

Board of Municipal Utilities  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**September 19, 2023**  
201 Miller Road  
Avon Lake, Ohio

***Call to Order – Roll Call***

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 PM following a Work Session. The meeting was held in-person using web-based video conferencing technology and streamed live over Facebook.

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

Excused: Mr. Abram

Also present: CUE Munro, CUO Yuronich and Attorney Coyne of Mansour Gavin.

***Approve Minutes***

Mr. Dzwonczyk presented the Minutes of the September 5, 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. Dzwonczyk moved, Mrs. Schnabel seconded, to approve the expenditures of September 1 through September 14, 2023:

Water Fund 701	\$	184,164.47
Wastewater Fund 721	\$	197,441.50
ETL1 Fund 703	\$	198,458.28
ETL2 Fund 762	\$	442,072.28
LORCO Fund 749	\$	8,195.86
Water Construction Fund 704	\$	82,527.12
Wastewater Construction Fund 724	\$	79,892.11

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

## ***Laborer***

Mr. Munro provided an informational item to the Board that the open laborer position has been filled. After posting the opening internally, advertising externally, and interviewing several candidates, staff selected Mr. Jack Butcher to fill this position. Mr. Butcher started on September 5, 2023 as a Laborer Step 5. Mr. Munro stated that he and the rest of the Avon Lake Regional Water staff would like to welcome Mr. Butcher to the team.

## ***Social Media Contract***

Mr. Munro stated that at the April 18, 2023 meeting the Board approved a six-month contract with the Social Gathering for social media and public relations services. That contract will expire in October 2023. Mr. Munro and Mr. Yuronich held a meeting with staff members of the Social Gathering on September 12, 2023 to review the work they have performed for Avon Lake Regional Water thus far. Staff are pleased with the work they have performed and asked them to provide a new one-year contract. Mr. Munro noted that the Social Gathering name will be rebranded to the name Lemon Stitch Media. Mr. Munro stated that staff will provide the new agreement to the Board at the October 3, 2023 meeting for the Board's consideration and approval.

## ***Project Updates***

*Power Plant Update:* Mr. Yuronich informed the Board that Avon Lake Environmental Redevelopment Group (ALERG) awarded the contract for connecting the effluent of the retention basin to the 108-inch storm sewer outfall. He stated that the catch basins have been ordered and those are estimated to have a three-week lead time. Mr. Yuronich added that ALERG has been manually pumping water from the retention basin into a storm sewer catch basin near the construction trailer that ALERG works out of on the south side of Lake Rd. Mr. Yuronich also stated that the expected end of the demolition has been moved to April of 2025 rather than January of that year.

*ETL Design Services:* Mr. Yuronich stated that the CUE has submitted a red-line agreement to Railpros and Norfolk Southern on September 5, 2023, regarding the license agreement for installing two 60-inch pipe casings under their railroad tracks for the new ETL suction line. Staff are waiting on a response from Railpros and Norfolk Southern.

Mr. Rickey inquired about the cost difference between realigning the suction line and just paying the large fee proposed by Railpros and Norfolk Southern for the easement agreement. Mr. Munro stated that we are actively negotiating with them. The biggest factor currently against the originally proposed agreement was the fact that it was only for a term of twenty years and not a perpetual agreement. Mr. Munro added that if some of our terms in the redline agreement are acceptable to Railpros and Norfolk Southern we may still be able to proceed with the original location.

*WFP Improvements:* Mr. Yuronich informed the Board that Engineering Services staff are compiling the list of alternate bid items along with the AutoCAD drawings and specifications that could potentially be added to the contract. Mr. Yuronich also added that Hoffmann and Metzger are beginning the plat consolidation of the Water Filtration Plant parcels.

*2022 Water Line Bundle Project:* Mr. Yuronich stated that Underground Utilities Inc will complete site restoration of any affected properties by the end of September allowing this project to be closed out.

*Additional Storage Building:* Mr. Yuronich stated that concrete surrounding the additional storage building on the north side and a small portion of the southwest corner were formed and poured.

Mr. Yuronich informed the Board that First Energy completed their portion of the electrical connection to the new switchgear for the additional storage building. Once the remaining electrical components are delivered and installed by North Bay Construction, they will complete the remaining items on the utility contract by the end of September 2023.

Mr. Yuronich stated that the shop drawings for the commercial truck wash system were reviewed and approved by Engineering Services staff. The equipment has been ordered and is expected to be delivered by early December 2023.

Mr. Rickey inquired about the expenses compared to the budget allocated for the additional storage building project. Mr. Munro responded that we are well within the approved budget and the project is nearing completion. When the project is completed, Mr. Munro will provide a project accounting report to the Board.

### ***CUE Report***

Mr. Munro informed the Board that he, Mr. Dzwonczyk, and Mr. Yuronich had a meeting with Jim Zimenik of the Lorain County Metroparks and that we are still working on coordinating future efforts to collaborate with them in the future. Mr. Dzwonczyk added that he felt it was a productive meeting and that the Metroparks are very enthusiastic about the work they do and look forward to continuing to work on ways to continue the partnership.

Mr. Munro updated the Board on the state of water meter replacements within Avon Lake Regional Water's distribution system. Previously there were approximately two hundred meters that did not read in the spring quarter and that number has escalated to just over eight hundred meters during the last read. Staff has already replaced four hundred meters this year but given the age of the meters we will need to continue to address the failing meters. Mr. Munro added that when staff goes out to do a re-read some are just a missed read while others do require replacement of the meter head or if the age of the meter is in question the entire unit will be changed out. Some of these swaps go relatively quickly while some may have circumstances that make it a more involved process. Mr. Munro stated that due to these replacements, money will need to be allocated within the budget to address this deficiency in the meter line item. When developers purchase a meter for a new service, that money comes in as a revenue and is not automatically allocated back into the meter fund of the budget. Mr. Munro wanted to clarify that although we are showing a negative percentage of funds in the maintenance supply budget line, a portion of that money has already been restored to the overall fund balance, just not in that line item. An example of this that Mr. Munro shared was that a new eight-inch meter that cost \$12,000 for a lot being developed on Pin Oak Parkway. Mr. Munro said that so far this year we have replaced nine two-inch meters at around \$2,500 each and three eight-inch meters. Since water sales are the source of revenue for our organization, we need to ensure that we are able to reliably track the sale of our product and since these large meters are for large users, we will see a quick return on that investment.

Mr. Dzwonczyk wanted to clarify that when we show we're exceeding a budget line item for meters and money needs to be appropriated, it doesn't necessarily mean that the budget is performing poorly. Mr. Munro confirmed this by saying that it is strictly an accounting issue and that when the Board approves the two overall budgets, personnel and other, the money for the meters is still coming in to the budget as revenue and it just needs to be put back into that specific line item. It doesn't mean that the overall budget is in distress. Meters come out of the "other" portion of the budget.

Mr. Munro also added that although revenues are down by about five percent due to the extremely wet summer, being conservative in revenue projections when preparing the budget help to offset variables like this.

Mr. Rickey asked for a clarification on the meter issues to ensure that there is no misunderstanding for our customers. He wanted to make sure that these meter issues are not causing any misreads where the bills are calculated incorrectly. Mr. Munro stated that the physical read on the meter is not affected by the transmitter. The correct number is always displayed on the meter body, but when the battery lacks the power to transmit the read that is the issue we are dealing with. Mr. Munro also stated that not all of the eight hundred meters that required to be re-read were completely dead, they just had to be manually read as a follow up. Signals can get missed when staff are driving around collecting the reads.

Mr. Dzwonczyk expressed that there are issues with cellular bandwidth available at times throughout the area. Internet traffic can be bogged down by people using the internet for nefarious purposes such as cyber-attacks and this can result in slower access to internet speeds. Mr. Munro stated that this is one of the reasons ALRW went with the Master Meter system that uses its own radio frequency that is unique to our organization.

Mr. Munro informed the Board that the old Division Rd. water tower that is due to be demolished provides an annual revenue of about \$160,000 through cellular provider leases. He stated that Mr. Yuronich and Mr. Kimevski have been in talks with various companies that could erect a stand-alone cell tower that would not only provide ALRW with the ability to continue collecting revenue after the tower is demolished but also provide ALRW with space on a tower to install our own equipment. Mr. Munro said that would include a repeater antenna to communicate with the new radio-read meters that we are installing. The proposed cell tower would be approximately one hundred and ninety feet compared to the one hundred and twenty feet provided by the Division Rd. tower. This could help provide better cellular service in that area of Avon Lake.

Mr. Dzwonczyk stated that a structure like this would require approval from the planning commission and Mr. Munro affirmed that statement. Mr. Dzwonczyk also clarified an earlier comment by saying that although there are issues with the strength of cellular signals in areas of Avon Lake, sometimes you observe slow internet speeds even when you are displaying a strong cellular signal.

Mr. Rush inquired if the footprint of the cellular tower would fit within the available space at the Division Rd. tower property. Mr. Munro stated that it will easily fit within the fenced area at the site.

Mr. Yuronich provided an update to the Board about a question from a previous meeting regarding PFAS and forever chemicals. The Avon Lake Fire Department stated that they purchased PFAS-free fire fighting foams and have begun only using those foams. This will help prevent additional PFAS compounds from entering the environment and ultimately Lake Erie that is the source of our drinking water.

Mr. Rush inquired about progress with the United States Army Corps of Engineering regarding the Eastern Transmission Line permit approval. Mr. Munro stated that there have not been any updates.

### ***Miscellaneous & Member Reports***

Mr. Dzwonczyk stated that he will not be in attendance at the next meeting and Mr. Rush will fill in for him as Chairman.

### ***Public Speakers***

None.

### ***Executive Session***

Mr. Rush moved, Mrs. Schnabel seconded, to meet in executive session as allowed by ORC §121.22 (G)(1), (G)(2) and (G)(3) to discuss personnel matters, the purchase and/or sale of property and pending legal matters and to include the CUE and the CUO and a represent.

Ayes (per roll-call vote): Dzwonczyk, Rickey, Rush and Schnabel

Nays: None

Motion carried.

The Board entered Executive Session at 7:24 PM

The Board reconvened the public meeting at 8:09 PM.

### ***Adjourn***

As there was no further business, Mr. Rush moved, and Mr. Dzwonczyk seconded, to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 PM.

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Approved October 3, 2023.

John Dzwonczyk, Chairman

Robert Munro, Clerk