

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PLUM CREEK MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY
July 2017**

A regular meeting of the Board of The Plum Creek Municipal Authority was held on July 18, 2017 at the Plum Creek Municipal Authority Business Office Building, South Manheim Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

Board members present at the meeting were Tom Nagle, Jim Ridderhoff, Dennis Scharadin, Jerry Weiss, and Matt Gruber. Also in attendance was Jamie Lorah (SSM Engineering), Joe Zerbe (PCMA Attorney), Jeff Crawford (PCMA Operations Manager – Select Environmental), Nancy Wesner (PCMA Office); and property owners Joe Haggarty, David Tyson, Rich Hardy, Jean Schreiber, George Arsenault, David Mengel, Paul Purcell, Ronald Larsen, Glenda Wolfe, and Frank Miller

Jim Ridderhoff called the meeting to order at 5:55 p.m.

The minutes of the prior meeting held in June, 2017 were reviewed and accepted by motion of Matt Gruber, seconded by Dennis Scharadin, and carried by all.

The Treasurer's report for June, 2017 was reviewed and accepted by motion of Dennis Scharadin, seconded by Matt Gruber, carried by all.

Jim opened the floor to those in attendance.

Ron Larsen asked about the water part of the Authority supporting part of the sewage operations. He said he thought the two were separately funded. Tom said they were at one time, but all funds were opened for general use many years earlier and the accounts were combined. Ron asked if the money being taken from the water to support sewage would be put back into the water system if it wasn't used for sewage. Jim said it would, and Tom said there definitely would be extra money for more water system improvements if some of it wasn't being used for sewage. Ron said the PCMA has been telling people for a few years already to think about switching over to septic systems if they had holding tanks. He said didn't think the people with septic tanks in the development should have to pay for people with holding tanks who didn't heed the warnings. Tom said the Board realizes that a lot of the septic customers feel that way, and the PCMA has enlisted professionals to perform a feasibility study to compare their findings with the Board's findings, and to see what kind of solutions are available to handle the financial shortfall in the sewage operations. Ron said he feels things are at the point where something must

be done before the sewage uses even more of the water monies. Jim said that's true, and that's why the feasibility study is being done – because things can't continue as they are.

Joe Haggerty asked if there were any further developments with the Schuylkill County Municipal Authority (SCMA) taking over the PCMA. Tom said the SCMA asked for information about different aspects of the Authority, including sewage operations, and the PCMA provided the information but, other than that, there has been no contact with the SCMA. Tom said the SCMA needs more information about solutions for the sewage end of things also, and that's why the PCMA engaged its engineering firm to do a study to see if solutions can be found other than what the PCMA studies found. Joe Haggerty asked how long it will take for the engineers to do the feasibility study, and Tom said he had no timeframe for the results. Jamie Lorah, SSM Engineering, said they are prepared to start working on the alternative analysis for the sewage facilities planning side of things, but they need to gather more information first. She said the analysis is something that has to occur before any changes are made whether the plant is abandoned or not. A sewage facilities planning document has to be submitted to the PA DEP for review, and the biggest part of that is the alternative analysis which includes various scenarios to solve the sewage operation issues. Jamie said that will take some time to do, not so much on the study side of things, but on the DEP review side. Jim said the Board is not trying to rush into a quick decision; they want to find the best way to handle things.

Paul Purcell asked what the cost for the sewage plant repairs would be. Tom said the annual debt service alone would be \$97,000 if the funds had to be borrowed. Jen said the engineering estimate for all the repairs was roughly \$800,000. Jen said when the sewage repairs grant was applied for, the PCMA could only ask for up to \$500,000 which wouldn't have covered the entire cost. Tom said that doesn't include other repairs that might be needed in the future. Jim said if \$800,000 was put into the sewage treatment plant, the fact still remains that the plant is nearly 50 years old.

Dave Tyson said he thought a decision had already been made to close the sewage plant. Tom said a number of scenarios were recently discussed, with closing the sewage plant being just one possibility out of others, but no definite decision had been made to pursue any of the solutions until further analysis was completed. Jim said, although a lot of discussion has taken place, there was never any intention of moving forward until all questions the Board had were answered and more information was gathered. The first step toward getting some of the answers was to

determine if the Townships would support possible change. If the Townships were not in favor of changes, then there would have been no point in further discussions.

Paul Purcell asked if the Board would publicize the results of the different scenarios that were found. Jim said they would, and the entire community will be notified of the analysis results.

Joe Haggerty asked how long the Authority could stay operative if the \$800,000 was spent on the repairs for the sewage treatment plant. Tom said it would provide time until the next major problem surfaced, which nobody could determine. Tom added that some of the money would be used to provide new and more modern upgrades, but that would still leave other areas of the treatment plant running on older components. Jamie Lorah said that, if all the planned capital improvements were made on the sewage plant, they were looking at maybe 10 more years of operation, not counting normal repairs that would be required during operation. Ron Larsen asked if there was a large enough customer base to pay the \$800,000 needed for repairs and upgrades. Tom said the cost would have to be borne by the customers because the PCMA is not eligible for money through grants.

Ron Larsen said he has a septic tank that only has to be pumped once every three years as opposed to holding tanks that have to be pumped once a month or more, and again stated that he didn't think it was fair for the septic people to support the holding tank pumps. Jim said no matter what happens, the holding tank people will pay more than the septic people because they get pumped more often. Tom said that may be one of the scenarios – just put all the rates up and the holding tank people will have to pay what the septic tank property owners do; the rate analysis will help to determine if that is an option.

Joe Haggerty asked if the PCMA got rates from the outside haulers. Tom said the PCMA has nothing official from the haulers. Tom said the haulers won't know for sure what their charges will be until they see what they're pumping, so they're reluctant to give rate information they might be held to. Jen said the PCMA asked for base-rate charges but the response was poor for the reason Tom stated – they didn't want to be held to rate quotes that might not be feasible for all pumps. Tom suggested that Joe call the haulers, describe his individual pumping situation, and ask what the rate would be to pump his tank because not every pumping set-up will be the same. Tom said the engineering analysis will be based partly on what information is received from haulers as far as rates go.

A question was asked about hauling sewage to a location other than the PCMA's treatment plant. Jim said that option was discussed in prior meetings and it looked

like the least feasible of all the options because of the time involved. An additional pumper would have to be hired to make up for the time lost, and another truck would be needed to maintain the pumping schedule. The drivers and pumper trucks the PCMA currently has are fully utilized.

Ron Larsen said his septic pump is due to be pumped this year, and he asked if outside haulers could be used at this point. Jim said, at this time, the pumping is still controlled by the current ordinance in effect that prevents outside haulers from being used to pump tanks in Lake Wynonah. Ron said he wasn't sure if it had changed or not, and Jim said it has not changed.

David Mengel said he talked to the Board before about having to change his water filters far more than was normal due to the iron and manganese in the drinking water. He said his filter usage dropped back to almost what the life of the filter should be after the wells were rehabilitated. He said the rehabilitation has made a significant positive difference. Jeff Crawford said another hydrant flushing will be scheduled for later in the year, and that should help to keep the water clearer too. Jeff said a procedure was done on two of the wells to clean out the accumulated iron and manganese and that cut down on the amount going out into the system.

David Tyson asked if the cost of hauling to another processing plant will be part of the alternate analysis. Tom said it would be part of the study. Jamie Lorah said hauling to another facility would also depend on whether or not the facility will accept sewage from outside the district it presently served. Tom said, as far as hauling to another facility goes, it wouldn't cost the PCMA any more to dump a load than it would an outside hauler but the PCMA only has the equipment to make use of two employees. But because it will take a lot longer to perform a pump due to geographical differences, two employees won't be able to keep up to the pumping demands of the entire community. Additional personnel and at least one more pumper truck would have to be obtained, and that's what makes it too expensive to haul to other locations.

Paul Purcell said it would make a difference on the community roads if a lot of haulers came into the development rather than just the PCMA's two pump trucks. Jim said there may be ten different pumping companies coming into the community, but there shouldn't be additional wear and tear on the roads because the PCMA is already doing what those ten haulers would do collectively. It would just be different people doing the same thing the PCMA already does.

Jim thanked the people for attending, and the majority did not stay for the remainder of the meeting.

Jeff gave the manager's report. In water operations, he reported:

- Normal operations continue. No violations to report this period.
- All wells are operational. There are 3 wells online currently which are being rotated to avoid overflowing the water storage tanks.
- The Booster Station is at 13.0 PSI as of July 18; 17.3 PSI is full capacity.
- A water leak found on a customer's line has been repaired. Another leak was discovered on a customer's water line in Buckskin Cove. The owner is a part-time resident, and the water has been turned off at the property until a repair is made. There is no evidence of any major leaks in the water system, but a leak detection survey is being planned for some time in August.
- Slaymaker installed a rebuilt #2 Main and jockey pumps at the Booster Station in June, and the #1 Main and jockey pumps are scheduled for installation later in July.
- Becker Roofing has completed the roof replacement at the Booster Station but is waiting for the main and jockey pumps to be installed to correct a leaking valve before installing the new drywall.
- Two flow meters/totalizers for Wells 1 and 6 were repaired and reinstalled. L/B Water Service provided technical support and the replacement parts needed for the repair.
- Quarterly meter reading was completed on June 30th.

In sewage operations, Jeff reported that:

- Normal operations continue.
- Approximately 10 septic pumps are in the backlog. Both pump trucks are operational.
- The filter drum shaft & bearings at the sewage treatment plant need to be replaced. The shaft is worn and possibly out of alignment. Axiom is scheduled to make the repair at the end of July. The repair is expected to take 1 or 2 days.

- Both pickup trucks are currently operational. The Ranger is in the body shop for repair. Inspection and maintenance will be scheduled for August.
- The NPDES Renewal Application is being finalized and will be completed by July 26th. The due date for submission is August 4th.

Jamie asked Jeff how much the repairs cost for replacing the roof and drywall at the Booster Station. Jeff said he thought it was a little over \$3,000.

Dennis asked Jeff if a cleaning treatment was being planned for a third well. Jeff said Well 8 was scheduled for treatment back when Subsurface Technologies performed the cleanings on the first two wells, but there wasn't enough water in storage to be able to address cleaning Well 8. None of the other wells produce as much as Well 8 does, and it was critical to keep it online. Because Well 8 couldn't be done, Well 6 was cleaned instead. A new pump was installed in Well 8 but it still has a buildup of iron and manganese that needs to be taken care of. Jeff said he took Well 8 offline the previous week to replace a feed pump, and when he put it back online and ran off some water to clear the lines, the water was extremely dirty and brown. He said it had to be flushed for two hours to clear it up, and it should be scheduled for treatment. He said it should probably be done late in the year when the demand for water dropped. Also, Jeff recommended that system-wide hydrant flushing be performed before Well 8 is taken offline for cleaning. He said as long as there are no major leaks to draw down the water supply, it should be ok to go ahead and schedule the well treatment. Tom told Jeff to contact Subsurface to get a schedule set for Well 8 for later in the year.

Jamie gave the engineering report. She said the study will be started to look into solutions to the sewage issues. Act 537 Planning requires the alternative analysis to be done before any changes can be considered. Jamie said one of the things that will be studied is the possibility of using outside hauling. One of the issues with outside hauling is making certain there are adequate dumping facilities to take the place of the PCMA's sewage treatment plant. She said if other facilities are available, they must have the capacity for additional sewage processing that was previously treated by the PCMA's plant. Additionally, if other facilities are available, utilizing them may require additional permitting which takes some time to obtain. Jamie said the study will look at all the factors involved with alternative pumping and hauling. She said one of the things the facility managers need to consider is if they want to accept sewage from places other than their own customer base. Jamie said some plants aren't accepting hauled-in waste anymore because of getting loads that cause problems, which results in not accepting outside loads for a period of time. If that happens, haulers have to look for another facility to dump the loads. Jeff said that happened with the Schuylkill Haven plant. He said

the PCMA hauled a load to the Haven plant which tested bad for something, and the plant operator refused any further septage from the Authority.

Among other alternatives, another possible solution that will be looked into will be central sewage. Jamie said the study will consider the cost per connection and how the cost for construction might be funded. She said the monthly or quarterly fee that will be required for central sewage will be determined by a lot of factors. The entire study will produce a variety of alternative solutions which the Board will need to look at in order to make a decision. But no matter what alternative solution is chosen, the PA DEP must approve it. Also, abandoning the PCMA's sewage treatment plant may not be favored by the DEP because it would require assurance that the customer's holding tanks and septic tanks will be properly pumped out and maintained for the DEP to even consider it. Jamie said it's not impossible, but it's very difficult to abandon a sewage treatment plant once it's in place and operating.

Jim Ridderhoff asked Jamie how long it might take to complete the alternative solutions study. She said it would probably take two to three months, but they could have some initial results to report at the September meeting. She said it all depends on how long it takes to gather the information and data needed to complete the analysis.

In legal matters, Joe Zerbe said there was nothing that needed to be addressed in the past month.

The Board discussed a customer water bill that had exceptionally high overage. The amount of water the meter registered was the equivalent of the PCMA's small storage tank. The question that came up was, if that much water was used, where was the evidence of it? The customer's basement was dry and there was no sign of water flooding the grounds. The representative who was familiar with the new Perl meters was asked if it was possible that the meter malfunctioned. In two separate discussions pertaining to the high usage, the representative said it was possible that the meter malfunctioned, and it had happened in at least one other instance that he knew of. In light of the information gathered, the Board voted to credit the high overage amount upon motion by Dennis Scharadin, seconded by Matt Gruber, and carried by all. The Board also said the meter needed to be replaced as soon as possible.

Jim noted that the 2016 audit was completed and submitted by Jones and Co. prior to the Board meeting.

There being no further business, Jerry Weiss motioned for adjournment, Dennis Scharadin seconded the motion, carried by all. Jim Ridderhoff adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm.

Meeting minutes were taken, prepared, and submitted by Jennifer Hoy.