

DATE: Wednesday, December 18, 2024

The regular monthly meeting of the Womelsdorf-Robeson Joint Authority was held Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Womelsdorf Borough Hall.

It was noted that in order to assist in the preparation of the meeting minutes, the Secretary records the meeting. The recording is deleted following the approval by the Board of the minutes and no permanent recording is kept by the Secretary.

The following members were present:

Steve Bright	Ralph Honigmann	Matthew Miller	Rod Lebo
Mark Spotts	Jack Morris	Barbara Orth	

Sr Operations Specialist, Jason Coyle was absent. Eric Grinrod, Geologist from SSM attended (famous Rock Doctor), Solicitor Jestyn Payne, Dennis Miller and Jacob Sonnen (Authority Operators) were also in attendance.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag of the USA.

### Visitors:

#### **Robesonia Fish & Game Association: Scott Fidler, Brandon Ressler, Kristin Hoffman**

Scott Fidler, President of Robesonia Fish and Game spoke and noted that their organization has been around since 1917. The fish pens were built in the 1950's. That is the time they began stocking the creek and the fishing rodeos started. They have been taking care of the hatchery since that time. They work with the Fish Commission to obtain, feed and medicate fish as needed. In addition, they give tours to kids and parents, the high school students come to assist and get their community service time. They are interested in purchasing the portion of land that the hatchery is on to say that it is owned by the Robesonia Fish and Game and would make it easier to obtain grants. They would like to improve the hatchery and install electric for lighting and aeration. There have been thousands of fish lost over the years due to no electric. They do not wish to purchase the parking area. Their attorney is Elizabeth Fiorini. Scott Fidler is the contact person for the group. Chairman Bright has their contact information. They are willing to foot the bills for all costs including surveys, etc. The group has offered \$3,500 for the approximately .17 acres. Chairman Bright said the WRJA board will discuss and our solicitor will do some research. Will get in touch with them with any updates or questions. They left at 7:12 PM.

**Brian Focht of C2C Design Group** came regarding the Bethany Road Subdivision. It was previously owned by Jack Keener. Josh Martin recently purchased and is looking to develop. The process has been started with Millcreek and Lebanon County. There are 10 single family lots to develop. Came to talk about water service. Originally talked to Newmanstown Water. Worked out a design based on elevations and pressures that Newmanstown could provide. This would provide 3 laterals coming in with 3 meter pits. Mr. Focht noted as going through process we were reminded about the first right of refusal. It seems it will be easier to go through WRJA for water service. Mr. Martin will be willing to give up (extinguish) easement. Mark Spotts asked if the easement could be subdivided to WRJA so we would have access to our land to get to Gold Spring tank (emergency access). It was suggested to have access of 20 feet with another 20 feet temporary construction easement. Mr. Focht will take this proposal back to Mr. Martin and redo plans if he agrees. He plans to return to our January meeting with information.

**Berks Trail Works: Will Hawke** stated he has been running and hiking our property and picking up trash and flags as going through. The group is still committed to keeping land cleaned up. He came across 2 hunters who illegally killed a buck. They contacted the game commission. Will helped them and wanted us to know they are cooperating with other property users. **Kory Koehler** spoke he has been on our property since 2015. Kory met core group of people and loved being there. Hoping in the future we will work together with them and restore the privilege of riding bike on WRJA property. Will asked if they could have an environmentalist attend a future meeting? He was advised to contact secretary to get on the agenda. Kory asked that their issue is addressed when working with Berks Nature.

## **Secretary's Report:**

The minutes of the meeting held Tuesday, November 26, 2024 were reviewed and approved on a motion by Ralph Honigmann, seconded by Rod Lebo. Unanimously approved.

Correspondence:

Drought Watch Letter from DEP. Gave to Dennis.

Letter from Borough of Robeson: Reappointment of Mark Spotts to WRJA board expiring on 12/31/29.

Reminder regarding Annual Report of Municipal Authorities. Gave to Ralph.

PA Exemption Certificate: Keystone Air Power LLC

## **Treasurer's Report:**

1. The Treasurer's Report showing a balance of \$2,501,570.90 was approved on a motion by Jack Morris, seconded by Mark Spotts. Unanimously approved.
2. Bills in the amount of \$37,308.62 were presented for payment which were ratified or approved on motion by Jack Morris, seconded by Mark Spotts. Motion was unanimous.
3. Edward Jones statements are available upon request.
4. Notice from MJ Reider regarding rate increases.

## **Engineer's Report:**

Chairman welcomed Eric to our meeting and wants to get together with him regarding status of existing wells and future wells. They will make arrangements to meet at the barn in the next few months. Eric will send Steve available dates. Eric will get with Dennis and look at sites before meeting.

1. Jack Keener – Furnace Village II. Update: SSM survey reviewed the updates to verify the modifications. They have approved the changes made by HNT. The updated plans were sent to Jestyn. No Update from last month.
2. East High Street Subdivision Update: Information was provided to Kozloff to initiate the Improvements Agreement. SSM met with Kozloff and exchanged the final information required to initiate the agreement. Easement has been approved and Township has provided conditional approvals as C2C. Jestyn has verified Cherry Alley is open to the western boundary of the Doughman property (250 East High Street). No Update from last month.
3. 2024 Project Discussion: Tank Painting Project.  
SSM has prepared the bid package specifications and is ready for board action to approve submissions. WRJA has added an internal stack pipe for mixing. SSM has removed the language pertaining to the base grouting as that was included in the Kappe proposal. Will talk further about this in the Solicitor's report.
4. Berks County HOP has been received. Inquired on status of Lebanon Emergency HOP renewal. Reached out to PA Department of Transportation for another update on 12/16/24. No response.
5. Furnace Hill: Project status update and question on Agreement. No Update from last month.

## Solicitor's Report:

1. Grande Land LP: Attorney, Mike Gombar is handling due to conflict of interest. We forwarded the improvements agreement and easement agreement signed by the authority to Mike. We hand delivered letter of credit to him as well.
2. East High Street Subdivision: Close to getting resolved.
3. Gold Springs Water Storage Tank Repairs
  - Non-CoStars Portion of Project: Have been working and everyone is happy with the language. Recommends the authority have SSM put out on bid. If Stoltzfus is not the successful bidder, then successful bidder must work with Stoltzfus. Authorization of SSM to proceed on a motion by Ralph Honigmann, seconded by Jack Morris. Unanimously approved.
  - CoStars Portion of Project: Reviewed the proposal and are satisfied and recommends the board accepts the Kappe purchase order and to authorize the Chairman to sign purchase order on behalf of the Authority. Motion to accept and sign by Steve Bright, seconded by Matt Miller. Motion carried.
4. Maple Avenue Apartments: David Randler sold this property to 353 W Penn Avenue, LLC (Bachman entity). Spoke to their attorney, Brett Fegley. He has received the improvements agreement. We already received the tapping fees.
5. Insurance Bid Project: Zigmund is working on it and will contact Marcie Kunkelman before our next meeting. Motion made by Rod Lebo to proceed with bid process. Seconded by Ralph Honigmann. Motion carried.
6. Newmanstown Water Authority Emergency Supply Agreement: Distributed a packet. Do we want to extend the term? This is for emergency purposes only and it is reciprocal. Price per gallon is acceptable to us. Motion to extend for another reciprocal 5-year term by Ralph Honigmann, seconded by Jack Morris. Motion carried.
7. Meeting Dates for 2025: Meetings for 2025 are scheduled for the 4th Wednesday each month except the November meeting to be held, Tuesday, November 25, 2025 and December meeting, Wednesday, December 17, 2025. Marcie Kunkelman verified these dates with Charmaine at Borough of Womelsdorf. Motion to advertise made by Steve Bright, seconded by Jack Morris. Unanimously approved.
8. Potential Conservation Easement: Solicitor distributed a packet to the board. He developed a list of items which were sent to Larry Lloyd. Larry sent a revised agreement. Are we going to stand firm? Committee may want to schedule a meeting with Larry to clear things up. Need to articulate better to Larry. It seems we are too far apart to sign off tonight. The Rock Doctor would like to see where aquifers are in the 817 acres. If we must abandon a well, what do we do? Tabled until the committee can meet with Larry and perhaps others.
9. Bethany Road Subdivision: Mark Spotts sees an issue that 5 property owners will assume easement and could develop as private driveway. It might be helpful to all parties to renegotiate the contractual relationship with CMJM, LLC including extinguishing the existing easement agreements. Mr. Focht will discuss the issue with his client and respond back to the Authority.
10. Fish Hatchery: Solicitor recommends we would require a survey and perhaps subdivide. Mark recommended if we sell to them put in contract that we will buy back property if the organization ceases to exist. Jestyn will contact their attorney, Liz Fiorini.

## **Operator's Report:**

1. Fixed problem meters. Will ready meters the first week in January.
2. Update on Well 1: Kohl Brothers will return after holidays.
3. Update on Well 2 meter replacement: Got quotes – One at \$10,000 for meter and equipment but does not include installation, another for \$7,000. Will continue to investigate.
4. Fixed service leak at 115 Park Place. Found leak in Womelsdorf, 345 Dogwood (was on homeowners side). Looking for leak in Robesonia. Found on Meadow Avenue. Fixed leak at 155 North 2nd Street.
5. Put in new hydrant at Ozgood's.
6. Asked Solicitor for affidavit for Glenn for lead and copper. Need to get this done.
7. November 2025 is the expiration for National Uniform Rental. Barb will let Marcie know. Jake will get work clothes but not from National Uniform since it will increase our monthly bills.

## **Chairman's Report:**

Rate discussion: Rates have been raised twice in recent times in 1991 and 2009. The board reviewed spreadsheets that Steve and committee created. He distributed to board. There were 3 options. After review and discussion, motion to accept new rates, option 1 with tapping fee and facility rates going into effect as of today, December 18, 2024 and water rates as of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2025 by Rod Lebo, seconded by Matthew Miller. Motion carried. Chairman and committee created a letter to send out to residents to advise them of the increases. Rate listing available upon request.

## **Other Board Member Comments:**

No other comments from board members.

Motion to go into Executive Session at 8:44 PM to discuss Compensation for Officers/ Board Members for 2025 personnel matters/wage and benefits by Steve Bright, seconded by Barbara Orth. Motion carried.

Came out of Executive Session at 8:51 PM. Motion to adopt compensation plan and increasing Dennis Miller's hourly wage to \$35.00 and Jacob Sonnen to an hourly wage to \$29.00 by Jack Morris and seconded by Rod Lebo. All other salary rates remain unchanged. Motion carried.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:52 PM by Steve Bright, seconded by Jack Morris. Motion carried.

**Next meeting: Wednesday, January 22, 2025 at 7 PM at the Womelsdorf Borough Hall.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Barbara Orth*

Barbara Orth  
Secretary

A WATER AUTHORITY — SUPPLYING WOMELSDORF, ROBESONIA AND SHERIDAN, PA.

P.O. Box 94 Womelsdorf, PA 19567 Phone: 610-589-2740 Fax: 610-589-1340

## Treasurer's Report November 2024

Balance Oct 31 \$407,649.48

Customer Collections

\$ 89,191.73

Cert. Fees

\$ 330.00

Shutoffs

\$

Other Receipts

\$ 5,839.97

**Total Income**

+595,361.70

\$503,011.18

**Disburements for NOV.**

**Total Disburements**

\$81,571.23

-81,571.23

\$421,439.95

**Treasury Notes**

Expires 02.15.27 2.250%

\$100,000.00

Expires 08.15.28 2.875%

\$140,000.00

Expires 05.15.29 2.375%

\$105,000.00

\$345,000.00

+5345,000.00

\$766,439.95

PLGIT

\$ 739,854.66

Interest

4.83%

+\$2,929.01

+5742,783.67

\$1,509,223.62

Edward Jones account value of Oct. 26- Nov.29, 2024

+992,347.28

\$2,501,570.90