

**Onondaga County Water Authority**  
**Regular Monthly Authority Meeting**  
200 Northern Concourse, Syracuse  
Wednesday September 20, 2023 @ 12:30 p.m.

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

Others present: J. Brown, G. Miller, J. Stowell, M. Thomas and T. Latino-Gerlock.

**A. Board Meeting.**

1. The Pledge of Allegiance.
2. J. Bianchini, Chairman called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.
3. K. Gardiner presented a correction in the minutes of August 18, 2023. Under other business, seconded bullet, there was a correction to spelling. On a motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all members present approving, the Authority approved the corrected regular meeting minutes of August 18, 2023.
4. T. Latino-Gerlock presented a recruitment video. J. Stowell spoke the various ways in which the video can introduce potential candidates to employment opportunities at OCWA. The video highlights many positions and staff members of OCWA. Congratulations to everyone who participated in the video.

**B. Executive Director**

- J. Brown updated the Authority on the status of the draft water services agreement with Micron. A draft is being to Onondaga County for their consultation. Conversations ensued regarding base fee options, bonding and debit service ratios. J. Brown stated that the proposed system improvements are necessary to provide sufficient quantities and redundancy of water to Micron.
- Conversations are ongoing with the City of Syracuse regarding the rate that OCWA is charged for water on Southern Branch. OCWA and other large uses have received an 95% rate increase over a five year period. J. Brown proposed presenting to the City of Syracuse options to limit future rate increases. All Authority members presented agreed.
- The October Authority meetings are scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup> for a budget workshop at Northern Concourse and October 18, 2023 for a regular monthly meeting also at Northern Concourse. The Board will plan to meet at the Ontario Water Treatment Plant in the Spring of 2024.
- KPI's relating to the following three attributes of Effective Utility Management are available on BoardDocs:
  - Customer Satisfaction
  - Community Sustainability
  - Operational Optimization

- Stakeholder Understanding and Support

## **B. Reports**

### **1. Water Production and Delivery**

G. Miller presented the following:

- **Otisco Lake Level** – The lake level is -8” which is about 13” above the long term average.
- **Water Demand** – Demand never picked up from the August rains - we are in the mid 30 MGD range.
- **Watermain Breaks** – Current levels are average for August on a monthly basis but still below average for the year. September is running about average. There was a break on a main in a difficult spot last night in the Village of Manlius. The crew worked into the evening and used our excavator to reach the line. Water was restored before morning.
- **Metered Ratio** – Increased again, now over 88% - this is really a great job by everyone, can’t emphasize enough how this reflects upon the great work that all employees do – highest in over at least 10 years.
- **Solar Power** – The instrumentation staff and electricians have set up three solar powered SCADA facilities at locations where we did not have remote data information.
- **Salt Springs Tank** – 1 MG tank working well. 5 MG tank has been drained, we found what appears to be a bentonite layer in the bottom of the tank used to seal cracks in the floor. There are numerous cracks that need to be repaired. The overflow pipes were worse than expected. Staff is still evaluating the best repair method.

### **2. Engineering**

G. Miller presented on the following:

- **LOWTP** – Facilities and mechanical work is going well. The two new contact basins and filters 5 and 6 are working great. Work is progressing well on contact basin 1 and filter 4. We are having problems with several of the new valves and/or actuators. There are several different types of issues related to over torque, under torque, improper seat adjustments/stops, factory testing, and setup. Conversations are going with manufacturers, suppliers and installers.
- **Terminal Reservoir Pipe Repairs** – Pipe conditions were worse than expected, but we made repairs to the west side, now working on the east side, working through difficulties w/ contractor, work going slow.
- **Eastern PS electrical** – Our in-house electricians are working with our engineer and contractor to develop a plan to replace equipment and upgrade some of the electrical work.

- **Nine Mile Creek** – Bank stabilization just downstream from the dam is complete, work went very well.
- **Howlett Hill Tank** -Repairs are complete and the tank is back in service – operating w/o tank was difficult and probably some of the reason for increased watermain breaks in August.
- **Developer work** – We are starting to see increased interest in developers due to Micron. CNYRPDB is resurrecting a study they did a few years ago on attributes for several business parks and sites available for development. Our Engineering Department is working with them to provide information on available pressures and flows.
- **DE Tarolli** – The company has indicated it probably isn't interested in extending it's contract for another year, which means we will need to rebid the contract.

### **3. Human Resources and Insurance**

- Recruitment is especially active. Many vacancies are due to internal promotions or transfers, retirements, and resignations.
- The Civil Service law has been amended to include provisional time as in the position if the candidate successfully passes the exam when offered. This is a huge victory for the staff at OCWA, some who have been in provisional status for more than three years, because NYS has not offered a test. J. Brown and T. Latino-Gerlock continue to have dialogue with various NYS representatives regarding further Civil Service reform.
- J. Stowell shared with Authority members a recruitment palm card and pen that will be used at various recruitment events and career fairs.
- OCWA and the Teamsters met on September 12<sup>th</sup> to continue negotiations on the CBA that expires December 31, 2023.

### **4. Legal/Public Education/Communications**

#### **Legal**

- A contract has been entered into with OnSolve, the emergency response system. An internal committee has been established to develop goals and a timeline for implementation.
- M. Thomas is continuing to review PFAS litigation.
- A complaint will be filed in State Supreme Court soon, outlining the Authority's position related to events in January 2022 in the Village of Sylvan Beach and a Village hired contractor.

#### **Public Education and Communications**

- The MOST exhibit How Your Water Works was unveiled this month and has received very positive attention from the community. We had excellent attendance at the unveiling ceremony, including the County Executive. Children visiting the MOST have really enjoyed the water table and other community members have been very interested in learning about OCWA.

**5. Fiscal Services**

J. Brown presented the following:

- Departmental proposed 2024 O&M and capital budgets have been consolidated by J. Hartwell, reviewed by G. Miller and C. Marvin and submitted to J. Brown for his review. They will be reviewed with the Board at the Budget workshop in early October.
- Water revenues were \$399,093 (7.7%) less than budgeted and net operating expenses were \$131,211 (3.9%) less than budgeted for August.
- Investment Income is \$179,509 (159.4%) more than budgeted for the month and \$1,104,023 (122.5%) more than budgeted for the year. The variance is mainly due to unanticipated money market rate increases from 1.91% to 5.12% and the 3-month T-bill rate increases from 2.96% to 5.56%. Note that while the increase in investment income helps the bottom line, it does not affect debt service coverage because investment income is a non-operating income and the debt service coverage calculation only takes into account operating revenue.
- Net Operating Expenses were \$131,211 (3.9%) less than budgeted for August and are \$1,454,517 (5.8%) less than budgeted for the year-to-date. In addition, Net Operating Expenses are \$756,364 (3.3%) more than through August 2022.

**C. New Business**

**1. Expenditure Authorizations**

- Were signed without issue.

**2. Main Extension & Job Order**

- *Two (2)* Main Extension. On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Authority members present approving, the Authority authorized J. Brown to execute the following:

<b>Job No.</b>	<b>With</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Proj. Cost</b>
4230070	Christopher Madia	8" Ext. Wilson Point Road	\$15,362.50
4230071	Domenic & Deanne Valone	8"x10" Ext Pools Brook WD	\$13,841.25

- *Four (4)* Job Contract(s). On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Authority members present approving, the Authority authorized J. Brown to execute the following:

<b>Job No.</b>	<b>With</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Proj. Cost</b>
9004138	B&C Storage	6" Fire Service	\$13,000.00
9004140	Hematology-Oncology Associates	6", 8"& 12" Ext Wellington Planned Community	\$27,500.00
9004143	Fayette Manlius LLC	Direction Drill for 2" service	\$17,500.00
9004145	Fayette Manlius LLC	Direction Drill for 2" service	\$17,500.00

**3. Salt Springs Tank Project Change Order No. 1**

G. Miller proposed the following change order:

- The purpose of this change order is to reconcile quantities for miscellaneous additional work, unit price items and engineering charges related to the defective work and delay in completion. The contract price will be reduced by \$125,844.38 based on the following deducts. The total Cash Allowance used (Field Order 1) is \$11,160.00, leaving \$63,840 of the \$75,000.00 allowance to be deducted from the contract total. A total of \$2,400.00 for unused Additional Rock Excavation is to be deducted from the contract total. The engineering charges related to the defective work and Contractor delay beyond the specified substantial completion total \$59,604.38 which will also be deducted from the contract total. Substantial Completion was achieved August 1, 2023 and in-lieu of the accrued Liquidated Damages (\$600,000), Owner is accepting the aforementioned deduct for engineering charges. Additionally, the Final Completion date has been changed to 60 days after the date Substantial Completion was issued.

On a motion made by A. Geiss, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Authority members present approving, the Authority approved change order no. 1 for contract E-2021 as presented.

**4. Micron Phase One (1) Capital Work and Rates**

- Authority members continued the conversation from earlier in the in meeting regarding capital improvements, debit ratio and rates.

**5. Lease for Operation of Water District Hamilton Brown/Brushnell Shore Road – T/O Sullivan**

- On motion by K. Gardiner, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Authority members present approving, the Authority approved the Lease for the Operation of Water District Hamilton Brown/Brushnell Shore Road in the Town of Sullivan as presented.

## **6. Annual Meeting**

- Authority members discussed the agenda of by-law annual review, delegated powers resolution review, procurement policy review, appointment term review and committee assignments. Action was tabled until the next meeting.
- J. Bianchini announced that he will not seek a re-nomination as Authority Chair. He has served in the role for 10 years and it is time to pass the responsibility on to another member. He thanked the Authority members and the Executive team for their support and is looking forward to continuing to serve the rate payers as a member of the Authority Board.
- OCWA Board – Annual Election of Officers –  
On motion by J. Bianchini, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Board approved Ken Gardiner as Chair.

On motion by A. Geiss, duly seconded by K. Gardiner, with all Members present approving, the Board approved John Bianchini as Treasurer.

On motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by J. Bianchini, with all Members present approving, the Board approved Anthony Geiss as Vice Chair.

On motion by D. Wickman, duly seconded by A. Geiss with all Members presented approving, the Board approved Benedicte Doran as Secretary.

## **D. Executive Session**

- On motion by A. Geiss, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Board adjourned the regular Board meeting at 2:15 p.m. and moved to Executive session to discuss the matters leading the employment of a particular individual, collective bargaining negotiations and matter leading to the reappointment of a particular individual.
- On a motion by A. Geiss, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Authority adjourned Executive session at 3:00 p.m. and returned to the regular meeting.
- On a motion by A. Geiss, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Authority agreed to authorize an exemption to OCWA's Anti- Nepotism policy and hire Samuel Sgroi Jr as a Laborer II in Operations.
- On a motion by J. Bianchini, duly seconded by D. Wickman, with all Members present approving, the Authority adjourned the meeting at 3:01 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Authority is scheduled for October 18, 2023 at 12:30 p.m., at 200 Northern Concourse, Syracuse. The 2024 budget workshop meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2023 at 12:00 p.m. at 200 Northern Concourse, Syracuse.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennie S. Stowell  
Recording Secretary