

Board of Municipal Utilities
Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2021
201 Miller Road
Avon Lake, Ohio

Call to Order – Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM. As allowed by the Ohio Legislature during the Governor’s declared emergency, the meeting was held using web-based video conferencing technology and streamed live over Facebook.

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

Also present: Acting CUE Munro, Technical Support Specialist Collins, Community Outreach Specialist Arnold, Mayor Zilka, and Councilman Mark Spaetzel.

Approve Minutes

Chairman Dzwonczyk presented the Minutes of the December 15, 2020 regular meeting. With no 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 dated January 5, 2021, for funds and amounts as follows, Mr. Abram moved, Mr. Rush seconded, to approve the expenditures of January 5, 2021:

Water Fund 701	\$	123,352.46
Wastewater Fund 721	\$	124,261.84
MOR Fund 703	\$	5,617.67
MOR Fund 762	\$	10,742.81
LORCO Fund 749	\$	3,928.43
Wastewater Construction Fund 724	\$	119,600.00

Ayes (per roll-call vote): Abram, Dzwonczyk, Phillips, Rush and Schnabel.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Payment Plans

The Acting CUE reminded the Board that during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Avon Lake Regional Water has been offering flexible payment plan options to customers that were financially

impacted as a result of the pandemic. He said that of the 8,826 customers, 51 customers have been utilizing these payment plans. As of April 20th the Utility will be ending the payment plan option and all balances will be due by then. The Acting CUE added that Avon Lake Regional Water will continue to absorb the credit card processing fee for payments through April 20th. The Chairman asked that staff direct any customers experiencing financial hardships to Community Resource Services for assistance. Mr. Abram asked why the date of April 20th was chosen as the end date. The Acting CUE stated that the January bills went out on December 31st. He said those bills are due January 20th. He said that the second bill of the year will go out on March 30th, and they will be due on April 20th.

Project Updates

Redundancy & Future Capacity Project: The Acting CUE informed the Board staff will meet with HDR on January 6th to discuss the draft report and next steps for the project. Items of discussion will be the prioritization of project recommendations and design services.

Orthophosphate Point of Application: The Acting CUE said that staff has completed the contracting process with Underground Utilities, Inc. and is awaiting the signed contracts from City Hall. He added that UUI is scheduled to begin work at the end of January.

CUE Reports & Action Items

The Acting CUE briefed the Board on the COVID protocols and the continuing safety measures taken by the Utility. He said that a significant change took place at the beginning of the year regarding COVID sick leave. The stimulus package that was passed by the federal government in March 2020 included payroll tax credits for up to 80 hours per employee of COVID sick leave. He said that this was very valuable, but it ended on December 31, 2020. Those employees experiencing any illness or need to take time off related to COVID are now using their normal sick time. He added that he is thankful that the Utility was able to utilize those payroll tax credits while they were available.

The Technical Support Specialist updated the Board on Action Items progress. He said the billing flyer providing billing examples was completed and included in the January bills sent out to customers. He also said that staff has scheduled a work session on February 16 to present the draft of the new regulations with McMahan-DeGulis to the Board. He informed the Board that Mr. Tom Williams was sworn in on January 4, 2021 as the new Lorain County Administrator. He added that staff will be reaching to Mr. Williams regarding a meeting about LORCO.

Member Reports

The Chairman said that there is an Ohio Ethics Commission annual filing that must be completed for 2021. He said that as an elected official members are required to complete the filing each year.

Miscellaneous

None.

Public Speakers

Mark Bellatoni asked a question via Facebook regarding the Summer Sewage Adjustment. He asked what the process is to reconsider the wastewater adjustment for sprinkler systems. He said it works for the summer quarter but causes problems for the fall quarter. Mr. Bellatoni said this year with weather in the 70s and 80s in both September and October, outdoor water usage was still high in those months. He added that as a result, water bills increased for the fall in his neighborhood even though water usage decreased in the fall quarter. He said that one idea is to make the quarters May through July and August through October and apply the Summer Sewage adjustment to both. Mr. Bellatoni said he is open to other ideas, too.

The Acting CUE answered that as part of the regulations draft to be given to the Board in February there will be included a proposal to allow deduct meters. He said the Utility will still offer the Summer Billing Adjustment to those who do not have an in-ground sprinkler system and water with a hose. He added that staff will be offering a deduct meter program as there are a number of residents who already have deduct meters in their homes from when they were allowed years ago. He said he looks forward to presenting that program to the Board for their consideration.

Executive Session

Mr. Rush moved, and Mr. Abram seconded, to meet in executive session as allowed by ORC 121.22 G (1) to discuss personnel and include the Acting CUE, Community Outreach Specialist, and Technical Support Specialist.

Ayes (per roll-call vote): Abram, Dzwonczyk, Phillips, Rush and Schnabel.

Nays: None

Motion carried.

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 7:42 PM.

The Acting CUE welcomed Mr. Ryan Hill as the new Water Reclamation Facility Manager. He said the position was non-classified and he began working on January 4, 2021. The Acting CUE added that Mr. Hill successfully passed the drug screening, background check, and physical. His starting wage is \$45.67/hour.

Adjourn

As there was no further business, Mr. Abram moved to adjourn, and Mr. Phillips seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 PM.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Approved _____ 2021.

John Dzwonczyk, Chairman

Rob Munro, Clerk