

The Onondaga County Water Authority met in regular session on September 15, 2021

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

Others present: J. Brown, G. Miller, C. Marvin, A. Weiss, M. Carbery and A. Allen. Also present for Executive Session, Dean DiPilato and Megan Thomas, attorneys from Mackenzie Hughes, LLP.

I. Call to Order:

- J. Bianchini, Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:40 p.m.
- J. Bianchini thanked Mary Carbery for the overview of Human Resource functions and Amy Allen for explaining her role and responsibilities in the Administration department.

On motion by B. Doran, duly seconded by K. Gardiner, with all Members approving, the Board approved the regular Minutes of August 18, 2021, as presented.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by J. Dougherty, with all Members approving, the Board approved the Minutes of the Special Board meeting held on September 3, 2021.

II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- J. Brown reviewed the Executive Director's report:
- Continue to stress OCWA Core Values, receiving positive feedback.
 - What We Are About:
 - W – Well-being (safety)
 - A – Accountability
 - T – Transparency
 - E – Effort
 - R – Respect
- Reviewed the initiatives underway to strengthen the workplace and support the goal of being the Workplace of Choice among CNY utilities.
- Recruiting initiatives reviewed and presented. Formalizing interview process and procedures providing managers/supervisors with tools to assist them.
- OCWA University is in the development stage with a startup committee soon to be appointed.
- Discussion of OCWA's night crew and plan for its temporary suspension. A large part of the work of the night crew is flushing of

water lines. Work in the winter presents a challenge. Some difficulty with retaining staff on the night shift creating a continuum of training and staffing. After much discussion, a plan will be developed for flushing and valve work and explore the cost of outsourcing work that is performed at night.

- A. Weiss reviewed his recent meeting with the Marcellus Snowmobile Club which was very positive. Currently working through a draft agreement and verifying insurance.
- Continue to develop key performance indicators as well as tracking mechanisms. Charts and graphs will be included.
- Michael E. Hooker Training Center plaque is being ordered and will soon be displayed.
- The RFP for OCWA legal counsel is complete.

III. WATER PRODUCTION & DELIVERY REPORT

- G. Miller reviewed the monthly Water Production and Delivery Report.
- Water system demand and WTP production – The rainy weather has kept demand in the mid 30 MGD range. Production has been about the same and metered ratio has been very good at 86.85%. 85% is our goal and we have exceeded that every month this year
- Otisco Lake level – Tropical storm Fred dumped on us in mid-August raising Otisco Lake level to the highest we have seen since 1972 at 22". We have had the gates open 6" releasing a reasonable flow down Nine Mile Creek and we are now at about -3" about 17" above normal.
- Water quality out of WTPs and in distribution system continues to be very good. Mircrocystin sampling continues to be below detection limits with no blue-green algal issues so far. Distribution system chlorine levels are dropping as they typically do this time of year, but with water temperatures staying higher and demand lower we are seeing chlorine residual levels a little lower than normal. As such we have boosted the chlorine level coming out of Otisco WTP and have increased our flushing efforts.
- System betterment work has slowed due to delays in pipe deliveries, but we still expect to complete all work planned for the year.
- Material deliveries – we are experiencing delays in ductile iron pipe, copper pipe, meter pits and pipe repair materials – no significant impacts at this point. Chemical deliveries – longer order times. Most of the delays are due to a lack of delivery drivers.
- Town District work has been delayed similar to our water main replacement program due to copper pipe and meter pit delivery

delays. Contractors are working on water service installations for each project. Hastings and Clockville are waiting on NYSDOH approval of the installed watermains before customers can be turned on. Potential new customers from the three projects: Hastings 700, Granby 240, Clockville 180. Schroepfel accepted bids on their watermain project last week, bids came in about 20% over the engineers estimate, the award is on hold until they can determine if they can get additional funding or increase the cost to the customers.

IV. CAPITAL PROJECTS:

- A. Weiss reported on capital projects
- Provided a summary description of the Farrel pump station operations.
- Ontario WTP project is out for bid. Two local general contractors have requested plans. Bids due in November.
- Fairmount reservoir construction is going well. The first tank should have water in it by December.

V. HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE/SAFETY:

- Human Resource/Insurance report posted.

VI. FISCAL SERVICES:

- C. Marvin reviewed the Fiscal Services report.
- Bond development is moving along with a projected issue date of April. Board asked management to investigate the potential benefit of moving up the issue date.
- Water Revenues were over budget by \$79,000 (1.5%) in August and are over budget for the year-to-date \$253,000 (.8%). Basically, right on budget
- Operating Expenses are \$385,000 less than budgeted for the month. Significant positive variances continue in Labor and Benefits related to the large number of unfilled positions at the end of the month. Another very large positive variance is in contractor costs which are \$186,000 less than budgeted. Of the total amount, paving is \$75,000 under budget. There has been some dispute on particular invoices. Once resolved the amount will likely be used. Also, Facilities Maintenance had \$40,000 budgeted for vault painting and \$15,000 budgeted for right-of-way clearing that were not used.
- Cash receipts for August were about \$70,000 or 2% more than the August 2019 cash receipts adjusted for rate increases.
- Past due Accounts Receivable decreased by \$45,000 in August and are \$108,000 less than the peak of \$1.585 million that we

hit at the end of 2020. Overall, Accounts Receivable has remained pretty level over the past few months. Receivables, most likely, will not decrease significantly until we reinstitute shut offs.

- Residential consumption for August were significantly less than the same period last year. Once again, it is a good thing that we ignored 2020 when determining the 2021 revenue budget.
- C. Marvin advised the Board that the Excess Reserve policy includes a section on the Use of Excess Reserves. On BoardDocs is a projection of Excess Funds for year-end 2021. Executive staff recommended a few projects which are outlined on BoardDocs and include engineering for Farrell Pump Station improvements, Northern Concourse building improvements and engineering for Tug Hill pump station improvement. These three items totaled \$894,000. Also discussed and included was the purchase of a Vacuum Truck.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by M. Luber, with all Members approving, the Board authorized the spending of excess funds as outlined with the addition of a Vacuum truck, total not to exceed \$2M.

- Updated the Board on a recent email from Tesla indicating that they were going to pay what is outlined for failure to meet a performance guarantee.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

- OCWA Board – Annual Election of Officers - Reviewed the current slate of Board Officers.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by M. Luber, with all Members approving, the Board approved, renewing for another year, the current slate of Officers, without change, as outlined below:

John Bianchini – Chair
John Dougherty – Vice Chair
Kenneth Gardiner - Treasurer
Michael Luber – Secretary
Benedicte Doran - Member

- Brief discussion regarding time spent on Board business and compensation of Board members.
- Flexible Spending Plan – Summary Material Modification

On motion by J. Dougherty, duly seconded by K. Gardiner, with all Members approving, the Board authorized the Summary Material Modification to the Flexible Spending Plan.

- C. Marvin discussed an OCWA shut-off policy and outlined the state laws and related circumstances for shut-offs. Current overview of OCWA with 3,607 delinquent customers with balances more than \$125.00, represent 3.5% of total customers. The 3,607 customers owe a total of \$1,269,126 which is an average of \$352 per account. Following our existing guidelines which include payment arrangements along with exercising judgment should result in positive results on past due balances. The Board expressed no objection to reinstating shutoffs as allowed by state law/regulation.

On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by M. Luber, with all Board members approving, the Board adjourned the regular meeting and moved to Executive Session at 2:25 PM to discuss pending litigation and matters leading to the appointment of legal counsel.

On motion by M. Luber, duly seconded by K. Gardiner, with all Members remaining (3-0 vote) approving, the Board adjourned Executive Session and returned to Regular Session at 3:01 p.m.

On motion by M. Luber, duly seconded by J. Bianchini, with all Members remaining (3-0) approving, the Board adjourned the Regular Meeting at 3:51 p.m.

The next Authority meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 13, 2021, at 12 noon (Budget Workshop) and Wednesday – October 27, 2021, at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Khanzadian, Recording Secretary