

Board of Municipal Utilities
Meeting Minutes
January 2, 2024
201 Miller Road
Avon Lake, Ohio

Call to Order – Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM. The meeting was held in-person using web-based video conferencing technology and streamed live over Facebook.

Present: Mr. Abram, Mr. Dzwonczyk, Mr. Rickey, Mr. Rush, and Mrs. Schnabel.

Also present: CUE Munro, CUO Yuronich, Attorney Diane Calta of Mansour Gavin and resident Jay Lawniczak of 208 James Circle.

Approve Minutes

Mr. Dzwonczyk presented the Minutes of the December 19, 2023 regular meeting. With no additional changes, additions or corrections noted, he ordered that the minutes stand and be distributed as presented.

Public Speakers

None.

Correspondence

None.

Expenditures

Following review of expenses for funds and amounts as follows, Mr. Abram moved, Mr. Rickey seconded, to approve the expenditures of December 15 through December 28, 2023:

Water Fund 701	\$ 4,989,731.30
Wastewater Fund 721	\$ 3,303,147.63
ETL1 Fund 703	\$ 24,950.00
ETL2 Fund 762	\$ 110,402.47
LORCO Fund 749	\$ 1,826,265.26
Water Construction Fund 704	\$ 39,850.00

Ayes (per voice vote): Abram, Dzwonczyk, Rickey, Rush, and Schnabel

Nays: None

Motion carried.

2024 Strategic Priorities

Mr. Munro presented several strategic priorities that the organization intends to focus on for 2024. He informed the Board that the top priority will be the pursuit of ISO certification in Asset Management and other quality initiatives. Mr. Munro stated that there will be a presentation to the Board on the status of these endeavors in the first quarter of 2024. Mr. Munro also listed other key priorities that includes but is not limited to entering the construction phase of

improvements at the Water Filtration Plant (WFP), land acquisition near the WFP site for future expansion and growth of the water service area to the west and south of current areas served.

Mr. Dzwonczyk asked if the purchase of some of these properties would amount to significant economic development within Avon Lake and Mr. Munro replied that it absolutely will have a positive effect within the city.

Mr. Munro informed the Board that there have been several recent news articles that focused on the regionalization of sewers within Lorain County and that Avon Lake Regional Water is involved in these discussions. This is something that will be analyzed by ALRW staff and if it makes sense for the organization and ALRW customers this will be something that is pursued. If it doesn't benefit all involved then ALRW would step aside.

Mr. Dzwonczyk asked if the news article presented to members prior to the meeting was related. Mr. Munro stated that he believes that Vermillion is looking at having to spend \$26 million to bring their treatment plants into compliance if they were to continue treating their water and wastewater independently. Mr. Abram responded that it was actually \$76 million dollars. Mr. Munro added that regionalization is a way that can help prevent having to pass such large costs on to the ratepayers.

Mr. Munro stated that ALRW is interested in helping our largest bulk customer, Rural Lorain County Water Authority (RLCWA) grow their service area.

Mr. Munro stated that another goal that will benefit all of our bulk customers is entering the construction phase of the ETL Improvements. He mentioned that this improvement has been slowed by the ongoing negotiations with the railroad but is confident that we will continue to move towards the construction phase in 2024.

Mr. Dzwonczyk wanted to make sure that we will be following all of the terms included within the Great Lakes Pact that ensures that any water withdrawn from Lake Erie is ultimately returned to this watershed. Mr. Munro stated that this agreement is always followed and the RLCWA specifically is very cognizant of where they pump their water as their service area includes areas south of the divide. Mr. Munro also stated that this is why potential agreements to construct piping that would withdraw water from Lake Erie and pump it to areas that need water outside of the Great Lakes watershed will not come to fruition.

Mr. Munro also added that posting requests for qualifications to update the water system master plan, capital improvement plan for both our system and the ETLs, along with updating the cybersecurity master plan will be undertaken in 2024. Mr. Munro stated that there has been considerable investment in updating the SCADA systems at both of the treatment plants along with IT infrastructure throughout the organization. Mr. Munro stated that the goal was to ensure that every IT improvement within the organization follows the same guidelines.

Mr. Dzwonczyk inquired what types of engineering firms would be submitting proposals. Mr. Munro replied that he felt consulting firms that have submitted proposals in the past when we had an RFQ for the ALRW Risk and Resiliency plan include HDR, Stantec, AECOM and others would most likely be submitting.

Mr. Dzwonczyk also inquired if the cybersecurity master plan would be a subset of the updates to the master plan. Mr. Munro stated that it has been discussed as having one firm handle all of the updates because staff have witnessed these consulting and design firms have specialized staff that handles specifically instrumentation and controls along with cybersecurity personnel. Mr. Dzwonczyk asked if there was potentially money available in the form of grants to help fund

this engineering. Mr. Munro stated that this is definitely a possibility and staff will be looking for applicable grants throughout this process.

Mr. Rush asked if it would potentially exclude some submittals if it were posted as a single project. Mr. Rush stated that there may be some cybersecurity firms interested that would not be interested/qualified in updating the water system master plan but specialize in cybersecurity only. Mr. Munro said that staff will be considering that as ALRW gets closer to posting the RFQs.

Project Updates

Power Plant Update: Mr. Yuronich informed the Board that work continues on the main portion of the power plant property on the north side of Lake Rd.

ETL Design Services: No updates.

WFP Improvements: Mr. Yuronich informed the Board that due to questions that arose around compliance with the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, staff had decided to postpone the bid opening until January 10th. Mr. Yuronich stated that one of the questions raised cast doubt on whether one of the specified tanks to hold the liquid lime would meet the BABA requirements or if the manufacturer's warranty would comply with the bid specifications. He added that it was difficult to get answers from the suppliers due to the holidays.

Additional Storage Building: Mr. Yuronich confirmed that all of the commercial wash bay equipment has been delivered. Mr. Yuronich stated that staff has cleared out two of the bays in the additional storage building to be used as a staging area for this equipment. Mr. Yuronich added that January 8th is when a representative from Hydro Chem will be onsite to oversee the installation and startup of the equipment along with providing necessary training to staff on operation and maintenance of the wash bay equipment.

Mr. Dzwonczyk inquired when the wash bay equipment installation would be complete. Mr. Yuronich stated that he thought the end of the month is when it would be operational and Mr. Munro confirmed that two and a half weeks was the timeline he had been given.

Traveling Screen Replacement: Mr. Yuronich stated that there were no real updates as staff is still waiting on the arrival and programming of a PLC that will allow fully automatic operation of the travelling screen but that it continues to operate in manual mode with no issues.

Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer (ICP): Mr. Yuronich informed the Board that WFP Lab staff is going to begin sampling wastewater samples to be analyzed in conjuncture with testing from a third-party laboratory to ensure that results continue to match up with the testing performed on the new equipment. Mr. Yuronich stated that ALRW Lab Staff continue to pursue full certification through the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) for the ability to begin performing tests on drinking water and that they are striving to achieve this certification by the middle to end of February 2024.

Mr. Rickey stated that this seems like a very laborious process to get these approvals and wanted to know how long the approval was good for. Mr. Yuronich explained that the certification is good for two years but that subsequent renewals do not require the same level of involvement. Mr. Yuronich stated that the initial proficiency requirements and method developments are much more involved than what is required for renewal of that certification.

CUE Report

Mr. Munro stated that he and Mr. Yuronich were presented with a completed Standard Operating Procedure Manual that was compiled by the WFP Manager Jason Gibboney for both the WFP operation and the laboratory. Mr. Munro reminded the Board that this is a large portion of the ISO certification and is very important to ALRW's quality initiative. Mr. Munro stated that this is something that Mr. Yuronich had begun while he was the manager at the WFP and stated that this is not a static document but something that will be regularly updated.

Mr. Dzwonczyk asked if this will serve as a template that will be followed by others in the organization. Mr. Munro responded that yes it will. Mr. Munro added that we've had a standard template that allows for approval by a second person who has reviewed each procedure along with storage and tracking of revisions was developed by Mr. Gaydar and Mr. Larson in Engineering Services. Mr. Munro also stated that Mr. Hill at the Water Reclamation Facility has been putting in a lot of work on the SOP manual for the WRF as well since he began working for ALRW a few years ago.

Mr. Dzwonczyk stated that he agreed this is an important step in pursuing our quality initiative.

Miscellaneous & Member Reports

None.

Public Speakers

Mr. Lawniczak of 208 James Circle stated that during the heavy rainfall in August of 2023 that his home on James Circle experienced a sewer backup. Mr. Lawniczak informed the Board that his house sits at a noticeable lower elevation than some of the others in that neighborhood and wanted to know if others had reported backups as well.

Mr. Munro inquired if it was a storm or sanitary sewer backup. Mr. Lawniczak stated that it was a sanitary sewer backup. Mr. Munro stated that he was unsure if others had reported a backup but informed him that ALRW is currently taking the steps of a thorough investigation utilizing the camera truck to video and explore the sanitary sewer system in that area to determine if there are storm water cross-connections that still need to be separated or if other improvements need to be made. Mr. Munro inquired if Mr. Yuronich was aware of any other complaints. Mr. Yuronich responded that he believed there was another complaint because the ALRW camera truck had gone out there to perform some initial inspections at that time.

Mr. Munro asked Mr. Lawniczak to stick around after the meeting so that we can discuss further investigative efforts to diagnose what had happened. Mr. Munro stated that the camera work can be done in conjunction with smoke and dye testing to clarify where downspouts and sump pumps are emptied into.

Mr. Abram stated that he believed that the storm and sanitary sewer renovations in that area were performed in the late 1990's but that this work was completed by the City of Avon Lake and was not under the supervision of ALRW.

Executive Session

Mr. Rush moved, Mr. Abram seconded to meet in executive session as allowed by ORC §121.22 (G)(3) to discuss personnel matters, the purchase and/or sale of property and pending legal matters and to include the CUO, the Facility and Asset Manager, and a representative from Mansour Gavin.

Ayes (per voice vote): Abram, Dzwonczyk, Rickey, Rush and Schnabel
Nays: None
Motion carried.

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:12 PM.

The Board reconvened the public meeting at 7:35 PM.

Adjourn

As there was no further business, Mr. Abram moved, and Mrs. Schnabel seconded, to adjourn.
The meeting adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Ayes (per voice vote): Abram, Dzwonczyk, Rickey, Rush and Schnabel
Nays: None
Motion carried.

Approved January 16, 2024.

John Dzwonczyk, Chairman

Robert Munro, Clerk