

EPHRATA AREA JOINT AUTHORITY MINUTES – JANUARY 11, 2024

The Ephrata Area Joint Authority met on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 7:00 PM, in the Council Chambers of Borough Hall, 124 S. State Street, Ephrata, PA.

In attendance were Thomas Reinhold, Chairman; Gary Landis, Vice Chairman (arrived at 7:03 PM); Jonathan Zimmerman, Assistant Treasurer; and Members Timothy Barr and Clark Stauffer. Absent was Steve Sawyer, Treasurer.

Also in attendance were Attorney Aaron Zeamer, Russell, Krafft & Gruber, LLP; Jeff Bologa, Becker Engineering; Nancy Harris, Secretary; Karen Gerhart, Director of Finance; Scott Mohn, Water Operations Manager; and Stephanie Fasnacht, Recorder.

Call to Order

Chairman Reinhold called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Harris provided confirmation of the following:

1. The meeting agenda was posted on the Borough's website and at Borough Hall no later than 24 hours in advance of the time of the meeting.
2. The meeting agenda included a listing of each matter of Authority business that will be or may be the subject of deliberation or official action at the meeting.
3. There were no changes made to the meeting agenda after it was posted.
4. The meeting agenda was made available to individuals in attendance at the meeting.

Chairman Reinhold asked if there were any requests to add a matter of Authority business to the meeting agenda. Seeing none, Chairman Reinhold asked for a motion to accept the meeting agenda as posted. Mr. Barr moved and Mr. Stauffer seconded to approve the meeting agenda as posted. The motion carried unanimously.

Reorganization

Chairman Reinhold opened nominations for Chairman. Mr. Barr nominated Mr. Reinhold. Chairman Reinhold called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Mr. Reinhold was unanimously elected to serve as Chairman.

Chairman Reinhold opened nominations for Vice Chairman. Mr. Stauffer nominated Mr. Landis. Chairman Reinhold called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Mr. Landis was unanimously elected to serve as Vice Chairman.

Chairman Reinhold opened nominations for Treasurer. Mr. Zimmerman nominated Mr. Sawyer. Chairman Reinhold called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Mr. Sawyer was unanimously elected to serve as Treasurer.

Chairman Reinhold opened nominations for Assistant Treasurer. Chairman Reinhold nominated Mr. Zimmerman. Chairman Reinhold called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Mr. Zimmerman was unanimously elected to serve as Assistant

Treasurer.

Chairman Reinhold opened nominations for Secretary. Mr. Barr nominated Ms. Harris. Chairman Reinhold called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Ms. Harris was unanimously elected to serve as Secretary.

Chairman Reinhold opened nominations for Assistant Secretary. Chairman Reinhold nominated Ms. Gerhart. Chairman Reinhold called for additional nominations. With no additional nominations forthcoming, Ms. Gerhart was unanimously elected to serve as Assistant Secretary.

Mr. Stauffer moved and Mr. Landis seconded to appoint Attorney Aaron Zeamer, Russell, Krafft & Gruber, LLP, to serve as the Solicitor for the Authority. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Landis moved and Mr. Stauffer seconded to appoint Becker Engineering, LLC, as Engineer for the Authority. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Stauffer moved and Mr. Zimmerman seconded to appoint Stephanie Fasnacht as Right-to-Know Officer for the Authority. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes – December 14, 2023

Mr. Stauffer moved and Mr. Zimmerman seconded to approve the December 14, 2023, Meeting Minutes. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

With no visitors in attendance wishing to address the Board, Chairman Reinhold moved onto the discussion of the Financial Reports and Payment of Bills.

Financial Reports

Mr. Landis moved and Mr. Barr seconded to approve the financial reports. Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

Payment of Bills

Mr. Stauffer moved and Mr. Barr seconded to ratify the payment of the bills. Motion carried unanimously via roll call vote.

Action Items

a. Becker Engineering: 233 East Fulton Street – Conditional Approval of Water Facility Design

Mr. Stauffer moved and Mr. Barr seconded to approve the water design plans subject to the completion of the following:

1. The developer will be required to secure the water capacity (i.e., pay the required tapping/connection fees to the Authority) prior to Final Plan approval.
2. The developer's consultant has acknowledged that prior to the Final Plan approval, all plans will be signed and sealed by a Pennsylvania Registered Professional Engineer.

3. The developer shall establish an escrow account for Authority engineering/legal review fees/observation fees and post the required financial security for the proposed water improvements.

Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion Items

a. Fire Sprinkler Consumption Billing

Due to some older services not being metered or being combined services (i.e., WellSpan-ECH), Ms. Harris sought feedback from the Board regarding their interest in billing for water consumption due to a fire. Ms. Harris advised this is a “gray area” that should be clarified by the Authority. Mr. Landis advised he would be interested in gathering more information as to how other water authorities handle these scenarios. In response to Mr. Zimmerman’s inquiry as to the current fee structure, Ms. Gerhart provided an overview of the fee according to the size of the service line. Mr. Landis inquired if water consumption costs as a result of a fire are covered by insurance companies; in which, Solicitor Zeamer advised he believes the cost would be covered. Mr. Stauffer commented that, “... we need to get consistency ... the monthly payments are minimal,” and, “... maybe a higher billing rate is necessary to not bill for consumption.” Mr. Zimmerman inquired as to where meters are typically located; in which, Ms. Harris advised, “... some are in pits, some are in buildings ... there are some which have combined services and others that are unmetered.” Attorney Zeamer commented that “... consistency is ideal,” and that historically, the Board has granted combined lines only in unique or unusual circumstances. In concluding the discussion, Ms. Harris advised she will reach out to other municipalities to obtain additional information and will provide the results to the Board at an upcoming meeting for additional discussion.

Old Business Items

a. Highpoint Church

Mr. Bologna provided an overview of the top three bids received for this project:

1. Barrasso Excavation, Inc. - \$425,290.00
2. DOLI Construction Corporation - \$360,540.00
3. MSX Site (A Mason Dixon Contractors, LLC, Company) - \$355,475.20

Mr. Bologna advised there is no action for the Board to take at this time and a recommendation for the bid award will be made at a future meeting.

b. New Joy Church

Ms. Harris advised there is nothing new to report on this matter.

Operations Report

- System Demand:
 - 1.968mgd Average for the Month of November
 - 1.939mgd Average for the Year
- Accounted For Water
 - 74.9% for the Month of December
 - 79.4% for the Year

- Service Line – 19 Creek Lane – Estimate 5K/Day
- Service Line – 814 Dawn Avenue – Estimate 5K/Day
- Service Line – 639 West Main Street – Estimate 7K/Day
- 6” Water Main Break – Kathi Avenue / Marion Terrace
- 4” Water Main Break – 239 S. Reading Road
- 6” and 4” Main Breaks – Estimated Water Loss – 1.3MG

Mr. Mohn commented he is looking to “beef up” leak detection efforts in hopes to increase the percentage of “Accounted For Water.” Mr. Mohn further commented that the goal he continues to strive for is 85% “Accounted For Water.” Mr. Landis inquired as to if there is a common denominator causing the persistent issues being experienced; in which, Mr. Mohn advised the issues vary. Mr. Bologna further advised that the numbers are close to where they should be for a system of its size.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date is Thursday, February 8, 2024, at 7:00 PM.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy E. Harris, P.E.
Secretary

SJF