

# *Weaverland Valley Authority*

## **Meeting Minutes**

October 3, 2016

The Board of the Weaverland Valley Authority (“Authority”) met at the East Earl Township building 4610 Division Hwy, East Earl, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania on October 3, 2016. Chairman Ken Witmer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and informed all present that the meeting was being recorded by a resident.

The following Board members were present: Ken Witmer, Harold Kilhefner, Scot Ash, Randy Miller, Gene Pierce, & Robert Jackson. Also present were Bradford J. Harris, Good & Harris LLP; Jeff Sweater, ELA; Julian Mazero, ELA; and Denise Bensing, Administrative Assistant.

**MINUTES:** A motion was made by Scot Ash and seconded by Robert Jackson, that the minutes of the September 8, 2016 meeting be approved as submitted. The motion carried unanimously.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Dave Horst asked if the projected cost of 17 million includes the lines needed to get the sewer to the treatment plant. Julian explained that the 17 million includes the treatment plant, the collection system, and engineering costs.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

Denise also reported that she received two more bills from ELA and one from Good & Harris. Randy Miller made a motion to pay the bills when funds are available: Good & Harris invoices 26807 and ELA invoices 1027474 & 1027475, seconded by Harold Kilhefner. Motion carried unanimously.

Denise discussed preparing a budget for 2017. The Day-to-Day committee discussed combining the Blue Ball Water Authority, East Earl Sewer Authority, and Terre Hill Borough water and sewer budget for 2017. Denise explained that this would be possible but the WVA will have additional costs that will also need to be budgeted for. Gene explained that Terre Hill Borough is not planning on budgeting for water and sewer for 2017. After some discussion, it was determined that Denise can use the Terre Hill 2016 figures as a starting point.

### **ENGINEER’S REPORT:**

**Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant & Conveyance System:** Jeff reported that he and Julian met with representatives of the USDA’s Rural Development Program to discuss the project. They were not willing to discuss grants at this time but did explain that they provide loans with a 40 year repayment period at a fixed rate and there is no penalty for early repayment. The current rate is 1.875%. They also explained if the rate is lower when the project is complete, they will give the lower rate but will not increase the rate if the rate is higher. There will be engineering costs incurred when applying, but some of the information from the 537 Plan can be used, which will save some engineering costs. Julian estimated the cost to complete the application to be around \$25,000 and would take approximately 1-2 months. Julian did explain that by going with USDA, they will be a little more involved in the process. For instance, USDA will need to review any change orders. It was also noted that the Authority is not locked in to taking the loan in the end if a better option is available. Gene Pierce made a motion to begin the

engineering and environmental study necessary for the USDA loan application, seconded by Scot Ash. Motion carried unanimously.

Chester County Solid Waste Authority (CCSWA): ELA received the sampling results for a single sampling event of the Ultrafiltration (UF) permeates. Based on the sampling results, ELA feels the Authority may be able to accept the CCSWA's wastewater in the future but would recommend CCSWA perform additional sampling of the UF permeate for the parameters of concern. Since CCSWA would provide this testing at their own cost if they choose to continue to pursue connection to the WVA sewer system, there is nothing needed from the Authority at this time.

Service Area: A map of the proposed service area was distributed. Jeff explained that they need to get started with surveying the service area for the new treatment plant. Before doing this, the area to be sewerred needs to be determined. There was discussion in the past about changing Shady Maple's flow to go to the new treatment plant. ELA is estimating the cost to add a line from Shady Maple to Rt. 625 to be approximately \$550,000-\$600,000. The advantage to doing this would be that Shady Maple's large pumps would then not have adverse effects on the smaller pumps on the system. It would also give the Authority more flexibility by alleviating some capacity in some of the pump stations. The cost to survey the Shady Maple section is estimated to be \$10,000-\$12,000. It was decided to table a decision until later.

#### **SOLICITOR'S REPORT:**

Act 537 Appeal update – Brad reported that Terre Hill Borough decided to proceed with trying to recoup the legal fees incurred by the appeal. East Earl Township has decided to not try to recoup their fees.

Short-term Financing – The financing has been approved by DCED and closing will be held on Oct. 13, 2016. The bank is in the process of approving the final loan documents.

Brad also noted that he received the corporate seal and it was given to Denise

#### **RULES AND REGULATIONS COMMITTEE:**

Julian reported that the committee met on September 15<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. The committee has discussed the first five chapters of the sewer rules and regulations. After the recommended revisions are made, Julian will send the revised document to Brad to review. Julian expects to send it to Brad by early November. The committee will then work through the water rules and regulations.

#### **DAY-TO-DAY COMMITTEE:**

Stationary - Ken reported that the committee has discussed stationary and they do not feel a logo is necessary; rather Microsoft Word or similar software can be used to create letterhead.

Administrative Duties – The committee discussed the possibility of using QuickBooks which is what Denise uses currently for Blue Ball Water Authority and East Earl Sewer Authority. Gene noted that Valerie uses Excel spreadsheets for bookkeeping in Terre Hill. Denise will talk to Connie about using QuickBooks since the software was purchased jointly with East Earl Township. In regards to staffing the committee feels 1 full-time position and 1 part-time position would be needed. The committee is checking on what would be needed to have one person located in Terre Hill and one person located in East Earl. The responsibilities of each person are to be determined.

Depository Bank – Ken explained that Blue Ball Water Authority and East Earl Sewer Authority recently moved their accounts from BB&T to Ephrata National Bank. This change should have a net

savings of approximately \$4,000 with lower fees and higher interest. The committee would recommend using Ephrata National Bank as the depository bank.

Operations Employees – Bruce discussed the projected employee needs with Bob Rissler and both feel that 4-5 operators will be necessary by the time the treatment plant is operating. Bob plans to stay with Terre Hill Borough but will be available during the transition. Zach Eshelman also works for Terre Hill but the committee is not sure what his future roll will be. Ken said that Blue Ball Water and East Earl Sewer Authority will discuss hiring another operator at their meeting. Gene asked if Zach could be used in the interim. He could be leased from the Borough.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Monthly vs. Quarterly billing – Jeff asked the board if their preference for customer billing would be monthly or quarterly. He explained that monthly billing would help customers to be able to budget for the water and sewer bill better. His experience with changing to monthly billing from quarterly billing at the Manheim Borough Authority was that, although, it was more expensive, the aged receivables decreased. The board agreed that since the customers are already accustomed to quarterly billing that a change is not necessary.

Metering all Customers – In order to meter all customers, anybody that is not served with public water would need to have a meter installed on their domestic water source. There was discussion regarding whether the Authority should supply and install the meter or if the customer should be responsible for these costs. Currently, Terre Hill provides the meter and installs it but in East Earl, the customer is responsible for purchasing a meter and installing it. It was also discussed that metering the sewer flow is very inaccurate. Also discussed was the possibility of allowing sewer only customers the option to continue on a flat rate but the flat rate would be high enough to incentivize the customer to prefer to be metered. Scot feels that if the customer has to purchase and install the meter that they may prefer to continue to pay the flat rate.

Ownership of Grinder Pumps – Jeff was looking for a consensus of the board regarding ownership of the grinder pumps. East Earl Sewer Authority owns the grinder pumps on their system but Terre Hill does not. With Goodville, there will be an additional 140 grinder pumps. Gene asked what the advantage is to being in the grinder pump business. Ken explained that he is concerned about customers having no idea who to call when there is a problem with their grinder pump, and he believed it would be cheaper and quicker to obtain repair services from the WVA rather than from a private repairman. If customers could be charged a service fee per billing cycle it would be able to cover the cost of an additional operator. That operator would be able to do preventative maintenance when not working on grinder pumps. It was noted that New Holland Borough charges a service fee in addition to usage charges. Scot noted another concern with customers maintaining their own grinder pumps is whether they would replace a failing or defective grinder pump with something cheaper and not suitable for the WVA system, the customer, or both. Julian explained that the Authority could keep grinder pumps on hand for emergencies. Julian also explained that USDA will not pay for anything out of the right-of-way. He also feels that if the grinder pumps are owned by the property owner, they will be more careful with what they flush. There was concern about how to handle this when there is a change of ownership of the property. It was then suggested that a customer could automatically be under the service plan unless they opt out.

Mandatory Connection Ordinance – Since the Authority will service properties in two municipalities, it is important for East Earl Township and Terre Hill Borough to adopt similar connection

ordinances. Currently, East Earl's ordinance states a resident must connect if within 150 feet of the sewer or water line. Terre Hill's states a customer must connect if the property is adjacent to the water or sewer line. Jeff recommends that the Authority draft an ordinance to submit to both municipalities for their approval and adoption. The new ordinance should be in place when the assets are transferred.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**EESA/ETSA Financing:** The loan is scheduled to close by the end of October. Brad asked if the bank will charge a large fee when the loan is transferred. Denise will check with Scott Kramer at RBC.

Gene Pierce moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m., seconded by Randy Miller. The next meeting will be held on November 7, 2016, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise A. Bensing

Cc: Scot Ash  
Robert Jackson  
Harold Kilhefner  
Scott Marburger  
Randy Miller  
L. Eugene Pierce  
Kenneth Witmer  
Jerrene Zimmerman  
Bradford J. Harris, Attorney  
East Earl Township  
Terre Hill Borough  
Robert Rissler  
Jeff Sweater, Consulting Engineer  
Gary Martin, Becker Engineering  
Frank Mincarelli, Blakinger Thomas