

MINUTES
NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2021

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

President Brown opened the meeting by addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, and read the following statement:

Due to the COVID emergency, we are again conducting our board meeting via live stream video conference using the Zoom Video Communications tool and pursuant to continuing authority of House Bill 404.

Members of the public may observe and hear the meeting using the Zoom login link found on the top of the District website, and those who wished to address the Board were able to make that request through the Zoom system prior to the start of the meeting.

I. Roll Call

PRESENT: Darnell Brown
Ronald Sulik
Samuel Alai
Terence Joyce
Jack Bacci
Timothy DeGeeter
Sharon Dumas

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

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION – Mayor Bacci moved, and Mayor Alai seconded to approve the Minutes of the January 21, 2021, 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, provided an update regarding the District's ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells informed the Board that as of February 4, 2021, the District staff has twelve active COVID-19 cases, of whom three have recovered and are in various stages of the return-to-work process, and nine are convalescing. There is one additional employee who is symptomatic and awaiting test results. The District wishes them a full and speedy recovery. There has been a total of sixty-nine employees with confirmed diagnoses since the beginning of the pandemic, with fifty-seven having recovered and returned to work. There are currently no District employees who are remaining at home because a member of their household has tested positive for COVID-19.

The District has announced two sessions to be held virtually on February 19 at 9:00 a.m. and again on February 23, with medical experts from the Cuyahoga County Board of Health and the Cleveland Clinic, as well as members of the District's Human Resources Department to provide information to District staff regarding COVID-19 vaccination and the District's voluntary vaccination policy.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells invited Constance Haqq, Chief Administrative Officer, to provide an update regarding the District's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts.

Ms. Haqq advised the Board that during the last quarter of 2020, each of the District's departments were asked to prepare a set of DEI goals. Because each department is unique in composition, interests, and issues, they were able to approach the DEI from their perspective and in alignment with the overall District DEI goals.

The District's four DEI goals are: to be a workforce that reflects the communities it serves; to provide a work environment that fosters creativity and innovation while promoting employee engagement; to engage in strategic business and community partnerships designed to eliminate barriers; and to provide a comprehensive communication vehicle to report the goals, objectives, challenges, and successes of the program.

In addition to creating goals, each department will develop key performance indicators under each of the four areas and provide a quarterly status update. Nearly every department will participate in unconscious bias training this year. The Legal Department will have regular book discussions regarding DEI. Recruitment and hiring are other areas of focus with Human Resources expanding its candidate sourcing to a wider range of schools and professional organizations. The Engineering & Construction, Operation & Maintenance, and Watershed Departments are developing a rotational DEI internship opportunity to outreach to minority and women candidates. The Finance Department is performing an audit to determine whether changes to the Business Opportunity Program are needed. The Administration and External Affairs Department is exploring pipeline opportunities through participation in youth programs. The Information Technology Department will create a dashboard to monitor the progress on a quarterly basis.

V. Action Items

Authorization to Advertise

Resolution No. 36-21 Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for a three-year requirement contract for stand-by generator maintenance and repair services with an anticipated expenditure of \$80,000.00.

Resolution No. 37-21 Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for property demolition services with an anticipated expenditure of \$500,000.00.

Resolution No. 38-21 Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Center Tunnel Structural Repairs project with an anticipated expenditure of \$2,100,000.00.

MOTION – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 36-21 through 38-21. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Issue Request for Proposal (RFP)

Resolution No. 39-21 Authorization to issue an RFP, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for professional services related to the development and submittal of precipitation data in support of the Regional Stormwater Management Program and wastewater program under the Gauge Adjusted Radar Rainfall Services project.

MOTION – Mayor Alai moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 39-21. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown asked for additional information regarding data gathered through the program regarding changes in weather patterns and how the data is being applied.

Frank Greenland, Director of Watershed Programs, explained that the wet weather issues are occurring nationwide and are acute in the District's service area.

Mr. Greenland provided a graphic of the District's 29 rain gauges strategically located across the service area. The District has used the rain gauges for a long time to assist with CSO planning, interceptor sewers, local sanitary sewer evaluations, and under the Regional Stormwater Management Program to monitor rainfall amounts in real time.

In the District's service area, there is aging infrastructure with some of the combined interceptors being well over 100 years old and built under different design standards. There is a changing

landscape, as the amount of impervious area has greatly increased, creating infrastructure problems. Additionally, there have been increasing rainfall events. Last year the Cleveland area experienced its second highest total volume rainfall of all time and several local waterways reached levels that were in the top 10 highest levels of all time. Also, Lake Erie continues to remain at near-record high levels. These factors are contributing to sewer overflows, basement flooding, stream flooding, and erosion. The District is working to understand and react to these changes to develop and implement solutions on a local and regional level.

The intent of this contract is to augment the rain gauge information with Doppler radar to understand what happens in the area between gauges, where the gauges may have missed the rainfall, but the effects of an event are seen in the community. This is a three-year contract to assist with the implementation of urgent storm response. The District will discuss with consultants their ability to produce and manipulate the data quickly.

As for design standards, there are common trench sewers in much of the service area where the capacity of the storm drainage in these systems is two to five years. This is a significant problem in the area and very expensive to remediate.

President Brown added that there is a new administration in the federal government which should be considered when discussing infrastructure replacement and large capital projects. President Brown further noted the prevalence of aged infrastructure in the service area and the importance of readiness to proceed in terms of having performed studies and evaluations to be able to present information regarding needed projects through lobbyists to advocate for those needs.

Mr. Greenland indicated that the new administration is discussing infrastructure bills. The District is working through the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), Ohio organizations, and congressional and state legislative contacts to advocate for these needs. The District is well positioned in terms of understanding the infrastructure needs in the area. The local sewer system evaluation studies will conclude this year. The last of the stormwater master plans are also being completed, providing information regarding the problems and solutions regionally. The combined sewer overflow control measures are continuing. Should infrastructure funding become available, the District has examples and information that it can provide now to take advantage of the funding.

President Brown noted the importance of communicating that readiness to the new administration to demonstrate the viability and feasibility of these projects.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells added that the Biden administration is emphasizing the combination of infrastructure and environmental justice and as Mr. Greenland noted, the District is well positioned and articulated the case when Governor DeWine rolled out H2Ohio and the District presented to that team about its readiness.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells noted that this is an interesting time for advocating at the federal level as Radhika Fox, the former CEO of the US Water Alliance, is now the Acting Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water, and she understands water equity very well. Additionally, Secretary

Buttigieg is very familiar with combined sewer overflow and smart sewers and has a broad understanding of infrastructure.

Authorization to Amend Agreement

Resolution No. 40-21 Authorization to amend Agreement No. 3810 with Enel X North America, Inc. for curtailment service provider and demand response services to add additional services to assist the District in participating in the PJM Emergency Load Demand Response Program at the Easterly Wastewater Treatment Plant and Westerly Wastewater Treatment Center at no additional cost to the District.

MOTION – Mr. Joyce moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 40-21. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown indicated that he is aware that the agreement allows for reduction of peak demand load on the generators at particular points in time, reducing energy costs, and asked for additional information regarding this arrangement and whether there are any implications impacting the District’s current energy provider.

Jim Bunsey, Chief Operating Officer, explained that Enel X is the District’s service provider for the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) to help support the demand response services there. The emission controls on the generators have been upgraded. Enel X has provided monitoring systems to alert the District when the PJM grid requires generators to go into service and has assisted with the permitting of the generators as well as assisting the District with PJM and ensuring it is a part of the program.

These services were initiated at Southerly over the past year and although the District’s generators were not activated, the District did save on electrical costs. The District is looking to add the same services at the Easterly and Westerly WWTPs for an anticipated savings of \$563,000 over the remaining four years. The Southerly plant is powered by FirstEnergy and the Easterly and Westerly WWTPs are powered by Cleveland Public Power (CPP). There is no difference between the two providers for the plants because PJM pays directly to the consultant and the District bypassing the local grid operator. This is a no-cost modification to add the services at the Easterly and Westerly WWTPs.

President Brown added that this arrangement may also provide a benefit to FirstEnergy and CPP when trying to meet demand load for peak usage. Mr. Bunsey confirmed that is correct as both energy providers would have to buy power at premium costs during high demand periods.

Authorization to Assign Agreement

Resolution No. 41-21 Authorization to assign Agreement No. 17007294 with Ultimate Software Group, Inc. to UKG, Inc. (Ultimate Kronos Group) for integrated HRIS, payroll and timekeeping services, effective January 1, 2021, with all current terms and conditions of the agreement to remain unchanged under the assignment.

MOTION – Mr. Sulik moved, and Mayor Alai seconded to adopt Resolution No. 41-21. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 42-21 Authorization to enter into a one-year requirement contract with PVS Technologies, Inc. for the delivery of up to 1,700,000 dry pounds of ferric chloride solution to the Easterly, Southerly and Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plants in an amount not-to-exceed \$494,700.00.

Resolution No. 43-21 Authorization to enter into a three-year requirement contract with Reliable Turbine Services, LLC for steam turbine process system support services at the District’s Renewable Energy Facility (REF) in an amount not-to-exceed \$87,249.20.

MOTION – Ms. Dumas moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 42-21 through 43-21. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Property Related Transaction

Resolution No. 44-21 Authorizing the District to acquire one permanent sewer easement on property known as part of PPN 108-02-004, located on East 93rd Street, in the City of Cleveland, owned by the Board of Education of the Cleveland Municipal School District, formerly known as the Cleveland City School District, also known as the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, necessary for the construction and maintenance of the Shoreline Storage Tunnel Project with total consideration of \$3,500.00.

Resolution No. 45-21 Authorizing the District to acquire one temporary easement on property known as part of PPNs 105-06-001, 105-06-003 and 105-06-013, located at 1201 East 55th Street, in the City of Cleveland, owned by The East Ohio Gas Company, necessary for the construction of the Shoreline Storage Tunnel Project with total consideration of \$2,200.00.

Resolution No. 46-21 Authorizing the District to acquire two temporary easements on property known as part of PPN 133-31-002, located at 8500 Aetna Road, in the City of Cleveland, and part of PPN 133-31-008, located at 8550 Aetna Road, in the City of Cleveland, owned by FPT Cleveland Real Estate, LLC, necessary for the construction of the Morgana Burke Systems Improvement Project with total consideration of \$600.00.

MOTION – Mr. Sulik moved, and Mr. Joyce seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 44-21 through 46-21. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

VI. Information Items

Frank Foley, Director of Operation and Maintenance, provided the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) quarterly update for the fourth quarter of 2020.

Regarding safety, there were 436 lost workdays and no restricted workdays, which is down from 2019. All lost workdays were attributed to three accidents, two slips, trips, and falls and one struck by incident.

The DART rate is the number of incidents per 100 full-time employees that resulted in lost or restricted workdays. The internal target rate is 2.0, which was met in 2020 with a District-wide DART rate of 0.49 and an O&M DART rate of 1.26.

Regarding effluent quality, total suspended solids at all three WWTPs were under the limits for the fourth quarter. There were a couple instances of higher numbers at Easterly, due largely to limited capacity in the secondary system during rehabilitation work in the aeration tanks.

As for carbonaceous biochemical oxygen demand, all WWTPs were under limits for the quarter. This is also true of phosphorous and E. coli, which is only monitored during the recreation season, which ends October 31 each year.

The District treated approximately 88 billion gallons of wastewater in 2020, removed 96 million pounds of solids, 47 million pounds of BOD, and 1.4 million pounds of phosphorous. The District had 4,750 NPDS compliance points, which account for times when the effluent quality is compared to the permit limitations. There was one exception in nearly 5,000 events, involving a grab sample for oil and grease at the Westerly WWTP, in January 2020. The permit compliance rate was 100% at Easterly and Southerly and 99.98% at Westerly. The District anticipates receiving NACWA peak performance awards of gold at Easterly and Southerly and silver at Westerly, for 2020. Mr. Foley commended the O&M team for a job well done, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, and thanked the other District departments for the support they provide.

President Brown asked how this compares to a typical year in terms of volume. Mr. Foley indicated that it is similar in terms of flow, with an average of 239 million gallons per day.

Regarding dry weather overflows, there were three in the fourth quarter for a total of 11 for the year. There were 13 total overflow events in 2019. The causes for the overflows include miscellaneous debris, downstream blockages, and gravel debris.

As for the automated collection system equipment, wet weather performance, there was one issue in October and one in November. Both events were minor and neither impacted the amount of flow discharged into the environment.

Plant maintenance has been consistent across the WWTPs in the 70% to 80% range and has remained consistent from year to year.

Operation and Maintenance came in under budget for 2020. The variances are mainly attributable to two budget categories, Salaries and Wages, and Utilities. Additionally, there was some reduced activity as a result of the pandemic. There was \$1 million budgeted for the Jennings and Old Denison sewer cleaning project, which was completed very late in the year. That project came in under budget as none of the material encountered was hazardous. O&M spending for 2020 is approximately \$2.5 million below the spending for 2019, however, all spending may not be fully accounted for at this point.

The District is planning a pilot operation at the Westerly WWTP beginning near the end of this month. A project is under design to build a pump station and a force main to move biosolids from Westerly to Southerly for incineration. The design should be finished later this year and construction is expected to last three years, beginning in 2022. The plan was to shut down incineration at Westerly upon the startup of the force main in three to four years. However, the District is short incinerator operators at both plants and sees an opportunity to move staff from Westerly to Southerly sooner than intended. The pilot shut down will be for six to eight weeks while solids are hauled to the landfill. If this is successful, incineration would likely not continue at Westerly.

The associated costs are expected to be approximately neutral. There is an anticipated decrease in labor, maintenance expenses, electricity, natural gas, ash disposal, and stack testing. It is anticipated that there will be an increase in costs in a similar amount for sludge hauling.

There will be two loads of centrifuged biosolids in cake form hauled to the landfill each day. In December, the Board authorized a new three-year contract worth approximately \$575,000 for sludge hauling. The District will need to request authorization for a new larger hauling contract in the near future, as the recent contract will likely last about six months under this new arrangement.

Mr. Foley provided the hauling route for the cake sludge along I-77 South to the primary disposal site near Dover, Ohio. When the new contract is bid, there may be a new hauler, meaning that the disposal location may change.

Open Session

There were no items.

VII. Public Session (any subject matter)

There were no items.

VIII. Executive Session

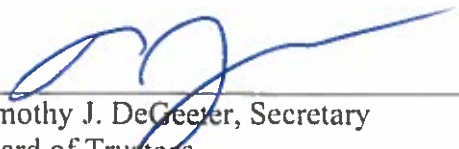
There were no items.

IX. Approval of Items from Executive Session


N/A

X. Adjournment

MOTION – President Brown stated business having been concluded, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded the motion to adjourn at 1:13 p.m. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.



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



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