

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE MEMBERS OF
SWATARA TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY**

The regular monthly meeting of the Swatara Township Authority was held on August 18, 2021, at 6:00 P.M. The following members were present: Castellano (Chairman), Cichy (Vice Chairman) via phone, Mancuso (Treasurer), Johnson (Secretary), Werner, Murphy, and Belles. Also present were: Miller (Business Manager), Marino (Administrative Assistant), Brenner (ARRO Consulting, Inc.), and Coccorese (Salzmann Hughes, PC).

Chairman Castellano called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chairman Castellano announced that she had just found out that the Township building was closed due to unforeseen circumstances and that she was able to secure a meeting space at *Leeds*. Mr. Johnson motioned to adjourn the meeting and reconvene at *Leeds*. Ms. Mancuso seconded, and the motion carried.

Chairman Castellano adjourned the meeting to *Leeds* at 6:02 P.M.

Chairman Castellano reconvened the meeting at *Leeds* at 6:13 P.M.

Chairman Castellano asked all Board members and visitors to introduce themselves. The following visitors were in attendance: Mr. Rodney Copenhaver; Mr. Christopher Heagy; Mr. William Hummel; Mr. Kenneth Miller; Mr. Jeremiah Thomas; Mr. Michael Varner; and Mr. Daniel Wise. All of the visitors listed are employees of the Authority. Later in the evening, Mr. Tom Connolly of the Swatara Township Board of Commissioners, joined the meeting.

Chairman Castellano entertained a motion to accept and approve the minutes of July 21, 2021. Ms. Mancuso made the motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Werner seconded, and the motion passed.

Chairman Castellano presented the Executive Director's Report.

Chairman Castellano gave a personnel update and announced that Mr. Heagy welcomed his newborn son this past month.

Chairman Castellano stated that the dryer was repaired and functioning allowing sludge samples to be sent to *Gryphon*. Ms. Brenner stated that the samples were received by *Gryphon*, but no response has been received yet. Chairman Castellano stated that if the response is positive, emails will be sent out regarding making a dryer selection.

Chairman Castellano announced that a meeting with Derry Township Municipal Authority, Lower Paxton Township Authority, City of Harrisburg (Capital Region Water), and Swatara Township Authority was held on August 3, 2021, to discuss the possibility of a regional biosolids dryer. Chairman Castellano stated that, in her opinion, this was something that could potentially be discussed as an option years down the road – but much work remains to be accomplished until reaching that point. Additionally, the Authority is in need of a dryer

replacement now. Chairman Castellano also stated that Derry Township and Lower Paxton Township asked if Swatara Township would be willing to participate in a study with an estimated cost of \$50,000 to be shared between all four entities. Mr. Thomas, Mechanic for the Authority, stated that he concurred with Ms. Castellano that the Authority's current dryer would not last until a regional dryer could be placed in service. Mr. Werner asked which entities would be a part of the regional dryer. Chairman Castellano stated that Swatara, Lower Paxton, Derry Township, and Harrisburg City participated in the discussion but that no entity was actually signed on to the concept. Theoretically, others could potentially join as well. Chairman Castellano asked if the Board would like her to continue discussions or would they be willing to discuss the possibility later. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Werner both stated they would prefer that we place it on hold with the possibility of discussion in a few years. Ms. Brenner stated that participating in the study might be a way to placate things for now and to have possible discussions down the road. Ms. Mancuso suggested letting the parties involved know that the Authority currently needs to focus on its current dryer and once there is additional information, other discussions may occur. Ms. Mancuso then asked if any stakeholders in our current dryer could possibly cause delays on financing. Ms. Brenner stated that they could not unless they did so legally. Mr. Coccorese indicated that it would be difficult to do so from a legal perspective.

Chairman Castellano informed the Board that the Maintenance Contract work started on Monday night, and that some employees will be working at night which will require overtime. Chairman Castellano also stated that flushing has been completed.

Chairman Castellano stated the truck repairs have been approved by the Board and repairs can proceed.

Chairman Castellano then opened discussions regarding COVID-19 policies. Chairman Castellano stated that a memo was sent out to employees reaffirming the current policies including the *Visa* card incentive and signs to be placed on the doors regarding masking. Chairman Castellano presented *PowerPoint* graphics to show the impact of one COVID-19 positive case on the Authority (utilizing a situation from June 2021 as the example). Chairman Castellano also stated that all employees being affected received COVID leave compensation without affecting their accumulated leave.

Mr. Varner, Utility Worker / Union Steward, introduced himself and discussed some of the employees' reservations with receiving the COVID-19 vaccine and questions regarding the memo they received. Mr. Varner then handed out a list of questions the employees had regarding the vaccine and the alternative option to receiving the vaccine. Mr. Miller, Collection System Maintenance Worker, asked if an employee chose the weekly testing route in lieu of the vaccine who would cover the cost of the COVID-19 test and if the employee would be able to return to work if there is a delay in receiving the results from the test. Chairman Castellano stated that, in her capacity as Executive Director, it was her recommendation that the employees pay the cost of any testing; testing delays cannot be controlled by the Authority. Chairman Castellano stated that the COVID leave expires at the end of September and the Board will have further discussions regarding leave at the next Board meeting. Mr. Heagy and Mr. Varner confirmed that employees would be willing to use their personal leave if they became ill due to COVID-19 and would not object to such.

Ms. Mancuso informed the Board that it has been proven that just because you have the vaccine does not mean you would not get the virus or spread it. She states that the hope for the vaccine is that if you do get the virus while vaccinated that your symptoms are not as severe. Ms. Mancuso stated that she believes that, to be fair, all individuals should wear a mask no matter their vaccination status nor mandate that vaccinations be enforced. Mr. Thomas asked if the vaccinated employees will be required to get tested or be required to quarantine if they encounter someone who has COVID-19. Mr. Coccorese stated the *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* guidelines state that if a vaccinated person comes into contact with someone with COVID-19, they should be tested and wear a mask until they receive a negative test (as long as they have no symptoms).

Mr. Johnson asked if the vaccine receives full *Food and Drug Administration (FDA)* approval, would it change the minds of employees who are not currently vaccinated? Mr. Heagy responded by stating that even with *FDA* approval, he would feel more comfortable waiting a few years. Mr. Johnson proceeded to state that at this point he believes we should keep the current incentive for the vaccine and allow the employees to make the choice on whether to receive the vaccine.

Mr. Murphy asked if the Authority could possibly implement an employee COVID-19 self-survey to complete prior to the start of each workday. He also stated that he does agree that it should be the employee's choice but if it does get *FDA* approval, he would suggest the employees get vaccinated.

Mr. Connolly, Swatara Township Commissioner, thanked everyone for all their work and appreciated the fact that the conversation is being held regarding what is not just right for the employees but also for the public.

Chairman Castellano suggested a motion to keep the current policies in place. She also suggested tabling any further discussion until next month at a Special Meeting, which should be held prior to September's Regular Board Meeting. Mr. Cichy asked if the employees will continue to receive COVID-19 leave or will the employee have to use their own time. Chairman Castellano stated that currently the COVID-19 leave is already extended to September 30, 2021, and further discussion will be held regarding any leave extensions or creations at the Special Meeting. Mr. Cichy motioned to keep things in place as-is. Mr. Johnson seconded, and the motion carried. Chairman Castellano stated that she will be in contact regarding the date of the Special Meeting.

Chairman Castellano thanked all the employees for attending and participating in the meeting.

Chairman Castellano asked for Board approval of the Family Sick Leave MOU with *AFSCME*, which would now include a parent and/or person for whom the employee is power of attorney (POA). Ms. Mancuso motioned to approve the proposed MOU. Mr. Werner seconded, and the motion carried.

Chairman Castellano asked for Board approval regarding the proposed phone stipend policy that would offer a stipend to the Collection System Maintenance employees, the Lead Mechanic,

and some positions in Management. Ms. Mancuso motioned to approve the phone stipend policy. Mr. Johnson seconded, and the motion carried.

Chairman Castellano stated that she still has not received the contracts or further information from the one IT company which submitted a proposal, and she suggested we move forward and make a company selection as the Authority is losing time based on various internal deadlines and external plans. Ms. Mancuso motioned to reach out to *DII* and move forward with selecting the company for the IT merger. Mr. Murphy seconded, and the motion carried.

Chairman Castellano asked for Board approval on the engagement and representation agreement for legal services with *Salzmann Hughes*. Mr. Werner motioned to approve the engagement and representation agreement for legal services with *Salzmann Hughes*. Mr. Belles seconded, and the motion carried.

Mr. Werner motioned to accept the Executive Director's report. Ms. Mancuso seconded, and the motion carried.

Mr. Miller presented the Business Manger's report.

Mr. Miller presented the monthly summary and budget to actual reports, and reviewed items addressed in the report.

Mr. Miller gave an update on accounts currently in Collections. Mr. Miller also stated that second-quarter bills became delinquent and the applicable fees were added. He also stated that 194 two-quarter delinquent letters were sent out, and estimated that about 100 customers would be sent to Collections due to non-payment. He also stated that *Modern Recovery Services (MRS)* will be given between 30-35 accounts to proceed with water shut-off notices.

Mr. Miller informed the Board that a list of all properties that are subject to condemnation related to the I-83 highway expansion project has not yet been obtained, but he will try to reach out to an individual to possibly obtain such a list to ensure liens are placed on delinquent properties.

Mr. Werner asked how the accounts are selected for water shut-offs. Mr. Miller stated that it will be done on a determined random selection.

Ms. Mancuso motioned to approve Mr. Miller's report. Mr. Murphy seconded, and the motion passed.

Mr. Werner motioned to accept the Engineer's report as submitted. Mr. Belles seconded, and the motion carried.

Mr. Coccorese, Authority Solicitor, presented his report.

Mr. Coccorese gave a brief update on Act 65 to ensure the requirements are met for next month's meeting. This includes but is not limited to placement of the meeting agenda within 24 hours of the meeting. Chairman Castellano indicated that staff has worked on this for two

months, and that Mr. Miller will ensure that the agenda is properly posted to meet the legal requirements.

Mr. Coccorese also stated that he appreciated the time the employees put into the questions they had gather, printed, and handed out to the Board, but not all the questions would apply to the Authority nor would he advise any agent of the Authority to sign the documents. He also stated that it would be legal if the Board chooses to implement a vaccine mandate.

Mr. Werner motioned to approve Mr. Coccorese's report. Mr. Murphy seconded, and the motion passed.

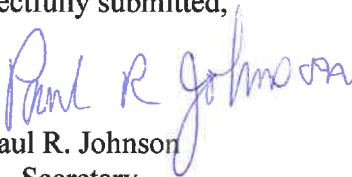
Chairman Castellano stated that an email will be sent out regarding optional dates for the Special Meeting to be held.

Chairman Castellano stated there will not be an Executive Session this evening.

Ms. Mancuso motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Belles seconded, and the motion carried.

Chairman Castellano adjourned the meeting at 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,


Paul R. Johnson
Secretary