

MINUTES  
NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
JUNE 4, 2020

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:

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to be a matter of serious concern and remains a state of emergency. As such, the District is again conducting its Board meeting via live stream videoconference using the Zoom video communications tool and pursuant to House Bill 197. Members of the public may have access to the meeting using the Zoom login link found on the top of the District's website, [www.neorsd.org](http://www.neorsd.org), to watch the Board's discussions and deliberations through the videoconference.

The District issued a public notice that regularly scheduled meetings will be held electronically until the emergency ends, and with specific login instructions for the public posted on the District's website. The notice and login also informed members of the public who wished to address the Board to make such request known to the Chief Executive Officer 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 May 21, 2020, 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, began her report by providing an update regarding the District's continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells advised the Board that on June 1st the District reconstituted its plant maintenance staff and SSMO field crews at Southerly, Westerly, Easterly and EMSC. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells reminded the Board that when Governor DeWine first instituted the stay at home order in March, most of the plant maintenance staff and SSMO field crews moved to modified schedules to allow ample space for social distancing. As the District moves into the reconstitution phase, the plants are almost fully staffed, with the exception of a few employees who will continue to telework.

The return to District facilities has been supported by the Health and Safety staff, through its work with the reconstitution team, to ensure that the proper safety measures are in place with a focus on face coverings, social distancing, and sanitation.

The District has also reconstituted its Stormwater Inspection and Maintenance (SWIM) Team, Water Quality and Industrial Surveillance (WQIS) staff, and Analytical Services staff in the Watershed Programs Department, as well as the support staff in Health and Safety, Security, and Inventory Control departments, across District facilities.

The reconstitution efforts will continue through June 8, transitioning from 85% of staff on modified schedules or teleworking to 50% teleworking. The remaining 50% will continue teleworking at least through July 1, per Governor DeWine's most recent order.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells commended District Staff for their response to the pandemic.

Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells further advised the Board that on June 3rd EPA Administrator Wheeler announced the membership and leadership of the Great Lakes Advisory Board. The Advisory Board has been dormant for several years and was reconvened by Administrator Wheeler. It is a federal committee charged with advising the Administrator on Great Lakes issues, restoration, and protection through the Great Lakes Program Office of U.S. EPA Region 5. The members represent a broad range of experts, including agencies, tribal interests, agriculture, academics, and community organizations from across the Great Lakes states. Ms. Dreyfuss-Wells has been appointed Co-Chair of this Board and is looking forward to working with the Committee.

#### V. Action Items

##### Authorization to Advertise

Resolution No. 162-20

Authorization to publish notice calling for bids, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for the Morgana and Burke System Improvements project with an anticipated expenditure of \$8,950,000.00.

**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 162-20. After the following discussion, without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

President Brown noted that Resolution No. 162-20 appears to address repairs to sectors of the conveyance system and not capacity issues. President Brown requested clarification and additional information regarding the scope of the project. Devona Marshall, Director of Engineering and Construction, explained that it began as a \$40 million relief sewer project for Morgana Run, but as the preliminary design process advanced it was discovered that, based on more targeted flow monitoring and updated modeling, a relief sewer was not necessary and only repairs to the Morgana Run culvert are needed. There are structural repairs, relining in some locations and small portions of pipe replacement being performed, but from a CSO standpoint there are no capacity issues. Ms. Marshall invited Mr. Greenland to further address the question from a stormwater perspective .

Frank Greenland, Director of Watershed Programs, explained that under the Stormwater Master Plan the District is evaluating up and downstream of the area to evaluate capacity and remodeling the culverts to assess how they handle large rain events, and depending on the analysis, what improvements are needed.

President Brown asked about what the District is doing in terms of flow monitoring and anticipating rain events, and how that may differ from what the District has done in the past. Mr. Greenland advised that typically flow monitors are placed in culverts and sewers to get results. In this instance, the District is also using USGS gauges to evaluate stream flows and how they vary in wet weather events.

Mr. Greenland further explained that the District had many of these monitors in place prior to the Master Plans and will determine what monitors to keep in place once the initial plans are complete. The District wants to have early warning systems to react to differing rainfall patterns. In terms of monitoring in critical areas, there are warning systems to notify community officials when flooding is imminent so that they may take the necessary safety control measures.

Authorization to Issue Request for Proposals (RFP)

Resolution No. 163-20	Authorization to issue an RFP, in accordance with Ohio Revised Code Chapter 6119, for the 2021 Green Infrastructure Grants for the Combined Sewer Area Program.
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**MOTION** – Mr. Sulik moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 163-20. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Purchase

Resolution No. 164-20 Authorization to purchase Polychem Systems metallic sludge collector replacement parts, on an as-needed basis, for the Primary Settling Tanks at the Easterly and Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plants from sole source vendor Pelton Environmental Products in an amount not-to-exceed \$270,000.00.

**MOTION** – Mr. Joyce moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution No. 164-20. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Agreement

Resolution No. 165-20 Authorization to enter into a loan agreement with the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Water Development Authority to accept WPCLF funding for construction costs related to the Easterly/Southerly Fiber Replacement project for a total amount up to \$3,843,007.00.

Resolution No. 166-20 Authorization to enter into a loan agreement with the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Water Development Authority to accept WPCLF funding for construction costs related to the Southerly Miscellaneous Disinfection and Solids Handling Improvements project for a total amount up to \$5,402,450.13.

Resolution No. 167-20 Authorization to enter into a loan agreement with the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Water Development Authority to accept WPCLF funding for construction costs related to the Miscellaneous CSO Improvements project for a total amount up to \$2,090,483.03.

Resolution No. 168-20 Authorization to enter into a project agreement with the City of Independence for the West Creek at Patriots Way Culvert Replacement project with a District contribution toward project construction costs in an amount not-to-exceed \$46,850.00 and a City contribution toward the remaining costs of the project, currently estimated to be \$33,850.00.

**MOTION** – Mayor Alai moved, and Mayor Bacci seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 165-20 through 168-20. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization to Enter Into Contract

Resolution No. 169-20 Authorization to enter into a construction contract with Nerone & Sons, Inc. for the West Creek Bank Stabilization near Sandpiper Drive in Parma project in an amount not-to-exceed \$1,295,090.00.

**MOTION** – Mayor Bacci moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution No. 169-20. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Authorization of Contract Modification

Resolution No. 113a-20      Authorization to Modify Contract No. 20002206 with Nerone & Sons for the Euclid Beach Netting Facility Embankment Erosion Emergency Repairs project with an increase in the contract amount of \$5,157.89, thereby bringing the revised total contract amount not-to-exceed \$125,652.58.

**MOTION** – Mayor Bacci moved, and Ms. Dumas seconded to adopt Resolution No. 113a-20. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

Property Related Transaction

Resolution No. 170-20      Authorizing the District to acquire one parcel in fee simple located on property known as PPN 761-16-006, located at 4268 Cricket Lane, in the City of Warrensville Heights, owned by Andrea Topaz Ogletree and Casey Ogletree, necessary for the construction and maintenance of the Mill Creek Bank Stabilization project, to enter into a lease agreement with Andrea Topaz Ogletree and Casey Ogletree, and to allow for the entirety of the payment to be disbursed to Innovative Title and Escrow Services, LLC with total consideration of \$80,000.00 plus closing costs.

Resolution No. 171-20      Authorizing the District to acquire one parcel in fee simple located on property known as PPN 455-22-002, located at 8081 Pleasant Valley Road, in the City of Parma, owned by the Cuyahoga County Land Reutilization Corp., necessary for the construction and maintenance of the Big Creek Stream Restoration Upstream and Downstream of Ridge Road in Parma project with total consideration of \$45,928.00 plus closing costs.

**MOTION** – Mr. Joyce moved, and Mr. Sulik seconded to adopt Resolution Nos. 170-20 through 171-20. Without objection, the motion carried unanimously.

VI. Information Items

Mohan Kurup, Director of Information Technology, provided the Board a project update and addressed the IT Department's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Kurup advised the Board that there was a security camera upgrade project performed at the Southerly plant where, of 81 total cameras, 47 were replaced and 15 new cameras were added, as

some were obsolete, and some were not functioning properly. Other issues included 7 of the cameras not being compatible with the required software and not recording video. There was also a stanchion added at the contractor entrance to allow security to monitor and control access without being physically present at the gate.

The benefits of the project include improved security and operations monitoring. Other aspects of the project include software updates to consolidate the cameras onto one platform, MAXPRO VMS, and upgrading the wireless network, Fluidmesh Wireless Infrastructure, that the cameras use to communicate information. There was an added benefit to the Fluidmesh update, inasmuch the new system will not be affected by upcoming construction projects and the cameras will continue to function properly.

The next project was the replacement of LabLynx, which is a software used for laboratory instrument management systems that was implemented in 2003. While the software was customized to District needs, as it is 17 years old, lacks flexibility and scalability and is no longer supported by the vendor, necessitating its replacement. This single software will be replaced by three new pieces of software: LIMS by Horizon for laboratory management of water quality information; iPACS for pretreatment management information to monitor commercial entities; and eAquaPro to manage environmental testing information. The benefits of these replacements are out of the box functionality and support the three business processes without the need to customize the software. It provides industry standard reporting and dashboards, has a better user interface and the data set is common behind the three applications. Less time and effort to produce reports is needed. This project was a joint effort between IT and WQIS. It is scheduled to go live this month.

The District has replaced its customer relationship management software, called ITL. ITL was created inhouse by District staff in 2010 and was intended to be a short-term solution. It has reached its limits to support current usage levels. The new software, Salesforce, has multiple features that will increase efficiency and help District staff better serve customers, including easy customer lookup, being integrated with data from the Cleveland Division of Water, Oracle EBS, and the Avaya phone system. It has reduced the time to close common cases from two minutes to twelve seconds.

Other current IT projects include an Avaya upgrade to the District's telephones, and an enterprise content management program. The IT remote access upgrade was forced to an early completion, due to COVID-19. There are various infrastructure upgrade projects and multiple projects to be completed by the end of the year.

Mr. Kurup then moved discussion to the IT Department's response to COVID-19. The pandemic caused a drastic and immediate increase in the number of employees teleworking. The department had to adapt to the new limitations and challenges, including security challenges and equipment handling issues.

Last year, between March and May, the District only deployed 15 laptops to employees, whereas this year, it deployed 126 in the same period. The District is using tracking software, which will enable it to bring them back onsite when necessary.

Another issue was virtual private networking (VPN) capacity and licenses. This allows staff to securely access District drives and applications while working remotely. The District currently has 400 VPN licenses versus 100 in 2019. This required a lot of work by the IT Department, as VPN needed to be installed on each teleworking employee's computer. There has been a 10-fold increase in employees using VPN connections with an average of concurrent connections that has increased from 22 to 248.

Mr. Kurup noted that the IT Department saw a 55% increase in Help Desk requests in March, while District staff was adjusting to working remotely. The number of requests and time taken to resolve requests has gone back to average, which means that District staff has adjusted and is teleworking effectively.

The District was fortunate that it had just completed the WAN update which included hardware to support the increase in VPN connections, for which the District had to very quickly purchase VPN licenses, to accommodate the number of people teleworking. Had the District not completed the WAN update and still been using its old hardware, it would not have been able to adapt to teleworking so quickly and efficiently.

President Brown noted that through planning and necessity, the District had a good plan in place, which allowed District staff to pivot to telework during the COVID-19 pandemic. He agreed with Mr. Kurup's assessment that it was fortuitous that the District had recently updated the WAN network to provide increased bandwidth and VPN capacity.

President Brown further noted the importance of the technology updates at the treatment plants as it relates to analysis and quality, as well as safety, adding that it appears to be functioning well. President Brown indicated that he would appreciate semi-regular updates as to how the District is adjusting to the new normal that is being established.

President Brown added that the enhancements to the customers' experience, in terms of wait times, more quickly accessing account information, and overall ease of operation is paramount and commended Mr. Kurup for a job well done.

President Brown indicated that it is necessary to appoint a Nominating Committee for the nomination and election of officers for the upcoming year, and requested that Mr. Sulik lead the Committee with assistance from Mayor Bacci and Ms. Dumas, to create a slate of officers for recommendation to the Board, in time for the first Board meeting in July. Mr. Sulik agreed to lead the Committee.

#### Open Session

There were no items.

VII. Public Session (any subject matter)

There were no items.

VIII. Executive Session

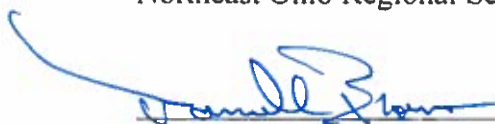
There were no items.

IX. Adjournment

**MOTION** – President Brown stated business having been concluded, he would entertain a motion to adjourn. Mayor Bacci moved, and Mayor Alai seconded the motion to adjourn at 1:11 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