

**WHITEMARSH TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OCTOBER 18, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Meeting of the Board of the Whitemarsh Township Authority of October 18, 2023, was called to order by Chairman Timothy Ferris at 7:00 p.m. and held in person at the Whitemarsh Township Authority office located at 2015 Joshua Road, Lafayette Hill, Pennsylvania 19444.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Ferris led the Board and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

*Board Members Present:*

Timothy Ferris – Chairman  
Jonathan Reisberg – Vice Chairman  
Jeannette Quirus – Secretary  
Jori Broad – Treasurer  
Gene Swider – Assistant Secretary/Treasurer (Not Present)

*Also in Attendance:*

Michael Clarke, Esquire – Rudolph Clarke, LLC  
Allen Mason, P.E. – Carroll Engineering Corp.  
Brent Wagner – Executive Director  
Thomas Bonjo – Operations Manager  
Laurie Hagey – Director of Finance

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

**CONFIRMED APPOINTMENTS**

**Rate Study** - Robert Grimm, Senior Consulting and Management Strategist at Herbert, Rowland & Grubic, Inc. (HRG), presented the Sewer Rate Study they performed on behalf of the Authority. Mr. Grimm explained the details of their 22-page report outlining the Authority's service area and current rate structure, our revenue requirements, future capital project needs and debt service. Options were given for rate increases which align with the future needs of the Authority. Comparisons were made to other area Municipal Authorities showing the low rates currently held by the Whitemarsh Authority.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the potential rate increase and options for how to implement an increase, and when. Concerns from the Board were expressed and questions were answered as to why an increase is undoubtedly required and when it should be implemented to begin building capital to meet future operational demands. Mr. Wagner reported the expenses to the Authority created by the Ridge Pike Road Project are a factor in the need for the increase, as well as other Capital Project needed. The members of the Board were acutely aware of the impact a rate increase will have on

the community and explored each option in great detail to determine the best possible plan for the Authority and the community.

The Board thanked Mr. Grimm and HRG for their efforts to prepare the Rate Study and their recommendation for the successful future of the Authority and its customers. The Board requested additional time to review the Rate Study and to discuss the Rate Study again at the November meeting of the Board.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Reisberg and seconded by Ms. Quirus to approve the Minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting of the Board. The motion unanimously carried.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **ENGINEER'S REPORT**

**Sludge Dewatering Facilities** – Mr. Mason reported on a Final Change Order which would provide for additional paving needed at the Dewatering building. Mr. Mason stated that when the electrical contractors ran a Power Study at these facilities, they discovered a problem with a transfer switch that belongs to the Township but is located in the Authority's garage. The Authority sent a letter to the Township informing them of the situation and the financial impact for them to make the necessary modifications to bring the transfer switch into compliance with electrical codes.

**Ridge Pike Widening** – Mr. Mason reported that the Authority may have to relocate a portion of Pump Station #8's force main as it may interfere with the placement of the proposed storm sewer. The County's engineer is currently reviewing alternatives to avoid this from happening.

**Miscellaneous** - Mr. Mason reported that he received a telephone call from a potential buyer of David's Bridal in Conshohocken who would like to turn the building into 185 apartments. Nothing official has been received by the Authority regarding this.

**Tapping Fee Recalculation** - Mr. Wagner asked Mr. Mason if he and Carroll Engineering would be able to do a recalculation of the Authority's Tapping Fees. Mr. Mason stated they would be able to do that calculation.

#### **WASTEWATER MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Wagner verbally updated the Board on the status of plant operations.

#### **SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Clarke had nothing to report.

#### **MANAGER'S REPORT**

**New Hire** - Mr. Wagner reported a new Operator was hired for the sewer facility and he started on October 16th. Mr. Wagner stated this employee has industry experience and although he is not yet licensed in wastewater, he does have a CDL.

**Auto-Dialer System** - Mr. Wagner reported he is working on implementing a new mobile phone-based call out system for all pump stations. Mr. Wagner stated by changing over to this system, thereby eliminating big carriers, the Authority will be saving approximately \$50,000 a year. This system will allow alarms to be sent to employees via text messages, emails and phone calls. Mr. Wagner will have a detailed analysis prepared to present at next month's meeting to demonstrate the cost savings.

**Audit Services** - Ms. Hagey reported an RFP for auditing services for 2023 was sent out and requested responses by September 29th. Ms. Hagey summarized the results and included them in the meeting packet for Board review. The recommendation was to appoint Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC, as the cost savings will be significant. As such, the following motion was made:

**Motion to Appoint Auditing Firm** – A motion was made by Mr. Ferris, seconded by Mr. Reisberg, to appoint Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC as the Authority's auditor for 2023 for a term of one year, at a cost of \$15,5000, unanimously carried.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Ms. Hagey reported the Residential Billing was created and distributed, with those invoices being due by October 31.

Ms. Hagey reported the Commercial Billing will be prepared when readings from Aqua are received, which should be early to mid-November.

**Approval of Monthly Expenditures** – A motion was made by Mr. Ferris, seconded by Ms. Broad, to pay the expenditures as presented in the amount of \$152,905.23, unanimously carried.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.