

The December 18, 2024 regular monthly meeting of the Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority was called to order by Chairman Sullivan at 6:30 PM. All participating in the meeting gave a pledge of allegiance.

December 16, 2024 Work Session Roll Call:

Eyerly – Present	Formica – Present	Gallagher – Present
George – Present ¹	Grink – Present	Sharkey – Present
Sherrock – Present	Sullivan – Present	Zola – Present

Also in Attendance during Work Session:

Gregory Olander – Director of Administration	Andy Nowak – Field Operations Manager
Attorney Joseph D. Ustynoski – Solicitor	¹ Christopher Carsia – Director of Operations
Gene Zynel – Plant Operations Manager	Laura Motel – Environmental Manager
¹ Nicholas Sahd – Olde Forge Environmental	Robert Dougherty, P.E. – RJD Engineering, Inc.

December 18, 2024 Regular Meeting Roll Call:

Eyerly – Present	Formica – Present	Gallagher – Present
George – Present ¹	Grink – Present	Sharkey – Present
Sherrock – Present	Sullivan – Present	Zola – Absent

Also in Attendance during Regular Meeting:

Gregory Olander – Director of Administration	Andy Nowak – Field Operations Manager
¹ Attorney Joseph D. Ustynoski – Solicitor	¹ Christopher Carsia – Director of Operations
Rachel Govelovich, P.E. – Gannett Fleming	

¹ via phone or Videoconference

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Formica & George moved to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2024 Special Meeting.
 Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

Formica & George moved to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2024 Pension Meeting.
 Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

Formica & Grink moved to approve the minutes of the November 25, 2024 Regular Monthly Meeting.
 Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

Directors’ Report -

MONTHLY FLOW REPORT

	<u>November 2024</u>		<u>Year to Date</u>		
			<u>Total</u>		<u>Average</u>
Total Flow	181,119,993	Gallons	2,800,945,824	Gallon	xxxxx
Total Flow Bypassed	2,197,341	Gallons	192,401,326	Gallon	xxxxx
Days Flow Bypassed	4	Days	62	Days	xxxxx
Total Flow Treated	178,922,652	Gallons	2,612,844,498	Gallon	xxxxx
Average Minimum	3.6	MGD	xxxxx	xxxxx	5.7 MGD
Average Maximum	10.1	MGD	xxxxx	xxxxx	13.7 MGD
Average Daily Flow	6.0	MGD	xxxxx	xxxxx	7.8 MGD

During the Work Session, the Director of Administration, Gregory Olander, reviewed the wastewater flows for November 2024 as presented in the monthly flow report. He said the flow to the treatment plant was recorded at approximately 181.1 million gallons with 178.9 million gallons being treated. He also stated that the average daily flow to the treatment plant for the month was 6.0 MGD, which decreased the average daily flow for the calendar year to 7.8 MGD. He noted that the Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMR) were submitted to PADEP for November with no violations reported.

Gregory Olander then reported that the revenues for November 2024 were \$1,067,750.25 and the billing for hauled waste received in November totaled \$190,936.12. He stated that the customer collection rate for the month of November was 99.28%, which increased the overall collection rate to 94.63% for the fiscal year. Gregory then reported that the cybersecurity assessment on the operations network is continuing with a second site visit that was conducted on December 12, 2024. He said due to the recent early retirement of the Lab Technician and completion of the union the bidding process, there is an opening for another plant operator. He said that he would contact the Hiring Committee to review resumes and schedule interviews after the holidays.

Gregory then reported that the maintenance staff is catching up on preventative maintenance and other items now that the work during the annual incinerator shutdown is now complete. He said one (1) new Secondary Effluent Pump was ordered as approved at the last Board meeting. He said the concrete testing firm will be onsite from December 16th through December 20th to collect concrete samples and perform testing of the Nitrification and Denitrification structures. He said the full report will be presented to the Board as soon as it is available. He then reported that a compliance meeting was held on December 17th to close-out the Luzerne County ARPA grant requirements. He said any additional information will be forwarded to the County's contract grant specialist upon request to complete all grant requirements.

Gregory also reported on the incinerator air quality items noting that the 2024 Stack Test was conducted on December 5th and 6th by a new testing firm. Gene Zynel stated that staff were pleased with the responsiveness and overall sampling procedure of the new firm. Gregory then reported that a conference call was held with representatives at Materia Matters, inc. and six of the seven sewage sludge incinerator facilities in Pennsylvania to discuss the potential for a DEP requirement to test the air emissions for PFAS contaminants. He said currently no action is required, but he will inform the Board if anything develops. He said Gene Zynel and Shane Boyer will be at the next work session to go over the work performed on the incinerator during the annual shutdown in October 2024.

Gregory also reported on the industrial development project proposing to reuse the GHJSA treatment plant effluent for cooling water. He said a meeting was held on November 26, 2024 at the PADEP offices in Wilkes-Barre to discuss planning and permitted requirements for the project. He said on November 8th a Proposed Change of Wastestream Report was submitted to PADEP by Nick Sahd on behalf of the Authority as required in the NPDES Permit, but there has been no response from the Department to date. He also said a meeting was held with the developer, their engineer, and the Authority staff and engineers to discuss capital improvements needed at the WWTP to convey the water to the development. He stated that an agreement will need to be developed to outline the conditions for providing the effluent water for reuse.

During the Work Session, Andy Nowak reported that replacement of 96" outfall pipe along the HASD Career Center parking area has been completed for this year. He said in the spring, work will resume in the grassy lot between the parking area and Branch Court moving southward. Andy also noted that GIS mapping work continues when the crew is available in between other tasks. He then reported that

Worker's Compensation Insurance quotes were received, and the lowest quote came from the existing provider for an annual cost of \$91,528 using the same payroll amounts as last year. He said the premium amount is a decrease of about \$4,000 from the prior year due to a slightly lower MOD rate for this upcoming year. Andy then informed the Board that Board Member Rocco Formica has been asked to serve as PMAA Region III Executive Director for the upcoming year.

Gallagher & Grink moved to accept the Directors' Report and to have the written report on diverted flows made a permanent part of the record.

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

Engineer's Report – During the Work Session, Robert Dougherty referenced a written report that was distributed to the Board. He reported that the survey work for the Amcor subdivision has been completed. He said the subdivision application is being completed for submission to West Hazleton Borough Planning Commission and the Luzerne County Planning Commission for their review and approval. He said there are three (3) application fees of between \$400 and \$600 each that are needed for the submission. He then gave an update on the Locust Street CSO Separation Project noting that the pipe work and temporary trench restoration are completed from Church Street to Laurel Street on Juniper and pipe work from Church Street to Laurel Street on Elm are also complete. He said temporary trench restoration is complete from Church Street to Lee Court. He then reported on Change Orders #44 and #45 noting that moving the new sanitary sewer pipe installation from the first lane on Church Street to the sidewalk running parallel to Church Street was a significant savings for the Authority. He said Change Order #44 is a net decrease to the contract in the amount of \$118,894.61 due to 1,400 linear feet of paving being removed from the contract. He then recommended the Board approve Change Orders #44 and #45 along with Ronca Payment Estimate #13 in the amount of \$550,277.11. He also reported that the work on the east side of Wyoming Street will begin soon with an anticipated completion date in late April. He said there will still be cross connections and disconnects to complete in Area 2B west of Poplar Street in the Hights section of Hazleton City.

During the Work Session, Nicholas Sahd reported on the EPA request to discharge treated groundwater from the Valmont TCE Remediation Site. He said an industrial wastewater discharge permit application was received from EPA on December 10, 2024 requesting to discharge the treated water from their remediation process to the sanitary sewer system for discharge to the Authority's treatment plant. He said their application and the EPA power point presentation outlining the pre-treatment process was sent to the Board by email. He said the next step would be to develop a discharge permit or authorization as a mechanism to outline the conditions they would need to meet to discharge the treated process wastewater. Chairman Sullivan asked if this was the document in which testing protocol would be listed. Nick responded that the Board could choose what conditions are in the authorization such as allowable discharge levels (limits), frequency of sampling, number of filter beds for treatment, etc. if those conditions are reasonable. He said sampling frequency in an industrial user permit is normally set at once every six (6) months, but in the past for a remediation project, the Authority has set the frequency at once per month. He said for this discharge; to give the Board a level of comfort, he would propose sampling weekly in the beginning with the ability for EPA to ask for less frequent sampling based on several test results where the contaminants are not detected. He said an independent laboratory could be used to do the sampling and testing. Board Member Zola asked how the Authority would benefit by taking the discharge from this remediation site. Nick responded that other than being paid to accept and treat the water, being a community partner by being part of the cleanup effort. Board Member Grink said he has had members of the nearby neighborhood contact him about the cleanup and he noted that his house is near the contaminant plume. He said this contamination has been underground for over 25 years and there are over 50 households affected in the neighborhood with a concern the plume will continue

moving and spreading that may affect more properties if it is not removed from the ground. Board Member Zola asked what changed from the last presentation by EPA when the Board was not considering accepting the discharge. Chairman Sullivan responded that during the Special Meeting on December 4th, they did a much better job explaining the treatment process and the levels they can treat down to before releasing the water to the sanitary sewer. He said the EPA representatives stated that they will remove the contaminants down to drinking water levels and we need to take them at their word that the treatment system has that capability. Board Member Zola asked if EPA provided case studies proving there would be no long-term effects of accepting this type of waste. Nick responded that case studies regarding other remediation using this same technology were sent by EPA after the August 2024 meeting and they were forwarded to the Board, but he is unsure if they contained any long-term studies; he believes the studies primarily contained information on the remediation and treatment technology. Nick noted that the treatment they will be using is a proven technology and it is the same type of treatment system being designed and installed in water treatment plants to remove these types of contaminants. Nick said the focus would be on what contaminants are in the water and making sure they discharge at levels acceptable to Authority. He said EPA is telling the Authority that their system can treat down to drinking water levels, which is what they would be held to in the discharge authorization. Board Member Zola then asked if public notice was advertised that the Authority would be accepting this waste. Nick responded that the Authority is not under an obligation to post a public notice; that would be the responsibility of EPA. Gregory Olander stated that EPA had a public notice advertised in January 2021 outlining the proposed treatment and disposal with a 30-day public comment period. He said the notice was forwarded to all Board members at that time. He said during the public availability session EPA held at Hazle Township on December 3, 2024, he was told they mailed notices to every residential and commercial property within a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile radius of the remediation site, but he is unsure if there was an advertisement in the local paper. Board Member Zola stated that every rate payer in the service area and anyone along Black Creek should have been notified so they have a chance to comment on the proposed discharge.

Christopher Carsia gave a history of the Industrial Pretreatment Program (IPP), which EPA ordered the Authority to implement in 1983. He said in 1991, the Authority was fined by EPA for not properly implementing the program so the Board put him in charge of the IPP, which he administered until the early 2000's when Greg Olander and subsequently, Laura Motel took over the program. He said during his time as IPP Coordinator, there were several remediation project discharges accepted by the Authority, most notably, the Tranguch Gasoline Spill Site. He said standards were set for those discharges based on the allowable influent loading for the treatment plant, but none of them were as low as drinking water standards. He said the Tranguch water was accepted into the treatment plant for several years with no adverse effects to treatment at the plant and in his opinion the discharge from Valmont TCE Site as proposed by EPA poses no threat to the treatment plant. He said in the event there is a problem with the remediation system, Gene would see changes at the plant where the Dissolved Oxygen (DO) would drop. He also stated that if EPA decides not to move forward with the remediation project because they have no viable discharge option, that plume will most likely continue to migrate further away from the source and there is a potential for the contamination to affect more properties nearby the remediation zone and some of the untreated groundwater will make its way to the treatment plant through cracks in the sewer lines in that neighborhood. Board Member Zola stated that he believes a public notice should go out to all residents in the service area to let them know this treated water will be dumped into the Black Creek. Gregory Olander responded that EPA did publish a public notice in 2021 with a 30-day public comment period. Nick said a public notice requirement could be put in as a condition in the permit or the Authority could publish one. Board Member Gallagher responded that the Authority should not publish the notice because we will be the ones required to answer the comments, which should be the responsibility of EPA.

Board Member Sherrock asked Gene Zynel if he was comfortable with the public meeting presentation by EPA that he attended at the Hazle Township Commons. Gene Zynel responded that it was a much better presentation and one benefit we have is that our tertiary treatment process for Nitrification and Denitrification hosts nitrifying bacteria, which are very sensitive to pollutants. He said that process can be considered the “canary in the coal mine” so to speak because monitoring the health of those sensitive bacteria will give an early indication of a potential plant upset so measures can be taken to identify and address the problem. He said a problem occurred last week when a full residential fuel oil tank ruptured and sent its contents to the plant. He said the nitrifiers were affected and it took them a week or so to stabilize, but other than having an additional blower running due to low DO, the plant biological processes were relatively unaffected.

Chairman Sullivan then asked the Board if they wanted Nick Sahd to create a draft discharge authorization for the treated water from the Valmont TCE remediation site. The Board was in agreement to authorize Nick to discuss the Board’s concerns with EPA and develop the draft authorization for review and consideration by the Board at a later meeting.

During the Regular Meeting, Rachel Govelovich referenced a written Engineer’s Report that was distributed to the Board. Rachel stated that Incinerator stack testing was completed since last month, but results won’t be known for a while. She said the next round of reporting is due in January and February 2025 as listed in the written report.

Rachel then reported that a compliance interview was held earlier today with the Director of Administration and Booth Management Consulting for closeout of the Luzerne County ARPA Grant. She stated that PADEP indicated they would be reviewing the change orders from the Incinerator Project over the holidays. She then reported on the PENNVEST funding for the Locust Street CSO Separation Project. She said change orders are being uploaded electronically to the PENNVEST site; however, change orders must be removed from payment requests because they have not been reviewed by PADEP. She said Construction Payment Request #3 will be submitted this week and it will quickly be followed by Payment Request #3 early next year.

Rachel then reported on the Act 537 and Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) activities. She said flow meters are still deployed and continue to capture flows at the CSO discharge points and the pipe layout for the flow model has been completed. She said they are building the design for a flow model to determine how and when each CSO discharges. She also stated that a meeting was held with PADEP on December 10th to review the details of the Flow Study to make sure they agree with the proposed study. She said confirmation was received from PADEP that the flow study methodology is acceptable. She then reported that GIS mapping continues; however, progress has slowed due to the repair of the 96-inch CSO line at the HASD. Andy Nowak stated that data collection has slowed due to the weather in the winter months. She then reported on the LTCP items noting that two (2) separation studies listed in the NPDES Permit are due in February 2025. She said those 2 studies are being worked on and a draft should be available by the end of this year for QAQC and staff review. Board Member Sullivan asked if the all the required studies will be ready for submission by the deadline. Rachel responded that they have been worked on for several months now and would be ready for submission. Gregory Olander added that flows at the CSO locations in the system have been recorded since November 2023 for use in developing the flow model. He said the model compares the flows coming to the treatment plant versus the flows that go to the stream during rain event during an average water year so the percentage treatment can be determined. Rachel said once the model is developed, flows and treatment percentages can be projected for different intensity storms. She said in the NPDES schedule, the LTCP must be updated by February

28, 2026, but the flow model is needed to determine the best course of action to work toward achieving 85% treatment of wet weather flows. She noted that the 85% treatment must be completed by 2040, so the planning of capital projects to reach that goal will be listed in the LTCP. She also noted that PADEP may be more flexible toward those authorities who have been proactive with CSO reduction activities, and she indicated that this Authority is looked upon favorably because of the continued work being done to separate the combined system.

She then reported that as part of the Act 537 Plan, letters are being drafted to the municipalities and their engineers within the Authority's service area about providing the information needed to compile the Act 537 Plan. She said the letters would go out this week. Chairman Sullivan asked that he be copied so he can follow up with the municipal officials.

Rachel reported that her firm continues assisting with Northpoint Development for reuse of treatment plant effluent and an industrial pretreatment review of the flow returning to the WWTP. She said there was a conference call with the developer and their engineer to review the preliminary basis of design for the facilities needed to convey to the effluent water to the development.

She then reported that the engineering firm contracted to perform sampling and testing of the concrete in the Nitrification and Denitrification tanks is onsite this week to perform the work as outlined in the approved proposal. He reported on a call from this afternoon regarding the work, but it is too soon for a determination to take place. She said the Gannett Fleming structural engineer has been actively involved in the process and has been in contact with the testing firm several times a day.

Rachel then reported on the upgrade to the ODMS system that captures the laboratory and operational data to generate reports for submission to PADEP. She said the old system has been in use since 1999 and it can no longer be updated. She said a Gannett Fleming representative was onsite October 29th to gather information on the existing SCADA system and data entry system so a new excel based platform can be developed. She said the scope and proposal were sent to the Board for review and consideration as agenda item 17.

Gallagher & Sharkey moved to accept the Engineer's Report.

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

Solicitor's Report – In addition to what was reported in executive session during the Work Session, Attorney Ustynoski reported that there has been dialogue with the Allen Ridge LLC developer, and we will be working on the final amendments to the developer's agreement. He said the cost estimate provided by the developer was reviewed by Gannett Fleming and found to be on the low side for the work that needs to be done. He said they will be informed that the bond amount will need to be revised more consistent with current prices. He then reported the Northpoint development agreements also need to be drawn up to outline the conditions for providing reuse water to their facility.

Gallagher & Formica moved to accept the Solicitor's Report. Passed: Aye-8, Nay-0, Absent-1

BILLS AND CREDITS

George & Formica moved to approve payment of Gannett Fleming, Inc. invoices and requisitions from October 26, 2024 through November 29, 2024, totaling \$20,484.41 as listed in the following table:

<u>Requisition#</u>	<u>Invoice #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Operating Fund	051153.A*44556	Annual Service Work	\$ 4,068.09
Operating Fund	051153.B*44559	Attending Authority Meetings	\$ 394.06
Operating Fund	051153.E*44560	LTCP & Act 537 (Flow Study)	\$ 8,238.21
Operating Fund	051153.AI*44558	ODMS Program Upgrade	\$ 1,179.30
Operating Fund	051153.42*44546	2024-2025 Air Compliance	\$ 2,616.35
Operating Fund	051153.46*44548	GIS Mapping Project	\$ 495.02
Operating Fund	051153.47*44547	Locust St PENNVEST (Const)	\$ 426.40
Operating Fund	051153.49*44557	Northpoint Campus Development	\$ 3,066.98
Total			\$ 20,484.41

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

Formica & Gallagher moved to approve payment of RJD Engineering, Inc. invoices from November 2024 totaling \$20,698.00 as listed in the following table:

	<u>Invoice Date</u>	<u>Project Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Operating Fund	11/30/2024	Area 2/3 - Locust St CSO	\$ 11,616.00
Operating Fund	11/30/2024	Collection System Engineering	\$ 9,082.00
Total			\$ 20,698.00

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

Formica & Gallagher moved to approve Change Orders #44 to #45 totaling a net deletion to the Locust Street CSO Separation & Force Main Replacement Project contract with Michael F. Ronca & Sons, Inc., in the amount of -\$105,901.84, as presented and recommended by the engineer and listed in the table below:

LOCUST STREET CSO SEPARATION FORCE MAIN PROJECT
CHANGE ORDER 44 to 45 SUMMARY

CHANGE ORDER	AMOUNT
44	-\$118,894.61
45	\$12,992.77
NET CONTRACT CHANGE	-\$105,901.84

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

Formica & Sharkey moved to approve Requisition No. C268, payable to Michael F. Ronca & Sons, Inc., totaling \$550,277.11 for Payment Estimate #13 of the Locust St CSO Separation & Force Main Replacement Project as recommended by the engineer. The original contract price was \$5,271,000.00. Add for Change Orders #1 through #45 in the amount of \$130,455.46 for a total contract price of

\$5,401,455.46. The total of payments made to date including this payment is \$4,355,003.54, which leaves a balance of \$1,046,451.92.

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

Sherrock & Formica moved to authorize payment from the Operating Fund for Operating and Administrative Expenses (\$1,363,088.67); Construction in Progress (\$461,545.74); Debt Service Series 2020 Bond (\$338,600.00); Debt Service Series 2021 Bond (\$502,000.00); Debt Service Series 2018 Bond – BB&T (\$18,362.29); Debt Service PENNVEST Loan #27906 (\$11,152.44); Debt Service PENNVEST Loan #71468 (\$321.53); Debt Service PENNVEST Loan #77114 (\$125.71) from the month of November 2024.

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

Formica & Sherrock moved to approve issued credits report totaling \$5,505.58 from the month of November 2024.

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

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

George & Formica moved to approve the Clear Spring Property and Casualty Group Worker's Compensation Insurance Proposal for calendar year 2025 through Assured Partners (Worker's Compensation Insurance underwriter) for a premium of \$91,528.00 using projected payroll amounts of \$3,025,000 for Waterworks Classification and \$193,000 for Clerical Classification.

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

Formica & Gallagher moved to approve the early retirement of Employee #1004 effective November 30, 2025 according to the conditions set forth in the separation agreement, with pension benefits commencing on January 1, 2025.

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

Gallagher & Formica moved to approve the proposal dated December 17, 2024 from Gannett Fleming, Inc. in the amount of \$26,000.00 for engineering services to develop a new Process Monitoring and Benchmark System (PMBS), which provides a solution for control systems data entry and reporting utilizing a SQL database on the Authority's business server. This new data entry and reporting system will replace the custom ODMS program that has been in use at the WWTP since 1999 and is no longer supportable.

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


Gallagher & Grink moved to adjourn.

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

The regular meeting was adjourned at 6:56 PM

The next scheduled Work Session will be Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 6:30 PM
The next scheduled Regular Monthly Meeting will be Monday, January 27, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority



Gregory Olander, Assistant Secretary