

ALBANY WATER BOARD
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
April 24, 2020

A regular meeting of the Albany Water Board was officially convened at 9:15 am, on Friday, April 24, 2020. Pursuant to Executive Order No. 202.1, issued by Governor Cuomo on March 12, 2020, and advisories issued by Federal, State, and Local officials related to the COVID-19 virus, the Albany Water Board convened its meeting by video conference call.

The meeting notice provided information to the public on how to participate. No members of the public participated and no inquiries were received from the public prior to the meeting.

PRESENT: Charles Houghton, Chairperson; Barbara Smith, Secretary, Karen Strong, Assistant Secretary; Anthony Owens, Treasurer; Rachel Johnson, Vice Chairperson

STAFF PRESENT: Joseph E. Coffey, Jr., P.E., Commissioner; Thomas Dufresne, CFO; William Simcoe, P.E., Deputy Commissioner; Emily Lyons, Confidential Assistant

BOARD ADVISORS PRESENT: William Kahn, UHY Advisors; TJ Ruane, Whiteman Osterman Hanna

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chairman Charles Houghton introduced the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on March 27, 2020. With no objection, the reading of the minutes was dispensed and Mr. Houghton called for a motion to approve the minutes of both meetings. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously.

Public Comment Period

No public comments.

Committee and Staff Reports

Report of Governance Committee: Rachel Johnson, Committee Chair

The Committee recommends for the Board to discuss setting measurable goals for the Department at the June Board meeting. The committee recommends a workshop to discuss risks and strategies sometime in the future. The committee will continue to work on by-laws and the operating agreement with two more meetings in June and August.

Report from Rate Consultant: William Kahn, UHY Advisors

The line of credit application made us look harder into revenues into the future and past. Given the current situation with the Coronavirus, right now it is too difficult to speculate what might need to be done in terms of rates.

Financial Report: Tom Dufresne, CFO

March 2020 MTD/YTD Financials

- We have not seen an impact yet from the Coronavirus in March's figures. For revenues, we are ahead compared to where we were in the previous year, with positive cash flows so far for the year. Our debt service was pre-funded by \$1.5 million. We also received the sewer bill (~\$3 million) late from the County, so it is not represented in these numbers.
- Revenues - we missed our budget amount for the month, but are still ahead for the year. We are still out performing investment income projections, but we don't expect that to continue. We received some rent checks late, so they are not in the March figures.
- YTD Operating Expenses - we are under budget for the year so far, however, a big expense (Keller Construction) costs have been delayed.
- We are under for expenses YTD compared to last year, and workers comp has been trending down.
- This month we had recorded Capital spending for the Harriman Campus Project.
- We are slightly over on overtime expenses for the year, but outperforming the previous year.
- Due to the City, is at \$600,000 and will be around the \$1 million mark for April. The City does expect to have critical cash flows coming up, so we need to keep this number close to \$0.
- The large user's unpaid balance is low.
- Large customers- revenue is slightly higher than previous year, but we expect to see this decrease in April. SUNY Nano water consumption seems to have had a big impact from recent events.
- Online payments - \$500,000 received in March, with a lot of the colleges paying online now.

Line of Credit:

The proposal from Bank of America did have some changes since it was originally submitted. We are still comfortable with the changes proposed as the Bank of America terms are still more favorable for the Board than the other proposal received. Bank of America will connect with our Bond Counsel soon to set a closing date.

Commissioner's Report: Joseph Coffey, P.E., Commissioner; William Simcoe, P.E., Deputy Commissioner
Key Performance Indicators:

- Thankfully, we did not have many main breaks in March and April. We did have a repair on the transmission main in Delmar - we were able to use the emergency connection with Latham to supplement water during this repair.
- Water production and consumption is down, and if it continues, we will have a revenue decrease. In light of this, we will institute more expense management, and review POs before purchasing items. We will also not fill positions unless needed. We have had some staff on stand-by and not working - we can review how effective this has been to help us be more efficient in the future.
- The overtime expenses are decreasing, and are expected to continue to approach budget. With less traffic during the week, many jobs are easier to complete during the week, as opposed to the weekend.
- Social media has been very effective for our outreach over the last few months.
- Water booster station equipment was delayed as the company refused delivery to NY due to Covid-19.
- We created a transition plan on bringing staff back to work at close to a 100% level. We have acquired the proper PPE (KN95 masks, surgical masks), and hope to get back to a new normal by mid-May. We are planning to purchase some infrared thermometers to screen employees.

- The office will remain closed. We have been working well remotely with customer service, engineering, and finance.
- We have suspended issuing new fishing permits, but will resume soon by appointment only and proper social distancing/mask usage.
- We are falling behind on preventative maintenance with staff out due to Covid. We plan to pick this back up when initiating our transition back to work plan.

Grants and Financing:

- Working to finish up the irrigation system at Woodlawn Park, and a contract is out for bid right now.
- New financing will close on May 21 for the Water Comprehensive Plan.
- We are working with the Joint Venture Team to finalize financing for Beaver Creek Project.
- We have a grant for Hackett Blvd that we have to use, and we are scoping out what we want to do currently.

Update on Capital/Construction Projects

- We are doing some work at the filter plant with the control system.
- We have sent out to bid some work in several locations that have had previous issues with main breaks.
- Some sewer rehab and water main work on Briar Ave.
- We awarded a contract to do sewer lining projects for the year.
- We have contract documents out to bid for a manhole chimney repair project.
- Rehab of Marborough Court sewage pumping station.
- Improvements at Arch and Pearl to prevent sewage surcharging.

Upper Washington Sewer Pump Station and Force Main - The pump station is starting up now.

Upper Washington Water Pump Station and Tank – Project is delayed a bit due to delayed delivery of materials.

New Business

Backwater Valve Grant – The Department is requesting permission from the Board for grant support for an alternative solution to basement backups.

A total of 500 grants have been awarded since the start of the program, and we anticipate continued “rain bombs” over the coming years. Instead of a backwater valve, a homeowner could re-plumb the entire basement - which has more upfront costs, but requires less long term maintenance of a valve. We are proposing allowing applicants to do basement plumbing instead of a valve and still take advantage of the \$2,000 grant. Plan to formalize this at the next board meeting.

Resolutions

Mr. Houghton called for a motion to approve each of the following resolutions. A motion was made and seconded for each; and each passed unanimously.

- Resolution 20-25: Resolution to Act as Lead Agency & Negative Declaration; 2020 Water and Sewer Improvements

- Resolution 20-26: Approval of Change Order #1 to the I-90 Sewer Rehabilitation Project

The Board found no purpose to enter Executive Session for this meeting.

Being no further business, Mr. Houghton called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM

Next regular meeting of the Water Board is scheduled for Friday, May 22, 2020 9:00am. The Audit Committee meeting will be at 8:00am; Finance Committee meeting will be at 8:30am.

Recorded by: Emily Lyons, Confidential Assistant

Approved by: _____

Barbara Smith, Secretary