

The Onondaga County Water Authority met in regular session on June 23, 2021.

Members of the Authority present were J. Bianchini, K. Gardiner, M. Lubber, J. Dougherty and B. Doran.

Others present: M. Hooker, G. Miller, C. Marvin, J. Brown, L. Khanzadian, and A. Weiss.

I. Call to Order:

- J. Bianchini, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:35 PM.
- On behalf of the Board, John Bianchini thanked C. Marvin for his presentation and overview of AMWA Insight survey which compares OCWA to other large water utilities.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by B. Doran, with all Members approving, the Board approved the regular Minutes of May 24, 2021, as presented.

On motion by M. Lubber, duly seconded by B. Doran, with all Members approving, the Board approved the Special Meeting Minutes of May 25, 2021, as presented.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- M. Hooker reviewed the Executive Director's report.
- Provided historic data, over 27 years, which indicates metered ratio at 85.26% in 1993 compared to 86.88% through May 31, 2021. This improvement is indicative of an ongoing leak detection program and a dedicated workforce.
- Reviewed the historic data on outstanding debt, major capital improvements, awards, and employee statistics. Oversight of all activity and changes has led to the growth and stability of OCWA today.
- Reported that 72.7% of OCWA employees have received the COVID-19 vaccine and including the Board members, we are at 73.5%. To date, 118 employees have taken a gift card. Staff continues to remain respectful of space and wearing masks when necessary.

- Distributed an article on the City of Brooksville and the accidental sale of their water tower.
- Commented on a recent Kiplinger Letter and the discussion of efforts by micro chip manufacturers to conserve water as part of the manufacturing process.

III. WATER PRODUCTION & DELIVERY REPORT

- G. Miller reviewed the Water Production and Delivery report.
- Late May there was a spike in the demand for water which has been followed by occasional rain and demand for water in the mid to high 30 MGD range. Metered ratio has been holding relatively steady at 86.88%.
- Otisco Lake is just below the crest of the dam and very close to the long-term average. Lake Ontario is about 14" below the long-term average and almost 4' below two years ago, with no significant impact on our operations.
- Water main breaks have increased slightly, close to the average in June. There have been a couple of large breaks including one on Wolf Street that occurred last weekend. There was also a series of breaks on Genesee Street in Geddes which caused us to move ahead with replacing about 150' of pipe. A capital authorization for this emergency repair work is included this month, for Board approval.
- Three town projects are under construction and making great progress. We will see hundreds of new OCWA customers coming online later this summer because of these projects. There is a small project in the Town of Manlius where residents are petitioning the Town to bond for the work to extend the watermain. Interest has picked up in a few other towns for extensions as well.
- Town of Manlius voted to proceed with improvements for Skyridge, approved SEQRA and are actively pursuing funding. The Town will need to setup a Water District along Salt Springs Road, which currently has a significant amount of opposition from homeowners, so it is not clear how the project is going to proceed. 51% of the residents and 51%

of the assessed value properties need to sign a petition in favor of the project to proceed.

- Barton & Loguidice postponed a meeting for the LaFayette and Tully water systems that was scheduled, last week, to review the options for the long-term planning and to discuss the condition of the system and plans for the Honeywell settlement funds. Barton & Loguidice is trying to complete the evaluation by mid-July to meet the NYSEFC grant and loan application deadline.
- The North Shore watermain project is nearing completion.
- The relining projects on Falls Road and Skyline Drive are complete and went very well. Currently working on Monte Vista Drive in Camillus.
- Flushing work has been completed in Fayetteville. Recently completed flushing work in North Syracuse and are starting up in Camillus.
- Water from Otisco Lake has recently required higher than normal chemicals for treatment due to the odd changes in weather. We increased the coagulant which in turn caused an increase in sedimentation in the contact basins. Working with WTP staff to analyze the raw water quality and the treatment process to determine if modifications are necessary. Finished water is still of excellent quality from both water treatment plants and in the distribution system.
- EPA Region 2 has hired a new water systems engineer and has requested that the new engineer shadow water operators to evaluate the water systems. The health department has recommended that they shadow OCWA employees due to our high-quality employees.
 - The new Lead and Copper Rule release date has been postponed until December 2021 with compliance by September of 2024. OCWA will need all of the next 3 years to work and meet the compliance deadline. While the new sampling requirements will be challenging, the hardest aspect is developing an inventory of our service materials and getting information out to customers about lead. OCWA's standard has been to install copper water services, but for the numerous water systems we have taken over

we have limited information. We are reviewing paper records and checking material types when we change meters. We have done mailings in the past asking customers to check their services and are working on additional mailings. The next mailing will target Solvay and Geddes where we believe there may be lead services – we will offer customers \$5 off their water bill and a chance in a gift card raffle if they respond. Tavia and Lisa are working with Jeff Brown on the communications to the customers. We are making plans for other methods of determining the material type for next year – going door to door and using our vac truck to excavate some as well.

- A. Weiss reported on capital projects.
- Reviewed the Farrell pump station P11 cone valve that fractured but fortunately was detected by staff before operation of the valve.
- Ontario Water Treatment Plant project scope is being reworked to separate out a few smaller projects. The core plant improvement project will be ready to rebid later this year for receipt of bids this winter.
- Lake Ontario WTP electrical improvements are close to completion. Training for the new facilities is scheduled for the week of June 21.
- Fairmount reservoir project is progressing well and preparing for the first large concrete pour scheduled for June 26th. Working through the defective ductile iron pipe which has not impacted progress of work at this time.
- Work is in progress at the Eastern 30 MG. Completion is expected in the next 2-3 weeks.

IV. LEGAL & PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORT:

- Jeff Brown reviewed the Legal & Public Affairs report.
- Reviewed a current request on encroachment from an Otisco Lake resident that involved a large retaining wall on OCWA property and removal of a fallen tree.
- Information security training is planned for the Fall.

- Commented on the responsive team effort at OCWA in dealing with the recent weekend water repair that involved G. Miller, A. Weiss and J. Brown working together and communicating with the media, Facebook etc.
- Prepared a PowerPoint presentation as part of the NYSAWWA Public Affairs Committee, to be incorporated in their Lead & Copper series.
- Annual report is complete. Distributed to Board members.
- Otisco Lake Citizens Guidebook has been finalized. Began distribution to Otisco Lake residents.
- Drafted the next bill stuffer entitled How OCWA Monitors Water Quality. Currently being printed.
- The closing on the two large parcels on Otisco Lake are being planned. We have had some recent questions from the buyer of the 7-acre parcel regarding land access.
- Terminal Reservoir project litigation is moving to mediation.

V. HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE/SAFETY:

- L. Khanzadian reviewed Human Resources/Insurance/Safety report.
- Working the last three weeks with Dermody Burke and Brown auditors conducting their annual review of our 457 plan. First two weeks was spent responding to requests for reports and investment data. Week three is a random selection of 25 OCWA employees, which include participants, nonparticipants, retirees, and those that have taken disbursements. So far, the audit is going very well.
- Reviewed the recent supervisory training and the recent drug and alcohol awareness for supervisors and staff, which went very well. We were able to have an experienced drug and alcohol counselor onsite to conduct the training. It was interesting how diverse the viewpoints were on the recreational use of marijuana and the discussions that ensued. Other topics that we are working on for supervisors include interviewing techniques and working with performance improvement.

- Recruitment continues to be a challenge, but we have started to see an increase in applicant flow. Mary has done a good job in getting our position openings listed in several locations which include the NYS Dept of Labor, veteran's locations, BOCES, OCC, etc. We have discussed trying to develop a partnership with the City of Syracuse School District, becoming involved in their programs, and trying to capture individuals that have chosen skills training. The cover of HR Magazine this month is entitled The Turnover Tsunami. More work to be done in this area as things settle following COVID.
- Received a grievance from CSEA on Monday, 6/14/2021, indicating a violation of 7.6.1 - On-call for hourly employees. The grievance follows the recent posting of two opportunities for call-duty, as outlined in the Teamster contract for work that is considered Teamster work. Initial meeting is scheduled for June 30, 2021. More to report next month.

VI. FISCAL SERVICES:

- C. Marvin reviewed the Fiscal Services report. Water Revenues were over budget by \$148,000. (3.6%) in May and are under budget by \$198,000. (1.0%) for the year.
- Operating Expenses are \$325,000 less than budgeted for the month. As was the case last month, Labor and Outside Contractors have the largest positive variances at \$133,000 and \$90,000, respectively. The reason for a labor variance includes 13 unfilled positions and overtime being \$41,000 less than budgeted. Much of the contractor variance will be used in future months.
- The refunding of the 2009 EFC Bonds took place on June 15th.
- Normalized consumption for the June 15th billing averaged 840 gallons or 7% less per customer than the

same period in 2020. However, the 2021 budget ignored 2020 when determining residential revenue. It is based on 2019 and 2018. And the June 15th, 2021, amount was 410 gallons or 4% more than the 2019 amount.

- Cash receipts for **May** were much lower (9%) than the May 2019 cash receipts adjusted for rate increases. Cash receipts so far for **June** are a bit lower than 2019.
- Past due Accounts Receivable increased a bit in May but for are still \$107,000 less than the peak of \$1.585 million that we hit at the end of the year.
- The number of delinquent accounts has started to increase again after decreasing for a quarter. They have increased almost but not quite to where they were three months ago.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- MWB Fund Request to Onondaga County – 2022 Budget.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by J. Dougherty, with all Members approving, the Board authorized the request for inclusion of the appropriated fund balance in the 2022 budget for \$1M to increase capacity for service to White Pine Industrial Park.

- Salt Spring Tank project – SEQR Resolution

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by J. Dougherty, with all Members approving, the Board approved the resolution and SEQR action with a classification of an “Unlisted Action” for the Salt Springs Water Storage Tank Improvement Project.

- Rights of Way – Two Rights of Way presented for consideration.

On motion by M. Luber, duly seconded by K. Gardiner, with all Members approving, the Board authorized G. Miller to execute the following:

Project	With	For
4210058	Brolex Properties, LLC	Treybrook, PH, 2, T. VanBuren

9004027	Johnson Liverpool, LLC	4806 E. Taft Road, T. Clay
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- Contractor Main Extension Contract/Job Order –One (1) Job Order(s) and two (2) Contractor Main Extension Contracts presented for consideration.

On motion by B. Doran, duly seconded by M. Luber, with all Members approving, the Board authorized M. Hooker to execute the following:

Project #	Developer/Contractor	Job Title (new Accounts)	Location	Proj. Cost
Main Extensions				
4210058	Brolex Properties, LLC	8" Main Extension (26)	Treybrook, Ph. 2A	\$54,212.50
4210072	Paul Massey	8" Main Extension (1)	7401 Totman Road	\$9,881.25
Job Orders				
9004003	Marion Garden Apts., LLC	8" Main Extension (1)	Marion Meadows, Ph. II	\$8,500.00

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Honeywell Water Systems
G. Miller reported that the meeting scheduled with LaFayette, and Tully and their Engineer was postponed by the town. The two Towns are still working on agreements.
- Executive Director recruitment has concluded.

On motion by B. Doran, duly seconded by M. Luber, with all Members approving, the Board adjourned the regular Board meeting and moved to Executive Session, with only Board Members present, at 2:00 p.m. to discuss matters leading to the employment of particular individuals in the Administration department.

On motion by B. Doran, duly seconded by M. Luber, with all Members approving, the Board adjourned Executive Session and returned to the regular Board meeting at 2:50 p.m.

On motion by J. Bianchini, duly seconded by B. Doran, with all Members approving, the Board authorized the Authority Chair to execute employment agreements with Jeff Brown, Geoff Miller and Andrew Weiss consistent with the terms discussed in executive session.

On motion by J. Bianchini, duly seconded by B. Doran, with all Members approving, the Board authorized the retention of Michael E. Hooker at an hourly rate of \$100 for as-needed consulting services beginning August 10, 2021.

On motion by J. Bianchini, duly seconded by B. Doran, with all Members approving, the Board approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS Michael E. Hooker has served with great distinction as the Executive Director of the Onondaga County Water Authority for nearly twenty-eight years; and

WHEREAS, through his tireless leadership, the size, financial standing and community impact of the Authority has grown substantially; and

WHEREAS the naming of a facility is an appropriate recognition for such a distinguished person; and

WHEREAS the upgrades made to the Otisco Lake Water Treatment Plant were a significant enhancement to the Authority's regional water system and symbolize the wide-ranging capital improvement program led by Executive Director Hooker during his tenure.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Members of the Authority hereby name the Otisco Lake Water Treatment Plant in honor of Michael E. Hooker; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Members of the Authority direct that an appropriate plaque be prepared, and ceremony be held to mark the naming of the Michael E. Hooker Otisco Lake Water Treatment Plant.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by B. Doran, with all Members approving, the Board adjourned the Regular Meeting at 3:00 p.m.

The next Authority meeting is scheduled for Tuesday - July 13, 2021, 1:00 p.m. at Northern Concourse.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laurie Khanzadian, Recording Secretary