

The February 22, 2021 regular monthly meeting of the Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority was called to order by Chairman Sherrock at 6:30 PM via videoconference. All participating in the videoconference gave a pledge of allegiance. Chairman Sherrock welcomed new Board Member, Rocco Formica, representing the City of Hazleton.

February 17, 2021 Work Session Roll Call:

Ammon – Absent ²	Formica – Present ¹	Gallagher – Present ¹
George – Present ¹	Grink – Present ¹	Milot – Present ¹
Sherrock – Present ¹	Sullivan – Present ¹	Zola – Present ¹

Also in Attendance during Work Session:

¹ Gregory Olander – Director of Administration	¹ Andy Nowak – Field Operations Manager
¹ Christopher Carsia – Director of Operations	¹ Attorney Joseph D. Ustynoski – Solicitor
¹ Rachel Govelovich, P.E. – Gannett Fleming	¹ Robert Dougherty, P.E. – RJD Engineering
¹ Gene Zynel – Plant Operations Manager	

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¹ via Videoconference

²Board Member Ammon entered the Work Session during the Director of Operations Report

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment received prior to or during the meeting to be presented.

Milot & George moved to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2021 Pension Meeting. Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

Milot & George moved to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2021 Regular Monthly Meeting. Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

Pension Committee Report

Gerald Grink gave a summary of the Pension Committee Meeting. He said the Authority's Actuarial Consultant, Peter Karapelou, reported that his firm, Beyer-Barber, Inc. was merging with another company with several offices throughout the country as part of their succession planning. He said the firm will be Foster & Foster, Inc. going forward and he will continue to work for the firm for the next two years. He said Mr. Karapelou noted that there would be no increase to their consulting fees over the next two-year period. He stated that the actuarial assumption rate of investment return was reduced from 7.5% to 6.5% last year as directed and the effects of that reduction will be calculated in the January 1, 2021 Actuarial Valuation, which is calculated every two years to set the Minimum Municipal Obligation (MMO) for the upcoming two-year period. He said the Authority currently has

a funding ratio of about 88% due to the additional made to fund the plan above the MMO the past three years. He then noted that the pension portfolio had a net return rate of approximately 13% during 2020.

Sullivan & Milot moved to accept the Pension Committee Report.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Director of Operations Report - MONTHLY FLOW REPORT

	<u>January 2021</u>		<u>Year to Date</u>		
			<u>Total</u>		<u>Average</u>
Total Flow	246,554,725	Gallons	246,554,725	Gallon	xxxxx
Total Flow Bypassed	686,499	Gallons	686,499	Gallon	xxxxx
Days Flow Bypassed	2	Days	2	Days	xxxxx
Total Flow Treated	245,868,226	Gallons	245,868,226	Gallon	xxxxx
Average Minimum	5.5	MGD	xxxxx	xxxxx	5.5 MGD
Average Maximum	10.5	MGD	xxxxx	xxxxx	10.5 MGD
Average Daily Flow	7.9	MGD	xxxxx	xxxxx	7.9 MGD

During the Work Session, the Director of Operations, Christopher Carsia, reviewed the wastewater flows for January 2021 as presented in the monthly flow report. He also reported that the total volume of wastewater diverted from all point sources for the month was estimated to be 7.015 million gallons with 0.686 million gallons of treated outflow diverted at the treatment plant. He said approximately 0.564 million gallons of the total diverted flow was treated outflow from the Autumn & Ridge CSO Separator. He said the flow to the treatment plant was recorded at 246.5 million gallons with approximately 245.9 million gallons being treated. He also stated that the average daily flow to the treatment plant for the month was 7.9 MGD.

Christopher reported that the revenues for January 2021 were \$1,123,555.49, which was a 6.5% decrease from the prior year. He said the billing for hauled waste received in January totaled \$141,510.66, which is a decrease of 15.8% from the same month in the prior year. Gregory Olander stated that customer revenues remain depressed at 96.6% of billing due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic and he reminded the Board that penalties were still not being applied to customer accounts for paying after the due date. He said the lower collections are not lost revenue, they are still being billed, but the accounts receivable balance continues to grow because delinquent collections processing has been suspended. Board Member Zola asked how much the lower collection rate equates to in dollars. Gregory responded that 1% in collections equals approximately \$120,000, so collecting 95% of billings would increase the accounts receivable by about \$600,000. Gregory then asked the Board if they reviewed the form letter he drafted to send to customers. He recommended beginning to apply penalties again in the spring of 2021 and noted that the letter also informs customers that the delinquent processing procedures would also resume. He said this is just a way to get some additional payments to try reducing the uncollected balance before it increases to a level more difficult to manage for many customers. The Board instructed Gregory to send the letter to customers as drafted with penalties being applied after the May 2021 billing.

Christopher then reported that Gene Zynel was looking at a few new hauled waste revenue sources due to the recent downturn in hauled waste business. Board Member Zola asked for an explanation of why there was a downturn. Christopher responded that it was due in part to loss of a few high revenue accounts along with businesses slowing down because of COVID-19. Gene stated that some waste that was taken before incineration went online has now been rejected because it is no longer compatible with new processes at the treatment plant. Gene said the Fats, Oils, and Grease (FOG) business is also down due to COVID and a ceiling of what can be accepted before causing the incinerator to burn too hot. Gene said some brine wastes were no longer accepted because they are not compatible with incineration. Board Member Zola asked if there was any way to correct continued loss of accounts. Christopher responded that installation of a high strength waste tank to distribute the high strength waste uniformly over time, would allow the Authority to accept more high revenue generating accounts without disrupting the treatment process. Gene reviewed several potential high strength waste accounts that have recently inquired about discharging at the Authority's treatment plant. The Board instructed Gregory Olander and Gene Zynel to investigate equipment needed to accept hauled-in high strength waste for future discussion.

Christopher then reported that he received a call from the owner of Biros Septics & Drain Cleaning regarding capacity of trucks discharging at the plant. Christopher noted that discharge volume being billed is generally measured as truck capacity and those volumes are periodically compared to the flow monitoring readings recorded in the Authority's SCADA system.

Christopher also reported that there was another alarm from the radiation detection equipment on February 11, 2021. He said the Health Physicist was contacted and upon his arrival onsite on February 12, 2021 he was able to identify the isotope. He said the alarm was triggered by a common medical isotope, Iodine -131 (I-131) that is expected to break down to a level that will not set off the alarm in about 8 days. The Health Physicist noted that the levels recorded are at a very low dose rate and most likely the Authority would continue having nuisance alarms from 3 isotopes commonly used in the medical field. He said the Authority may want to change their Radiation Protection Action Plan to accept higher levels of those three (3) medical isotopes. Christopher stated that changing the action plan would need to be approved by the State before the Authority could accept the higher levels. Board Member Zola stated that he is not in favor of accepting higher levels of radioactive material and the Board should be cautious about lowering the bar on hauled waste being accepted. Gregory Olander noted that the company hauling the waste is ultimately responsible for disposal if the Authority rejects a load. He said a PA Department of Transportation (DOT) exemption is needed to move the truck off premises once the alarm activates. He said based on the Radiation Protection Action Plan, the isotope must be identified before the truck may be moved, which requires the services of a Health Physicist each time it happens. Board Member Zola asked if that was an Authority requirement or a State requirement. Gregory responded that it is a State requirement. Board Member Zola said the Authority should continue with the bar set high for acceptance of hauled waste. Christopher noted that he is not aware of any other treatment plant in the state that accepts liquid hauled waste only after it is monitored by a radiation detector, so the bar is already set high for acceptance of outside hauled waste.

Christopher then reported that natural gas usage for the sludge incineration has been significantly less than what was originally anticipated because the incinerator continues to burn autogenously (without the need for supplemental fuel) most of the operating time. He said the billing discrepancy with UGI

as previously reported to the Board has still not been resolved; however, they were very helpful correcting an issue with low gas flow through a regulator at the rear of the Control Building.

Christopher then reported on the repair work beginning on the 60-inch CSO overflow line at the rear of the Hazleton Area High School. He said a D8 dozer and a larger excavator have been mobilized and excavation of the pipe down about 40' below grade will begin next week. Andy Nowak stated that the replacement pipe was delivered on February 17, 2021 and is now onsite.

Gregory Olander reported that the first of the high chrome suction covers for the three (3) Locust Street pumps was installed by the Maintenance Department. He said they also completed various repair and replacements during the month. He then reported that the maintenance staff completed tuning of the WESP prior to stack testing under the remote direction of the equipment manufacturer. He said the stack testing seemed to go well, but the results won't be known until the stack testing company compiles their report. He said Gene continues work on creating the training modules with 360water, Inc. and 5 of the 9 modules are near ready for use by the staff.

Gregory then reported the Optimum Controls Corporation (OCC) has continued their work to complete the SCADA Server Upgrade Project and they are now working on punch list items. He said the failover test is scheduled for March 8, 2021 so he is hopeful the project will be fully completed in March. Gregory then reported on the 2020 WWTP Upgrade Project and stated that a pre-construction meeting was held on February 11, 2021. He said clarifier equipment is expected to be delivered on or about April 1, 2021. Gregory also reported that the flow report that was sent to DEP to quantify the flow reductions due to completion of the Button Bock CSO Project. He said in order to avoid a potential problem with DEP accepting the flow reduction results for the next project separating combined sewers discharging to the Locust Street Pump Station, he recommends installing a flow meter on the Locust Street Pump Station discharge to record flows before and after the separation project. He said an equipment manufacturer was contacted to determine the feasibility of installing a meter at the station. He said after pricing is received, he will report back to the Board.

Gregory then gave another update on management and safety practices being implemented by the Authority due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the billing office remains closed to walk-ins and asked the Board for their input on whether to reopen the billing office for in person payments. The Board agreed that the office should remain closed to walk-in customers at this time. Gregory asked the Board for direction on the additional paid sick leave under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), which was no longer mandatory as of December 31, 2020. He said at the January 13, 2021 Special Meeting, the Board extended the additional paid sick leave for its employees through February 28, 2021. After some discussion by the Board, **Gallagher & Grink** moved to discontinue the additional paid sick for COVID-19 qualifying events as listed in the FFCRA as of February 28, 2021.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

George & Gallagher moved to accept the Director of Operation's Report and to have the written report on diverted flows made a permanent part of the record.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Engineer's Report – During the Work Session, Robert Dougherty referenced a written report that was sent to the Board. He gave a brief summary of the Mill Street CSO Closure Flow Report that was sent to DEP. He said the report shows a decrease of 950,000 gallons at the treatment plant influent flow meter during the 1 ½ hour period the sluice gate was closed on January 4, 2019. He said that six-month periods before and after the closure with nearly identical rainfall totals were analyzed for average flows to the treatment plant during each period. He said the result was a 890,000 gallon decrease in flow at the treatment plant after the closure. Robert noted that DEP is proposing a 25% giveback for the flow reduction, but in the report, he requested a 50% return of flow (EDUs). He then reported that mapping continues in Hazleton Area 2 & 3 for the design of the Locust Street CSO Separation Project. He then stated that there has been a temporary pause to the dye testing and smoke testing in Hazleton Area 10 due to the snow.

During the Work Session, Rachel Govelovich referenced a written Engineer's Report that was distributed to the Board. She reported that there has been no change regarding the Authority's NPDES Permit renewal. She then reported on the Incinerator Project. She said PENNVEST submission #8 was being worked on and would be submitted when completed. Rachel reported on one remaining construction related issue. She said the issue with the roof spray system operation is being worked on by SUEZ engineering staff, but it still has not been resolved. She said the O&M Manuals and As-Built drawings from Ronca are still open items that need to be received before that contract can be closed. Rachel stated that stack testing took place the week of January 25, 2021 and the WESP tuning was performed the week prior to the test. She said the results of the stack test should be received by mid-March for submission to DEP and based on the test results, operational minimum limits will be set in the Authority's operating permit and air modeling will be performed as required. Rachel then reported on additional air quality items for the incinerator. She said there is one remaining item in the CEMS Phase III approval process, which is the reporting format. She said some of the reports are still being fine-tuned to comply with DEP's specifications and once the CEMS is certified by DEP, the reports from 2020 will need to be manually reviewed and changed to comply with their reporting requirements. She said the Air Quality Division of her firm is preparing reports as required by DEP and EPA as listed on the written engineer's report. She also noted that quotes were being received for the required annual RATA testing, which needs to be performed before the end of the third quarter. Rachel said there were no payment estimates on the agenda for approval this month relative to the incinerator project.

Rachel then reported on the SCADA Upgrade Project. She said the contractor is working to reconfigure the existing primary server as the new back-up server and currently there are a few punch list items being worked on before the project can be closed.

Rachel then reported that the LSA Grant Application submitted for the Locust Street CSO Separation – Area 3 in the amount of \$1,900,000 may be considered at the June 2021 CFA Board Meeting.

Rachel also reported on the 2020 WWTP Improvements Project. She said Change Order #1 is on the agenda in the amount of \$7,665.00 for Board consideration relative project modifications to connect existing WAS and RAS piping lines to the new final clarifier mechanisms. She recommended the Board approve the change.

Rachel then reported that the annual reports were being worked on for submission prior to the deadlines as listed in the written engineer's report.

George & Milot moved to accept the Engineer's Report.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Solicitor's Report – Attorney Ustynoski stated that in addition to what was reported in executive session during the Work Session, the meeting regarding the employee discipline was postponed until Thursday, February 25, 2021.

Gallagher & George moved to accept the Solicitor's report.

Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

BILLS AND CREDITS

George & Gallagher moved to approve payment of Gannett Fleming, Inc. invoices and requisitions through January 29, 2021, totaling \$7,577.10 as listed in the following table:

<u>Requisition#</u>	<u>Invoice #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Operating Fund	051153.A*109310	Annual Service Work	1,641.24
Operating Fund	051153.B*109311	Attending Authority Meetings	232.41
Operating Fund	051153.C*109312	Chapter 94 Report	710.04
Operating Fund	051153.D*109313	Pretreatment Program	413.58
Operating Fund	051153.03*109307	Hazle Creek Development	370.27
Operating Fund	051153.04*109308	2020 SCADA Upgrade	2,341.94
Operating Fund	051153.39*109309	2020 WWTP Improvements	1,867.62
Total			7,577.10

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Gallagher & George moved to approve payment of Gannett Fleming, Inc. Invoice #048847.C0*109306, in the amount of \$21,476.51, from professional services rendered through January 29, 2021 relative to the following Incinerator Project items: Incinerator-PENNVEST (\$232.41), Air Permitting during Construction (\$16,274.92), and Construction Administration (\$6,420.92).

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Gallagher & Sullivan moved to authorize payment from the Operating Fund for Operating and Administrative Expenses (\$852,960.62); Construction in Progress (\$19,150.66); Debt Service Series 2018 Bond - BB&T (\$18,362.29); Debt Service Pennvest Loan #27906 (\$11,152.44); Debt Service Pennvest Loan #27769 (\$172,675.90); and Debt Service Pennvest Loan #58103 (\$3,426.99) from the month of January 2021.

Roll Call: Ammon-no*, Formica-abstain, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 6-2-1)

**Board Member Ammon votes no for all bills except those for the HCA for which he abstains.*

Gallagher & Grink moved to approve issued credits report totaling \$1,003.02 from the month of January 2021.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

NEW BUSINESS

Gallagher & Sullivan moved to approve Change Order #1 of the 2020 WWTP Improvements Project in the amount of \$7,665.00, to LB Industries, Inc., for materials, fabrication, and labor to add two (2) stainless steel hoppers on Secondary Clarifiers #3 & #4 to connect the existing 14-inch RAS piping and the 6-inch WAS piping to the new clarifier mechanisms as recommended by the engineer.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Gallagher & George moved to rescind the conditional sewer connection allocations issued by the Authority on December 23, 2019 to Blue Creek Investments, LLC for Hazleton Logistics Park Facility #1 (705 South Church Street, Hazleton, PA) and Facility #2 (PA Route 424 & Conahan Drive, Hazleton, PA) in the amount of 22 EDUs and 1914 EDUs respectively.

Roll Call: Ammon-yes, Formica-yes, Gallagher-yes, George-yes, Grink-yes, Milot-yes, Sherrock-yes, Sullivan-yes, Zola-absent (Passed 8-0-1)

Milot & Gallagher moved to adjourn.

Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

The regular meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM

The next scheduled Work Session will be Wednesday, March 17, 2021 at 6:30 PM

The next scheduled Regular Monthly Meeting will be Monday, March 22, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority



Gregory Olander, Assistant Secretary