

# *Weaverland Valley Authority*

## **Continued Meeting Minutes**

February 16, 2017

The Board of the Weaverland Valley Authority (“Authority”) met at the East Earl Township building 4610 Division Hwy, East Earl, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania on February 16, 2017 to continue the meeting from February 6, 2017. Chairman Ken Witmer called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and informed all present that the meeting may be being recorded by a resident.

The following Board members were present: Ken Witmer, Harold Kilhefner, Gene Pierce, Scott Marburger, Jerrene Zimmerman, Randy Miller and Jason Firestine. Also present were Bradford J. Harris, Good & Harris LLP; Jeff Sweater, ELA; and Denise Bensing, Administrative Assistant.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Henry Martin and Nate Martin were present to discuss the possibility of connecting their nearby property into the sewer line proposed on Conestoga View Dr. Jeff explained that they could apply for a Sewage Facilities Planning Module which would allow them to connect in. Scott also noted that if the building is not within 150 feet of the line they will not be required to connect but if they install a sand mound and build the residence within 150 feet of the line they will be required to connect even if they just put in a sand mound. Jeff noted that they will need to wait until the treatment plant is operating in approximately 4 years before discharging to the sewer system. Nate Martin asked if installing a temporary tank would be an option until the plant is operating. Jeff advised them to contact the Township SEO.

### **RATE STUDY STATUS:**

Rate Study Update: Mr. Busch explained that all the information he received to date has been incorporated but he is still waiting on most of the information needed from Terre Hill. Gene asked how soon he could provide a list of what is still needed from Terre Hill. Mr. Busch said he can provide a list to Jeff in a few days. Gene and Jeff thought all the information has been provided from Terre Hill.

Recommendation for Grinder Pumps: Mr. Busch first explained his personal opinion is that he doesn't like for an Authority to own the grinder pumps. Ken explained that he would be reluctant to take a vote at this meeting without the entire board present. He also explained that they have tossed around the idea of charging a service fee for all grinder pumps.

Mr. Busch distributed a grinder pump evaluation which showed how many grinder pumps are on the current systems and how many are anticipated with the new system. David Busch has always used a useful life of 20 years when analyzing grinder pumps. Mr. Busch also distributed a replacement cost evaluation. A replacement cost of \$2,650.00 was used for all pumps. This cost included the pump, panel, and labor. The East Earl Sewer Authority operator was present and he noted that a Liberty pump costs approximately \$1,100.00 and a Barnes pump costs approximately \$1,600.00. A control panel costs approximately \$600.00 and can be installed in 1-2 hours. Mr. Busch noted that if the Authority is going to own them then they need to plan ahead for the replacement of them and must make sure the money is set aside. If the Authority makes provisions for the cost to replace the pumps, then they are covered. Scott noted the budget committee for East Earl Sewer Authority has been putting money away to cover the costs to maintain the pumps since it began.

A few negatives Mr. Busch pointed out is that customers will compare their charges which would include a grinder pump reserve to others. He also has seen authorities not put enough money away for grinder pump replacements.

Scott explained that although he understands that there is always change, the East Earl Sewer Authority has been dealing with the grinder pumps since the mid-80's. Most of the homeowners didn't want the grinder pumps either but they had no choice. Scott is also concerned about turning them over to the property owners because they could go through 5 or 6 plumbers who don't know what they are doing and rack up some large bills and still not have the problem fixed. Mr. Busch would recommend the Authority have a list of plumbers for property owners to call. Scott explained that he is on a gravity part of the system and he has paid for customers who have grinder pumps all along. His thought is that it is all one system and we are all in it together.

Mr. Busch explained that if the Authority is going to work its way out of the grinder pump business then when a pump is replaced that the homeowner should be required to sign an agreement transferring ownership over to the property owner.

Nelson Groff said the board is missing one key issue. All customers are going to be required to pay for the new treatment plant whether their sewage is treated there or not. The board needs to look at this as a whole. Or, he asked, are customers not going to the new treatment plant going to pay less?

Gene explained that he looks at the function of a wastewater system as being collection, conveyance and treatment. He views the grinder pump as part of the household and he feels this way because then everybody is treated the same. He also expressed that he doesn't want to be living with a legacy. He wants to provide a better system.

Scott noted that although the grinder pumps are on the home owner's property, the Authority has easements to each grinder pump. Brad noted that unless there is a release in the easement, the Authority could be liable when working on the property although most liability is when sewer backs up in to the house.

Harold feels that the grinder pumps are an integral part of the system. Harold asked if the proposed system could be a gravity design. Jeff explained that it would be too expensive to have it all gravity. Jeff explained that it is cheaper to install low pressure especially if the Authority is not going to own the pumps.

Mr. Busch did note the low pressure is a closed system and therefore has no I & I, whereas a gravity system will eventually have I & I and therefore more expensive to treat due to I & I.

Randy questions how many people would not be prepared to pay to replace a grinder pump when it fails and is the Authority helping homeowners budget for the expense. Jeff explained that the Authority could have pumps in stock which could be loaned to homeowners or they could buy them. Mr. Busch said there will be property owners who can't pay. In this situation, the Authority could pay then lien the property.

Randy asked Bruce how many pumps are replaced a year. Bruce said he averages about 6 callouts a month. Not all of them require a pump to be replaced. Some callouts may only require capacitors or floats. He also explained that if the call out is due to a customer flushing something they shouldn't, the customer is notified that if another call out is due to flushing items that shouldn't be flushed they will be charged for the call.

Harold spoke with eight authorities and he will discuss this with the Day-to-Day Committee at their next meeting.

Recommendations for Terre Hill Assets: Gene explained that most everything is very straight forward. Mr. Busch said he was not aware of the situation with the assets. Gene explained that some of the assets to be used by the WVA are on properties occupied by other Borough facilities. Gene also explained that the other major thing that Terre Hill has been doing is an inter-municipal transfer to pay for common overhead of the Borough. They would like input on how to handle these unique liabilities. Mr. Busch said he feels, in regards to the assets, the Authority should own the assets. Gene explained that the rates are artificially high due to the inter-municipal transfers and he needs Mr. Busch to understand this when doing the rate study. A separate meeting will be set up. Gene invited any of the Authority members to attend if they would like for full disclosure.

Gene Pierce moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m., seconded by Scott Marburger. The next meeting will be held on March 6, 2017, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise A. Bensing

Cc: Scot Ash  
Harold Kilhefner  
Scott Marburger  
Randy Miller  
L. Eugene Pierce  
Kenneth Witmer  
Jerrene Zimmerman  
Jason Firestine  
Bradford J. Harris, Attorney  
East Earl Township  
Terre Hill Borough  
Robert Rissler  
Jeff Sweater, Consulting Engineer  
Gary Martin, Becker Engineering  
Frank Mincarelli, Blakinger Thomas