

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE  
PLUM CREEK MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY  
June 2018**

A regular meeting of the Board of The Plum Creek Municipal Authority was held on June 19, 2018 at the Plum Creek Municipal Authority Business Office Building, South Manheim Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania.

Board members present at the meeting were Jim Ridderhoff, Jerry Weiss, and Corby Lewis. Tom Nagle and Matt Gruber were absent. Others in attendance were Dave Bright (SSM Engineering), Joe Zerbe (PCMA Attorney), Keenan Engle (PCMA Operations Manager – Select Environmental), and property owners who signed the attendance sheet: Nelson Hess, Richard Hardy, Stephen & Marita Gardocki, Ronald Larsen, Gary Schultz, Joe Haggerty, Paul Purcell, Jim Corkins, Lisa Ridgers, Kathy Mongrain, Daniel Herner, Frank Miller, Barb Freiwald, Mike & Ellen Perricci, and Jean Schreiber & George.

Jim Ridderhoff called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The minutes for the April, 2018 meeting were accepted by motion of Jerry Weiss, seconded by Corby Lewis, carried by all. The May, 2018 meeting was not held due to lack of a quorum.

The Treasurer's reports for April, 2018 and May, 2018 were reviewed and accepted by motion of Corby Lewis, seconded by Jerry Weiss, carried by all.

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

- Normal operations continue. There were no violations to report for the period.
- All wells are operational. Three wells are currently online, and the wells are being rotated to avoid overflowing the water storage tanks.
- The Booster Station is at 15.0 psi.
- All pumps at the Booster Station are operational and are rotating on a monthly basis.

- Hydrant flushing took place during the first two weeks of June but it was not completed.
- Meters are currently being read.

In sewage operations, Keenan reported that:

- Normal operations continue. No violations to report for this period.
- Approximately 32 septic pumps are in the backlog. One pump truck is operational. The pump on the Mack pumper stopped working and is being taken to Axiom for repair. A large number of septic pumps and inspections are being requested for properties that are being sold, and they have to be moved to the top of the list due to transfer dates.
- Both pickup trucks are operational.
- A new effluent valve was ordered for the sewage treatment plant. The current valve is constantly malfunctioning to the point of having more sewage than can be processed.

Jerry asked Keenan if he looked into hauling to other places if we couldn't process all the sewage we hauled. Keenan said Pine Grove would take almost any kind of sewage but Haven is more particular and most times will only take holding tanks. He said running to Pine Grove would be time consuming and we wouldn't be able to do as many pumps in a day. Jerry asked about the cost of dumping at another place. Keenan said he could find out. Jerry suggested pumping on a Saturday to try to catch up on the septic backlog. Keenan said that could be done and they might be able to do two septics during a half day on a Saturday but that depends on how difficult the pump would be. Jim said we should make sure two pump trucks are operable before doing that. Jen said we're actually behind more than the 32 pumps because she was unable to send pump notices out for June because it would just add to the backlog.

Jim asked why people in the development had no water during the flushing process. It's common to have low water pressure but it's not common for customers to have no water. Keenan said he doesn't know why it happened because there was plenty of water in the storage tanks, and the pressure stabilized later in the day.

A customer said his water pressure gauge was damaged because of flushing. The PCMA does not install anything other than the meters for customers, so Keenan told him he would have to contact a plumber to repair it. He also told the customer to submit his complaint to the PCMA Board, which he did by way of an invoice. Jerry asked Keenan if any of the customer's neighbors called about damage.

Keenan said they only called to say they had no water but nobody else called to report any damage. Jerry asked how many hydrants at one time are opened and Keenan said only one hydrant at a time is flushed. Jim said the Board would take the invoice under consideration.

Keenan said he and Joe had to do a makeshift repair on the return line on the clarifiers at the plant. He said it's been a struggle to keep up with the pumps with the plant not operating properly until the new valve arrives and is installed.

In engineering matters, Dave Bright said routine matters were taken care of including correspondence with Jen and Keenan. Other than that, there was nothing to report.

In legal matters, Joe Zerbe said routine matters were addressed. He said he also spoke with the LWPOA's attorney. Other than that, there was nothing to report.

Jim opened the floor to those in attendance to discuss the future of PCMA sewage operations in Lake Wynonah. Gary Shultz, who recently moved to the Lake Wynonah community, said he read the sewage alternatives report online and asked if the water rates were subsidizing the sewage operations. Jim said it is helping with the sewage operations. Gary Shultz asked how water subsidizing the sewage gets approved. Jim said the PCMA is a combined sewage and water authority and Joe Zerbe added that the water end of things just picked up the sewage shortfall naturally. There was no special meeting to address water subsidizing sewage because it was just how things evolved. Dave Bright said that the PCMA does not require any other entity's approval to establish rates and use the revenues where needed. Gary Shultz asked if the sewage rates would go up or down if the PCMA turned sewage operations over to outside haulers and closed its plant. Joe Zerbe said the rates would probably go up because they're not high enough now.

Mike Perricci asked if the PCMA obtained competitive bids from outside vendors for pumping services. Jim said outside haulers were asked if they would be interested in pumping in the Lake Wynonah development but the pumpers would be setting their own rates, and the PCMA would have no control over that. Jim asked Jen about rate information she received from the private haulers. Jen said there were not many pumpers who submitted rates but overall, based on the few who did respond, she said it looks like holding tank people would pay a lot more for a pump and the septic people would probably pay less. But that would depend on whether or not the pumpers changed their rates down the line, and not everyone responded to a request for rates even though she promised anonymity. She said it's not only the water subsidizing the sewage, the septic people are subsidizing

holding tank people. Jerry added that people have to keep in mind, too, that the rates submitted by the private haulers may change depending on the distance and elevation of the tanks they're pumping in relation to where the truck has to pump from, and how long it takes to pump the tank.

Ellen Perricci said that the marketability of Lake Wynonah should be taken into consideration so that other people think it's a great place to live. She said you have to think long-term and not just with the problems that are going on now. She said it bothers her that Lake Wynonah is Plum Creek's only customer and that they [PCMA] get to tell everyone what to do. Jim said that's what the PCMA was commissioned to do when it was set up by both Wayne and South Manheim Townships, and water & sewage is the PCMA's only responsibility.

Ron Larsen gave a brief history of the Lake Wynonah development and the PCMA. He said the water authority was set up by the two townships at the request of American Realty, which was the original entity that owned everything in Lake Wynonah. When American Realty went bankrupt, the only thing it kept was the waterworks. The townships were asked by American Realty to create the sewer authority. In the beginning, the Authority only addressed sewage in Lake Wynonah. American Realty then turned the waterworks over to the LWPOA, but the LWPOA could not afford it so they went to the townships to turn the water over to the municipal authority. That's how the Authority ended up with both sewage and water operations. Ron said all of this was done by Township ordinances that the PCMA (then LWMA) has to abide by. He said the PCMA was the first to develop a sewage management program which then became the forefront of other management programs in different areas outside of Lake Wynonah. He added that people along the Route 443 corridor hooked up to Wayne Township's central sewage at a current cost of \$45 a month, and he heard that the sewer lines were to be expanded along Route 183 in the future. Meanwhile, the PCMA has to follow the direction of both townships via their ordinances and its only responsibility is Lake Wynonah.

Ron said some people suggested organizing a consortium to try to get group rates for the property owners if the PCMA turns the sewage over to private haulers. He said if the PCMA turned over sewage to outside haulers it would only have the water to take care of. Ellen Perricci asked why the water comes from so far away. Ron said it doesn't come from far away; it comes from wells within the development. Ellen said the website said the water comes from the Poconos. Jen said she's reading the wrong website. Jim reiterated that the water for Lake Wynonah comes from wells that are situated within the development.

Gary Shultz asked if he was correct that the meeting with the DEP was to get approval for the PCMA to turn the sewage over to outside haulers. He said if the plan was approved, and the townships approved, then it would be up to the LWPOA to go to the haulers and try to find the lowest rates. He asked if the PCMA would be in control of that. Jim said it would be totally out of the PCMA's control. Dave Bright said he wanted to clarify that the purpose of the meeting with the DEP was not to seek approval for any particular plan but to obtain direction as to what steps would have to be followed depending on what is decided.

Jim Ridderhoff said nothing has been decided yet. He said there has been talk of different actions and directions to take but a solution has not yet been decided. Jim Corkins asked if there was a possibility that the LWPOA will be represented at the DEP meeting. Jim R. said it would not. Joe Zerbe said the meeting was for informational purposes and there would be no decision made or vote taken at the DEP meeting. He said the PCMA wants to get as much information from DEP as possible and to see how it feels about different things before a lot of money is spent pursuing an avenue that wouldn't be feasible. Joe said we want to find out what they have to say and, based on that, the earliest anyone will know anything is at the next PCMA Board meeting in July. Jim Corkins asked if anyone addressed the list of questions the LWPOA submitted to the PCMA and asked if there was any value to the options the LWPOA presented. Jim R. said the LWPOA's input was considered but the PCMA Board didn't think the suggestions the LWPOA made served the majority of the people.

Someone from the floor asked if the minutes from the DEP meeting will be available to the public. Joe Zerbe said there won't be any minutes.

Ron Larsen pointed out that there are two PCMA Board members who were two-term members on the LWPOA Board in the past, with one of them serving as president, and he was instrumental in getting the management company in Lake Wynonah. He said the LWPOA is very much represented in the sewage matters in that both of those PCMA Board members have plenty of experience on both sides to make a decision about sewage issues. He added that he doesn't know why the LWPOA is so concerned but maybe it's because four of the LWPOA Board members have holding tanks. Ron said that the LWPOA's suggestions regarding sewage operations doesn't represent him and the LWPOA Board's solution doesn't represent the majority of the people in the Lake.

Joe Haggerty, in response to Ron Larsen, said the LWPOA represents all the people in the Lake, not just the 85%. He said what the LWPOA was trying to do was to come up with an optimal solution that doesn't penalize the 85% of the people who

have septic tanks but basically makes it bearable for the 15% of the people who have holding tanks.

A question was asked about the capacity of the sewage treatment plant and how long the plant will be able to continue until a decision can be made. Dave Bright said there's no capacity issue. It's a matter of a continual drain on the water revenues to maintain sewage operations which will be exasperated because of the continued deterioration of the sewage plant.

Marita Gardocki asked about the time frame for a decision to be made about the sewage. Jim said the PCMA is trying to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. She said she's sorry for the holding tank people who may have to pay more but, just for the Board's information, the majority of the people in the Lake would really like to have their own individual haulers.

Jim said the Lake Wynonah development was marketed in the early 1970s as a second-home subdivision and many of the first homes that were built did not perk for an on-lot sewage disposal system. American Realty wanted to sell the lakefront properties first, because they were the premium properties, and a majority of the lakefront properties were built with holding tanks in the early years of the development. In 1988, or thereabout, the DEP wouldn't allow installation of holding tanks anymore. Since then, all homes that were built had to install on-lot septic tank systems. He said there are now numerous other systems that can be used such as peat-based filtration systems and aerobic systems that are designed for smaller spaces. He said the PCMA has been recommending that holding tanks switch over to septic systems for the past five years because holding tank pump prices will continue to go up. Many people have switched over, and many are in the process of converting. He said of the roughly 160 holding tank properties that still exist in Lake Wynonah, about 90 are part-time residents and the rest are full-time residents.

Corby said that PHFA (PennVest) offers financing for homeowner septic systems at 2% interest and you can take the loan for 30 years. He said holding tank people should try to look into seeing what type of septic system their property might perk for and take advantage of the low-interest loans to switch over.

Ron Larsen asked if the Board looked at central sewage using the Schuylkill Haven sewage treatment plant for processing. Jim said that was one of the sewage alternatives that was looked at. Ron said maybe they should look at the Wayne Township side of the Lake for central sewage because they have an infrastructure already halfway to Lake Wynonah and, if they bring the lines up Route 183, the

Lake lines could tie into Wayne Township lines. Jim said it would be very expensive to do that. He added that the PCMA was commissioned to maintain the sewage treatment in the Lake Wynonah development and it's the PCMA's responsibility to make sure all of the septic systems are operating properly and that the sewage is transported and treated efficiently. In spite of a few incidents of broken septic pipes or people overflowing holding tanks, the quality of Lake Wynonah water has been very good and has not been affected. It's important for the PCMA to continue to take care of the sewage in the most reasonable way for all the homeowners, and there's no easy answer.

Jim Corkins said that the easy answer seems to be to open the gates to anyone who wants to come in and drive a truck around and maybe it ends up in the lake and there goes the water quality. Jim R. asked if he was assuming that outside pumpers are going to be less efficient than the PCMA is. Jim C. said yes, that's what he means. Jim C. said since our primary pumper has been laid up there have been two people there to pump his tank and he doesn't know why. Jen said a new pumper is being trained and there are two people there because one is training the other. That's why there have been two people at pumps. And if the trainer isn't comfortable that the new employee knows enough about a particular tank that's being pumped, he goes along to point things out. Jim C. said the PCMA is behind in the pumps. Jen said the holding tanks are not behind. The septic pumps are behind because a lot of homes have been sold and are being transferred, and they want septic pumps and inspections performed prior to the sale. The sale properties have to be worked in with the routine 3-year pumpings that are due. Jim R. said he cannot vouch for outside haulers but they have to be registered, licensed, and their trucks inspected just like the Authority.

A person attending the meeting asked if the meeting with the DEP the next day was to discuss different options for handling the sewage issues or if it's for discussing the different haulers who would be coming in should the PCMA decide to go with that solution. Jim Ridderhoff said the purpose for the meeting was to discuss what the PCMA needs to do to amend the way that sewage now is handled. A question was asked if that meant the sewage treatment plant would be upgraded or if the solution would be more of a financial manner. Jim said the sewage plant is in dire need of repair to the tune of about \$800,000 and the PCMA is trying to determine if sewage operations can continue in a way that's efficient without having to spend \$800,000 to do it. One of the options is outside haulers.

As there were no further questions or comments from the people attending the meeting, Jim Ridderhoff thanked the people for coming and for sharing their input.

There being no further business, Jerry Weiss motioned for adjournment, Corby Lewis seconded the motion, carried by all. Jim Ridderhoff adjourned the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

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