

**Onondaga County Water Authority
Regular Monthly Authority Meeting**
200 Northern Concourse, Syracuse NY
Monday February 13, 2023 @12:30 p.m.

Members of the Authority present were J. Bianchini, D. Wickman, and A. Geiss.

Others present: J. Brown, C. Marvin, G. Miller, J. Stowell, M. Thomas, and A. Weiss.

Guest: Fiscal Advisors

1. J. Bianchini led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. J. Bianchini, Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:41 p.m.
3. On a motion by A. Geiss duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Authority approved the regular meeting minutes of January 18, 2023 as presented.

B. Reports

1. Executive Director's Report

- J. Brown reported that conversations with Micron are ongoing. We received some information from the company regarding its projected capacity requirements, but it is not to a level of detail which allows us to develop a detailed capital project schedule. The OCWA team has been evaluating risks and assumptions associated with serving Micron. The next step is to begin a dialogue with County representatives.
- J. Brown, T. Gerlock Latino, and M. Thomas attended AWWA lobby day in Albany. There were productive meetings with our State legislative delegation regarding our MRF grant funding, Micron, civil service reforms, and workforce development.
- B. Andrews is exploring various grant funding opportunities. One project that has been identified as a priority is the Salt Springs Road/Clear Path project. There are significant limitations to the current system. J. Bianchini suggested holding the April Authority meeting at the Clear Path for Veteran's location.
- Reviewed KPI's relating to the following three attributes of Effective Utility Management:
 - Financial Viability
 - Water Source Sustainability
 - Infrastructure Strategy and Performance
- Incidents of COVID cases have decreased.

2. Water Production and Delivery

- On Thursday February 9th, the Otsico Lake Watershed Farmers Advisory Council held a forum at the Otsico Water Treatment Plant.

- Also on February 9th, the Onondaga County Sherriff's Department held a training exercise at OCWA's headquarters. G. Miller stated the Sheriffs have already inquired about holding another training at our headquarters and one at a treatment plant.
- G. Miller advised the Authority that a response has been received from the Department of Health regarding lead and copper testing. The water quality team is reviewing the criteria the DOH provided.
- Water Production: January Daily Water Production (MGD) 34.81.
- Lake Levels: Otisco Lake level is +2.5" as of February 6th, which is about 21" above average for this time of year. G. Miller noted that one gate is open 5". Because there is very little snowpack in the watershed, there are no concerns with the lake level. Lake Ontario is very close to the long-term monthly average. Neither lake level is causing any operational issues.
- Water Main Breaks: G. Miller reported that the number of watermain breaks was below average for January. The mild temperatures have prevented the frost from penetrating too far into the ground, thus keeping breaks down.
- Metered Ratio: The twelve-month metered ratio continues to be above OCWA's goal of 85% at 85.95%. G Miller credited the team effort of all departments to minimize lost water and increase revenue water (operators monitoring the SCADA system closely for odd usages, leak detection finding elusive small leaks, meter repair changing meters, distribution crews quickly responding to breaks, and many other examples).
- Water Quality: Finished water quality from both treatment plants continues to be excellent. Operations and water quality departments have worked hard to keep chlorine levels up throughout the distribution system with the last week of January having 93% of all sample points above 0.20 ppm and over 90% for the entire month.

3. Engineering

- A. Weiss reported that an intern from SUNY ESF is performing jar testing of coagulates at the Otisco Water Treatment Plant.
- Supply chain issues are easing at the Lake Ontario Water Treatment Plant. Large valves are arriving and thus critical path work for the completion of Filter No. 6 will be starting in mid-February. This will allow completion and start-up of the first rebuilt filter around the end of the month.
- Fairmount Reservoir Project –The 6MG West Tank went into service February 2nd and is now operating in parallel with the East Tank. The West Tank will not be formally accepted until the exposed footer can be visually observed. This will happen in the spring when dry, non-freezing conditions are available. Once accepted it will be backfilled and the project completed.

- Salt Springs Tank –The tank remains offline until the contractor determines how they will remedy the VOC contamination. D. Wickman asked if OCWA will be requiring liquidated damages. A. Weiss noted that he anticipates negotiating a close out of the project that will include a settlement.
- A. Weiss advised the Authority that he is working with J. Chamberlain to develop a likelihood of failure model for our watermains utilizing the current GIS data. D. Wickman inquired about failures and the allocation of expense across the district verses per customer.

4. Legal, Public Education, and Government Affairs

- M. Thomas updated the Authority on the MOST exhibit. A committee of OCWA employees and two Authority members has been created to develop the exhibit.
- There continues to be a high level of interest in school tours and presentations.
- M. Thomas reported that in T. Gerlock Latino's short time she has increased Facebook traffic by 87%. T. Gerlock Latino is working on a recruitment video and OCWA Annual Report. She is also updating OCWA's website. This includes updating the Authority group photo. A new photo will be taken at the March meeting.
- An intern from Syracuse University is working on several projects.
- Work continues on the processes for Sole Source and Standardization designation.
- HomeServe will be presenting to the Authority at the April meeting.
- IT Support Tech F. Garcia Toro will be assisting with building a database for insurance certificates.

5. Human Resources

- The Perfect Attendance Luncheon has been scheduled for March 30th. Eight Teamsters are eligible to receive awards.
- Recruitment - J. Stowell updated the Authority on current recruitment efforts.
 - Labor II – candidate starting February 23rd in the Distribution Department. The only vacant position currently in the department is the Vac Truck Operator – Water Maintenance Worker II. J. Stowell is working with C. Deitman and G. Miller to update the job description before the vacancy is reposted.
 - Account Clerk I – two positions have been posted due to retirements. The posting will close at end the of the week.
 - Engineering clerk II – the list is currently being canvassed.
 - Data Analyst – and interview has been conducted and the candidate is being considered.

- The HR Department will be attending the following recruitment events:
 - SUNY ESF – February 16th
 - SUNY Morrisville – March 21st
 - Hard Hat Show – March 22nd and 23rd
 - MACNY and SCSD – March 30th
- J. Stowell and K. Caramanna are meeting with NYSIF and HF&C on February 14th to receive training on the NYSIF claims and training portal.

6. Fiscal Services

- Net Revenue for 2022 increased by about \$134,000 over the preliminary number due to reducing the allowance for doubtful accounts from \$250,000 to \$90,000.
- Water revenues were under budget by \$261,000 or 5.8% for January. That was partially offset by investment income being \$94,000 more than budgeted.
- Net operating expenses were under budget by \$261,000 in January, which is almost the exact same amount that water revenues are under budget. The positive variances are spread across the board, but the electric and gas cost are 27% less than January 2022.
- Expenses were almost \$29,000 less than budgeted for January. This is primarily due to worker's compensation expense, which is about \$25,000 less than budgeted for the month and will continue to be each month throughout the year as the worker's compensation premium is expected to be \$300,000 less than budgeted for the year.
- OCWA has so far received \$69,000 of the \$476,000 levied onto the tax rolls in October.
- Onondaga County is using \$800,000 of MWB's appropriated fund balance for capital improvements in the Skyridge Water District, which includes the Clear Path for Veterans facility.
- MWB is still responsible for paying its debt service, retiree health insurance costs etc. They still collect tax money to pay for some of those costs, but OCWA is responsible for paying the amount necessary to keep the department in balance.
 - A conversation ensued about dialogue with the County and MWB reserves.
- The appropriated fund balance started out at \$6 or \$7 million and it has been used by OCWA over the past few years to reduce the amount of legacy costs that we need to pay to the County. OCWA has been drawing down the fund balance in a gradual and systematic manner. \$1.2 million in 2020, \$1 million in 2021, \$1 million in 2022 (we wanted to use \$800,000 but they increased it to \$1 million) and \$800,000 in 2023. We anticipated using the remaining \$1 million; \$600,000 in 2024 and \$400,000 in 2025. \$800,000 of that million is now gone and only \$200,000 is left. So, OCWA will need to come up with an additional \$800,000 over 2024 and 2025 to cover the amount given to Skyridge.

C. New Business

1. Rights of Way, Main Extension Contracts, & Job Orders

- One (1) contractor main extension. On motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss, with all Members present approving, the Authority authorized J. Brown to execute the following:

Project No.	Developer/Contractor	Job Title	Location	Project Cost
9004118	TDJ Properties	16” Relocation Container	T. Volney	\$25,000.00

- One (1) right of way. On motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss, with all Members present approving, the Authority authorized G. Miller to execute the following:

Project No.	Developer/Contractor	For:	Location
4220066	Cordelle Development	Crowne Pointe Section 5A	T. Volney

2. Expenditure Authorizations

- Were signed without issue.

3. SEQR Type II Declarations

- On motion made by A. Geiss, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Authority declared itself Lead Agency with respect to the SEQRA process, that the review be conducted as an uncoordinated review, and that the work be deemed to be a Type II action under SEQRA for the following:
 - 1) 20” transmission main at Milton Ave
 - 2) Howlett Hill water storage tank Rehab
 - 3) Otisco intake site chem. lines
 - 4) Volney Airport Tank Rehab
 - 5) Volney Seneca Tank Rehab
 - 6) Warners water storage tank replacement

4. North Burdick Street Property

- J. Bianchini presented to the Authority a proposal to exempt the 5427 North Burdick Street property from a requirement in our customer rules. Authority Members engaged in a conversation about the use of the building and impact on the fire suppression. On a motion by A. Geiss, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Authority Members present approving, an exemption was granted to

OCWA - Central New York's Water Authority's Customer Rules for the Sale of Water and the Collection of Rents and Charges ("Customer Rules") sections 3.3 and 5.1 requiring one application for water service and one meter per premise, as defined by Customer Rule 1.1, for the commercial buildings at 5427 North Burdick Street, Town of Manlius (the "Property"). Specifically, the Authority will allow for a single water service and meter to the two commercial buildings at 5427 North Burdick Street, Town of Manlius on the condition that the building permit issued by the Town of Manlius includes the condition that the Property may not be subdivided. If one building changes operating usage or ownership, then a second water service, meter, and appropriate backflow prevention shall be provided. The Authority reserves the right to modify this exemption if the Town of Manlius fails to amend its code to prevent subdivisions of properties with multiple structures and single water services.

D. Unfinished Business

1. No unfinished business

E. Bids

1. Bid #1- 2023

- A. Weiss asked to table Bid #1-2023. The department is still reviewing the information submitted.

Executive Session

- On a motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss, with all Members present approving, the Authority adjourned the regular meeting at 2:14 p.m. and moved into Executive session to discuss matters leading to the employment of a particular individual.
- On a motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss, with all Members present approving, the Authority, adjourned Executive session at 2:34 p.m., and returned to the regular meeting.
- On a motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss, with all Members present approving, the Authority agreed to permit an exemption to the Anti- Nepotism policy and hire Sharon Adams, as a Personnel Aide.
- On a motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss, with all Members present approving, the Authority adjourned the meeting at 2:38 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Authority is scheduled for March 22, 2023 at 12:00 p.m., 200 Northern Concourse, Syracuse.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennie S. Stowell

Recording Secretary