

MINUTES  
NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
JANUARY 4, 2024

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS) was called to order at 12:30 p.m. by Darnell Brown.

I. Roll Call

Present: Darnell Brown  
Ronald Sulik  
Timothy DeGeeter  
Sharon Dumas  
Samuel Alai

Absent: Jack Bacci  
Marjorie Chambers

The Secretary informed the President that a quorum was in attendance.

II. Approval of Minutes

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to approve the Minutes of the December 21, 2023 Board Meeting. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

III. Public Session

There were no items.

IV. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells, Chief Executive Officer, advised the Board that, as part of his efforts to creatively engage with NEORS's social media followers and customers, John Gonzalez, Communications Manager, established a hotline with a recorded message for people to listen to and leave a response, should one choose.

Mr. Gonzalez's message was played for the Board to hear.

Jean Smith, Director of Administration and External Affairs, added that Mr. Gonzalez's two-minute message shared NEORS staff's pride in serving the region over the past year and acknowledged that the holiday season can be difficult for some.

As a utility, NEORSD knows that connections are the core of its business. This message prioritized the human connections and caring that make NEORSD's communications culture unique in this industry.

There has been a significant response to this message. Between December 30 and January 2, more than 3,200 people called the hotline to listen to the message and nearly 600 voicemails were received sharing messages of thanks to NEORSD staff for their service and heartfelt expressions of surprise, appreciation, personal loss, humanity, and hope. Calls were received from customers as well as people from around the country and the world.

A sampling of the messages received from callers was played for the Board to hear.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells added that Mr. Gonzalez has personally listened to each of the more than 600 messages and not a single one was negative, which is a testament to the work of Constance Haqq, Chief Administrative officer, and her team, Ms. Smith, and her team, and the entire NEORSD staff.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells introduced the newest members of NEORSD's senior leadership team: Jacqueline Muhammed, Director of Government and Customers Relations, who was previously Manager of Government and Customer Relations; Matt Scharver has been promoted from Deputy Director to Director of Watershed Programs; and David Fiffick, who has been promoted to Deputy Director of Human Resources.

### Action Items

#### Authorization to Advertise

Resolution No. 01-24                      Authorization to publish notice calling for bids for a one-year requirement contract for grounds maintenance services, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Section 6119.10, with an estimated probable cost of \$175,000.00.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 01-24. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

#### Authorization to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)

Resolution No. 02-24                      Authorization to issue an RFP, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 153, for design and construction administration/resident project representation services for the Westerly Trickling Filters and Solids Contact Tanks Aeration Improvements project.

**MOTION** – Mayor Alai moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 02-24. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Purchase

- Resolution No. 03-24 Authorization to purchase Wonderware software maintenance and support services for a one-year period from sole source vendor Q-Mation dba Wonderware North in an amount not-to-exceed \$345,401.00.
- Resolution No. 04-24 Authorization to purchase a WEMCO SST 18-FF-WE Hydrogritter with Cyclones grit washer for the Westerly Wastewater Treatment Center from sole source supplier Sullivan Environmental Technologies, Inc. in an amount not-to-exceed \$188,280.00.
- Resolution No. 05-24 Authorization to purchase a three-year service plan and extended warranty for five analytical instruments within the District's laboratory from sole source vendor Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, Inc. to be paid in the annual amount of \$59,475.20, for a total amount not-to-exceed \$178,425.60.

**MOTION** – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 03-24 through 05-24. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Agreement

- Resolution No. 06-24 Authorization to enter into a professional services agreement with Access dba RetrieveX, for offsite records storage, under the State of Ohio Cooperative Purchasing Program, in an amount not-to-exceed \$100,000.00.
- Resolution No. 07-24 Authorization to enter into a professional services agreement with Stantec Consulting Services, Inc. for the Mill Creek Interceptor and Tunnel Capacity Optimization Study project in an amount not-to-exceed \$2,100,000.00.
- Resolution No. 08-24 Authorization to enter into a General Engineering Services – Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing (GES-13) professional services agreement with GPD Group for task-order based, as needed, engineering and design services for the Engineering and Construction Department, in an amount not-to-exceed \$1,500,000.00.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Mayor Alai seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 06-24 through 08-24. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown asked, regarding Resolution No. 07-24, whether there is anything in particular that NEORSD is looking for or has learned from previous studies to provide additional capacity in the area and alleviate basement flooding and related issues experienced in the local community.

Devona Marshall, Director of Engineering and Construction, explained that this project is for the study of the Mill Creek Interceptor and Tunnel system, to evaluate opportunities to optimize and/or increase the capacity of the system and ultimately, provide a higher level of service to the tributary communities. This would allow those member communities that are experiencing capacity issues to better address surcharging and basement backups.

Ms. Marshall invited Lita Laven, Project Manager, to further discuss the project. Ms. Laven provided a map of the area and explained that the Mill Creek Tunnel System began construction in the late 1990s, and NEORSD took ownership of the Mill Creek Interceptor from the county around that same time.

Shortly after the tunnel construction concluded, NEORSD commenced the Combined and Mill Creek Area Local Sewer System Evaluation Study, in order to understand and address problems in the local sewer system. The study revealed that the Mill Creek system had little to no additional capacity for local communities to solve their problems by constructing relief sewers.

The solutions that arose from the sewer system evaluation study focused on reducing or maintaining peak flows. There are high amounts of infiltration and inflow (I&I) in the area. The study identified potential concepts within NEORSD's Mill Creek System to improve capacity, which is why this request was issued to complete the Mill Creek Interceptor and Tunnel Capacity Optimization Study.

Potential alternatives to be evaluated under this study include evaluating bottlenecks in the system to increase capacity, and potential stormwater offloading in the combined system, potentially including areas near the Wolf Creek Regulator, which sends stormwater flows into the tunnel system. Additionally, the study will assess different ways of routing the flows to potentially alleviate capacity issues within the Mill Creek system, as well as potentially eliminating the Broadway Pump Station. There is also the potential for optimization of the Mill Creek Tunnel Gates which regulate the flows to the Southerly WWTC. This is not an exhaustive list, rather examples of some of the potential alternatives that will be evaluated under the study.

President Brown asked how long the study will take. Ms. Laven explained that it will take approximately 18 months and other options to increase capacity will be evaluated in the interim.

President Brown added that there are likely several relief sewers built for inline storage in the area. Ms. Laven explained that there were a number of local relief sewers recommended under the Mill Creek Watershed Study for communities to solve their problems. NEORSD is looking to optimize its system to allow the local communities to potentially use relief sewers to solve problems quickly and manage their own I&I.

President Brown noted, regarding Resolution No. 08-24, that NEORSD has been utilizing GES contracts for some time and asked if there are any observations that have been made from utilizing these contracts to expedite smaller projects.

Ms. Marshall explained that NEORSD has been utilizing these contracts for approximately 15 years, and they have evolved over the years to fit NEORSD's needs, including procuring multiple specialized contracts. These contracts are very useful to various departments District-wide to provide additional resources to internal staff. The contracts have been critical in NEORSD's ability to meet its needs and the needs have grown over the years, especially as it relates to the ongoing efforts of Operational Readiness.

President Brown noted that there was a resolution passed previously which allows NEORSD to either work on behalf of member communities or utilize some of its own resources to supplement their work, as many do not have the proper resources, even when utilizing MCIP, and asked if this is something that staff is considering.

Ms. Marshall explained that in 2023, there was a separate resolution to allow NEORSD to procure a consultant specifically to aid in the design of local projects wherein the local community is receiving grant money for the project. The E&C Department has not yet utilized these GES contracts for local community projects, and she would defer to Eric Luckage, Chief Legal Officer, as to whether these contracts could be utilized specifically for that purpose.

President Brown indicated that he suggested it as a potential option to assist local communities, as some of these projects, such as Mill Creek, are decades-old problems and are better resolved sooner than later, especially as it relates to basement backups. Ms. Marshall voiced agreement and added that NEORSD's goal is to assist member communities as much as possible.

#### Authorization to Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 09-24	Authorization to enter into a public improvement contract with Ohio Paving & Construction Co., Inc. for paving improvements at the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Center and Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant in an amount not-to-exceed \$224,963.83.
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**MOTION** – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 09-24. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Hearing Officer Findings and Recommendations

Resolution No. 10-24            Authorization to adopt the findings and recommendations of the Hearing Officer with regard to the sewer account of Josh Brown ending in 6445, Sewer District Hearing No. 23-014, that no adjustments be made.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Mayor Alai seconded to adopt Resolution No. 10-24. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Grant Credit

Resolution No. 11-24            Authorizing the District to issue a credit adjustment in the total amount of \$97,994.12 against sewer charges on the account ending in 0002 to Galileo Southland LLC, 6859 Southland Drive, Middleburg Heights.

**MOTION** – Mayor Alai moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 11-24. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

V.    Information Items

There were no items.

VI.   Open Session

There were no items.

VII.   Public Session (any subject matter)

There were no items.

VIII.   Executive Session

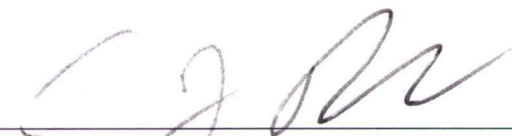
There were no items.

IX.   Approval of Items from Executive Session

There were no items.

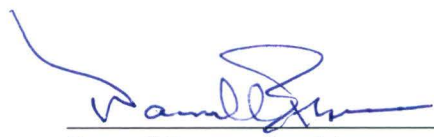
X. Adjournment

**MOTION** – President Brown stated business having been concluded, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Alai seconded the motion to adjourn at 1:02 p.m. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.



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Timothy J. DeGeeter, Secretary  
Board of Trustees  
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District



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Darnell Brown, President  
Board of Trustees  
Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District