

Towanda Municipal Authority

March 18, 2024

The March meeting of the Towanda Municipal Authority was called to order by Mr. Walsh at 5:05 p.m.

PRESENT: Michael Walsh, Carmen Venezia, Fred Johnson, Roger Hatch, Joseph Snell, Robert Williams-WTMA Chairman

ABSENT: Mark Christini, Katrina Murray, William Shaw

OTHERS: Lauren Hotaling, Borough Manager; Matthew Aikey, Superintendent; Eric Casanave, Stiffler McGraw; Morgan Madden, (via zoom) Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC; Shane Walker; Erik Berggren, The Daily Review

Visitors: None

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Minutes:

The February 26, 2024 meeting minutes were approved as amended; Ian Whinnery and Shane Walker were added as in attendance at the February meeting, Mr. Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Snell, approved.

Bills:

The February bills were approved on a motion made by Mr. Venezia, and seconded by Mr. Johnson, approved.

Water:

Ms. Hotaling stated that the EPA is requiring PFAS testing, our first test came back non-detect; this is a quarterly report from the spring and treatment plant per Mr. Walker.

Our DEP monthly reporting will be deficient for the month of February for chlorine residual testing. We did not get the required testing for the month; we will have to do a reporting for our customers for this deficiency. Mr. Hatch inquired if we have a master list of what testing needs completed; Ms. Hotaling stated yes, we have a list of the monthly and quarterly testing required. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Strickland and/or Mr. Tabor need to be consulted; Mr. Walker stated that it was Mr. Tabor's job to inform the personnel whom he trained prior to his leaving of the testing required.

Mr. Johnson stated that contacting Mr. Strickland or Mr. Tabor would save the Authority money; instead of contacting engineers or other companies in regard to the water plant; Mr. Walker stated he contacted PALL the manufacture of the system, Mr. Walker stated that there are maintenance issues at the plant that were not addressed. Mr. Walker stated that Mr. Maynard and Mr. Ackley have been in contact with Mr. Strickland/Mr. Tabor. Mr. Johnson's stated that it would be much easier if we contact them for assistance.

Thomas Street PRV:

Ms. Hotaling stated that we received our extension on this project, until June in 2025. Mr. Walsh inquired if we are ready to go out to bid on the project; Mr. Casanave stated that within the next couple of months yes, we will.

Mr. Johnson stated that this is needed due to the pressure that is involved in getting the water to the tank, the PRV needs addressed, it was installed in the 80's.

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EPA Service Line Inventory:

Ms. Hotaling stated we have to have we have approximately 1250 properties inventoried we have to have 90% done by October.

Sewer:

Mr. Casanave stated that they are done with the preliminary design. We are looking in the coming months to go out for our permits. Stiffler is making it available for Mr. Walker to review. There is a \$2,000.00 permit fee required and everything is being submitted online, we have to explore ways to pay online.

The Geo Technical report for the headworks came back, we are going to have to excavate to 20ft at an approximate cost of \$100,000.00 to \$150,000.00. Mr. Walsh inquired if this will be added to the cost of the project; Mr. Casanave stated it will be added when we go to Penn Vest for funding. Mr. Hatch inquired if the excavation needs to be landfilled; Mr. Casanave stated it was not deemed hazardous it just needs to be moved off site; Mr. Walker stated that the last time the fill was sent across the river to the Haggerty property for the indoor tennis court. Mr. Johnson stated the property was an old landfill so he is not surprised they are finding items but there is a lot of modified on the site as well.

Mr. Venezia inquired if we have a Gantt chart for this project, Mr. Casanave stated no, but he can provide one; Mr. Venezia stated he did not want one made; Mr. Casanave stated he has a spreadsheet.

Mr. Venezia asked for the timeline from DEPTo review the project; Mr. Casanave stated they have 120 days; he does not think they will take that long.

Matt Aikey:

Ms. Hotaling introduced Mr. Aikey as the Public Works Superintendent; he started March 4th.

HallockShannon P.C:

Ms. Hotaling stated HallockShannon was in to review our accounts , no findings at this time, we will await the final audit.

Rules and Regulations:

Ms. Hotaling stated that the Rules and Regulations were circulated last month, Ms. Maynard made some comments for Ms. Madden, Ms. Hotaling did not hear from anyone else for comment. Ms. Madden stated the Board might want to consider adding language for the process when we are refused access to our equipment (meters). There is language in the code but our own procedure should be defined in the rules and regulations.

Mr. Aikey stated he was given a copy of the rules and regulations last week and would like time to review them.

Mr. Johnson requested we table the issue and also provide a copy to our engineer to review as well. Ms. Hotaling stated she would provide a copy to him.

Ms. Hotaling stated she also wants the solicitor for the Borough to update the ordinance as it only has TMA and North Towanda as the only members of the Board.

Mr. Walsh questioned Ms. Madden if the rules need to be reviewed by our Townships and Boroughs; Ms. Madden stated no they have wording in their ordinances to give TMA the rights to enforce the rules and regulations they set forth. Ms. Madden stated we can circulate to them our rules and regulations so they are aware of them.

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Delinquent list:

Mr. Walsh stated the list looks a little better; Ms. Maynard stated that being able to start the lien process has helped with getting accounts paid or a lien filed. Ms. Maynard did state that the Bell property is going up for judicial sale so we will lose our lien if that occurs. Mr. Walsh indicated the payment plans we have; Ms. Maynard stated they are being kept so far.

Concerns:

Mr. Walker questioned Mr. Johnson if he had concerns about the water plant. Mr. Johnson stated that yes, he does have concerns and they have not been addressed. Mr. Venezia questioned if we have a list of tests that need to be done and specifications, Mr. Walker stated yes but the testing is different from water and sewer. Mr. Johnson stated that we were informed that Mr. Whinnery was going to be running the plant; Ms. Hotaling stated that they have talked to Mr. Whinnery about it; Mr. Johnson stated is Mr. Whinnery hesitant about that; Ms. Hotaling stated yes; Mr. Johnson asked is that why Mr. Walker is running the plant; Ms. Hotaling stated yes. Mr. Walker stated that when this started Mr. Whinnery did not have his water license, so they are using his; Mr. Ayres had shown interest in the water plant, but he is no longer employed, Mr. Ayres was supposed to concentrate on the water plant, Mr. Walker would concentrate on reporting and testing and the other personnel were to do the system testing.

Mr. Johnson stated he is more concerned with “having all our eggs in one basket”.

Projects:

Mr. Walsh stated that he would like to prioritize projects that we have already done the leg work on and to continue to get them accomplished. Ms. Hotaling stated she did give them to Mr. Aikey last week. Mr. Walsh stated that maybe we should lump them together and try to go after funding.

Mr. Walsh stated that our tanks need inspected as well, Ms. Hotaling stated we have a quote on that. Mr. Johnson stated they were inspected a year after Wysox water system was completed. Mr. Johnson stated they should be inspected every year visually, but the internal inspection needs completed. Mr. Casanave will provide Ms. Hotaling with other companies to get quotes from. Mr. Snell stated that maybe we can reach out to the private sector as well and get a better deal with them coming to the area to inspect tanks.

Adjournment

As there was nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 5:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
April Maynard
Recording Secretary