

The December 4, 2024 Special 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.

Roll Call:

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

Also in Attendance:

Gregory Olander – Director of Administration	Andy Nowak – Field Operations Manager
Attorney Joseph D. Ustynoski – Solicitor	Laura Motel – Environmental Manager
Nicholas Sahd – Olde Forge Environmental	¹ Rachel Govelovich, P.E. – Gannett Fleming
Leslee Everett – US EPA	William Corra- GHJSA Union President
Chuck Ouellette - Jacobs	Ken Champagne – US EPA
Jason Cole - Jacobs	Frank Klancher – US EPA
William Kassab – US EPA	Amy Bellanca – PA DEP

¹ via phone or videoconference

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Chairman Sullivan thanked the invite guests for attending and he asked that everyone attending introduce themselves for the group discussion. He then turned the meeting over to Frank Klancher of USEPA for a presentation on the proposed course of action to remediate the Valmont TCE superfund site. Mr. Klancher began a PowerPoint presentation by noting that the primary mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment. He said the interim remedy contains two (2) components with the primary remedy for this site being In Situ Thermal Remediation (ISTR) and the secondary component being groundwater extraction and treatment (GWETS). He said two contracts were awarded, one for the interim remedy and the other for oversight during construction and operations. He stated that Environmental Quality Management, Inc. and CH2M Hill, Inc. (Jacobs) were awarded the interim remedy contract on September 30, 2024 as a joint venture with the oversight contract being awarded to Hana Engineers and Consultants. Mr. Klancher then reviewed the tentative project schedule, which is expected to begin mobilization in March 2025. He said the GWETS system will be constructed and tested by October 2025 with operation over a three (3) year period ending October 2028. He said the ISTR construction is expected to be completed by May 2026 with operation for approximately eight (8) months ending in December 2026. Mr. Klancher then noted that the items requested at the last Special Meeting were provided to the Authority in August 2024 as requested. He also stated that discharge into the municipal storm sewer system was investigated, but because Hazle Township has a MS4 Permit, only stormwater is permitted to be discharged into the storm sewer system. Amy Bellanca from the PADEP Northeast Regional office noted that only stormwater is allowed into that system, not treated water from a groundwater remediation system. She said if the discharge were authorized by the Township, they would be in violation of their own permit. Mr. Klancher then informed the Board that different disposal options were looked at in 2020 during the feasibility study including direct discharge to Black Creek, reinjection into the subsurface formation, and discharge to the POTW. He said the most practical solution was discharge to the POTW due to cost, close proximity of the sanitary sewer line for discharge, and the lowest potential for disruption to the community given that the project has a limited duration. Mr. Klancher introduced Jason Cole and Chuck Ouellette of Jacobs, the prime remediation contractor on the project.

Mr. Cole gave a detailed explanation of the ISTR system operation noting that 207 wells will be drilled into the ground in and around the warehouse above the contaminated areas to a depth of 100 feet and heaters will be installed into each hole to heat the groundwater to 212° F to vaporize the contaminants for extraction as a gas along with steam. He said a manifold will collect the vapors and transport them to the vapor phase treatment system where treatment will occur through an air stripper and granulated activated carbon (GAC) vessels before release to the atmosphere. He said during the initial collection, the vapors will pass through a plate and frame heat exchanger where condensation will be produced and collected for treatment through the liquid treatment system consisting of a series of GAC vessels in a lead/lag configuration. He noted that about 90% of the contaminated mass will be treated in the vapor phase system and about 10% in the liquid treatment system. He then reviewed the discharge goals for the project as listed in the presentation, which are groundwater MCLs (maximum contaminant levels) or the highest level of contaminant allowed in drinking water. The Authority's Solicitor, Joseph Ustynoski, asked about the levels of PFOS/PFOA that would be discharged. Mr. Cole responded that there is a miniscule amount of PFOS compared to the solvent contamination at the site and the level from the treatment system will essentially be a non-detect at discharge. Chairman Sullivan asked if the sampling will be before the discharge to the sewer. Mr. Cole responded that the testing will be before any water goes down the pipe to the treatment plant to demonstrate and document that the limits are being met. Mr. Cole also noted that the reason for the GWETS system of pumping and treating groundwater downgradient of the site is to prevent contaminants from spreading during the ISTR phase and he then reviewed the GWETS Process Flow Diagram with the Board.

Board Member Gallagher asked if this discharge would result in an increase to the levels coming into the treatment plant. Mr. Cole responded that the discharge would not raise the levels in the influent given that the background PFOS/PFOA levels into the plant were identified at 19.3 ug/L, which is low compared to a Michigan study where the average influent level was 35 ug/L for PFOS/PFOA. He said the flows generated by the systems would be 14,400 gallons per day (gpd) for the ISTR and 18,000 gpd for the GWETS, which are minor flow contributions and corresponding contaminant mass contributions given the treatment plant's average daily flow rates of over 5.8 million gallons per day (MGD). He said drinking water standards have been proposed as discharge limits for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and PFOS/PFOA, which would have minimal potential for altering the characteristics of the treatment plant influent. Mr. Cole then stated that to reduce the Authority's liability concerns, EPA is receptive to increasing the frequency of performance sampling during project start-up and routine O&M, providing all monitoring reports as requested, providing access to conduct split sampling, notifying the GHJSA immediately if a problem is identified, and providing a tour of the site while it is under construction and during operation. Board Member Gallagher then asked if the contractors would leave at the November 2028 end date for the project even if the remediation is not yet completed. Mr. Cole responded that the job would not be considered finished until EPA and the contractor gauge that the treatment process is not achieving any further removal or when the process has reached a level of diminishing returns. He said based on the levels identified in the plume samples, they estimated nine (9) months for ISTR treatment, but there is an option for adding additional treatment time if necessary. He then noted that he has personally delivered 45 of these remediation jobs to completion.

Chairman Sullivan then asked what would happen if the incoming presidential administration pulled funding for the project. William Kassab of EPA responded that there is a low likelihood the project will be pulled given that the funds have already been allocated and contracts have been awarded and

signed. Board Member Grink asked about disruption to the nearby neighborhood. Mr. Cole responded that the main disruption would be during construction when the wells were being drilled. He said there are about 18 wells that need to be drilled outside the warehouse, but the work will be done during dayshift. He said they expect to be drilling the outside wells for a few months and the inside wells for about a year. He said it could be noisy given the metal walls and concrete floors, but once installed there should be minimal disruptive noise coming from the site. He noted that if the EPA were forced to install (and then remove) a pipe needed for direct discharge to the creek, there would be a significant disruption to the nearby community for a much longer timeframe over a more widespread area. He stated that discharge to a wastewater treatment plant under their Industrial Pretreatment Program is the preferred method of disposal for this waste since it is the least disruptive to the community and the fastest to implement given there is less engineering and permitting involved. Mr. Cole then explained that once installation of the system is complete, the contractor will hold an orientation with local fire departments and emergency management agencies to familiarize them with the operation and safeguards that are in place.

Chairman Sullivan then question the hours of the operation stating that the response time for someone on second or third shift should be very quick in the event there is a problem identified with the system. Mr. Cole responded that the risk profile of this project does not support a manned 24-hour operation with imbedded community members. He added that the remediation treatment systems are designed with automation and interlocks to shut the system down in the event a problem is detected. He said this system is on the simpler side and the automation will allow for notifications to operations staff in the event there is a deviation from process design with weekly on-site checks of the system. He said an operator can access the system remotely to identify how individual pieces of equipment are performing and control functions from offsite, if necessary. William Corra, the GHJSA Union representative, asked how often sampling will be conducted and how it will be proven that the level of contaminants in the discharge won't go above the limits being set by the Authority. Mr. Corra said the concern of the workforce is that if something happens to allow higher levels to come into the plant, and 10 years later employees start to become sick. Mr. Cole responded that the scenario presented will not happen given the chemical hazards present at this site are very well documented and identified with occupational standards for exposure. He said PFAS is relatively new, but the discharge from the system will be to drinking water levels whereas the contaminants present will be treated to a level that is safe for human consumption. He said from a risk perspective, there is extremely low risk based on the contaminants at the site and the treatment designed for this remediation effort. Mr. Ouellette added that sampling will occur going into the first (lead) GAC vessel, prior to the second (lag) GAC vessel, and at the discharge. Mr. Cole said if the level of the sample between the two GAC vessels shows a detection, it is an indication that breakthrough may have begun through the lead vessel and it is ready to be replaced. He said there is still an identical GAC vessel for redundancy that will capture any constituents that may have made it through the lead vessel with a final sample taken at the point of discharge to confirm the levels being sent to the treatment plant meet the permit conditions. He said as soon as the lead vessel shows a detection, it will be replaced by the lag vessel and a new GAC vessel will go inline as the first lag vessel.

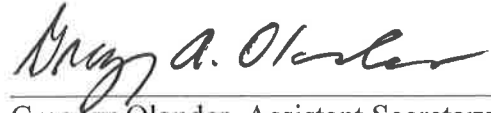
Chairman Sullivan asked if there were any other questions for the presenters and he then thanked the EPA representatives and contractors for their time in answering the Board's questions.

Formica & Sherrock moved to adjourn.

Passed: Aye-5, Nay-0, Absent-4

The Special Meeting was adjourned at 8:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Greater Hazleton Joint Sewer Authority



Gregory Olander, Assistant Secretary