

Borough of Somerset Municipal Authority Meeting

April 15th, 2024 – 5:00 p.m. (In-Person) Borough Council Room

1. Meeting Called to Order: – *Ben Flower*

2. Roll Call:

Authority Members present: *Ben Flower; Lee Hoffman and Jeff Shaffer.*

Authority Members absent: *Ruby Miller.*

Also present: *Municipal Authority Manager, Jessica Sizemore; Director of Finance, Brett Peters; Administrative Assistant, Roger Bailey; Solicitor, James Cascio; Borough Engineers, Tom Reilly and Jake Bolby.*

Public Attendance:

a. None

3. Approval of Agenda:

A. Approval of Agenda – Review and approval of the Agenda for April 15th, 2024 Meeting.

a. Motion to approve agenda as presented:

Mr. Hoffman moved, Mr. Shaffer seconded.

Motion Unanimously Carried

B. Executive Session – None.

4. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s):

A. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Review and approval of the Minutes from March 25th, 2024.

a. Motion to approve the Municipal Authority Minutes from March 25th, 2024:

Mr. Flower moved, Mr. Hoffman seconded.

Motion Unanimously Carried

5. Opening of Bids:

A. None

6. General Public Comments:

A. None registered

7. Payment of Bills/Requisitions:

A. None

8. Policy Agenda:

A. Old Business:

a. Water and Wastewater Rules & Regulations – Update from Manager/EADS.

Mrs. Sizemore noted that there were no updates on the Rules & Regulations.

i. Sewer lateral testing/repair discussion –

Mr. Bolby mentioned that there were numerous previous meetings discussing different construction methods for the sanitary sewer system.

The discussion this evening was to review the sewer lateral on the public side, between the viewport and the sewer main, which is generally in the middle of the street.

With the sewer mains, the primary construction method is going to be trenchless or rehabilitation. It depends on the condition of the sewer main and the ability to perform a rehab. There are also select sections where we are re-routing sewer in a different way because it goes underneath a house, and we are trying to get it out from underneath the house. So different techniques are going to be needed for the sewer main.

For the sewer lateral, it comes down to if the Authority wants to pressure test the sections that they rehab or replace, or are they agreeable not to a pressure test on that portion of the public sewer laterals.

There are methods of trenchless and open trench construction that can achieve pressure testing. Certain trenchless liners cannot presently pass the pressure test. Some have gaskets that react to water and seal themselves off. Whenever you put them in, they may not be testable the next day. It may take a good rain in order to flood the trench in order for the gaskets to swell up and seal off.

There is gasketed types of rehab and ungasketed types. There is also modified trenchless where you can do from the connection point at the main to the connection point at the edge of the road, or where the viewport would be. You can do trenchless between there, but you can provide an airtight seal if you dig down at those two connection points and replace them with something that is testable and make those connections.

Sometimes the sewer main is directly up against where the viewport is, or the edge of the road, so it is easier to dig and open excavate between those two points. If the main is on the opposite side of the road from where the viewport is, you might have 50 feet or so to go, so it could make sense to rehab.

Mr. Bolby said that, in general, they are looking for guidance on the primary preferred construction method. It can be incorporated into the permit drawings and specifications. That is what the contractors will be required to provide a base-bid for. Mr.

Bolby said that the option of alternatives can be provided within the bid to allow competitiveness against the techniques.

The construction methods can be put into 2 categories: (1) "testable for sure" or (2) "not testable." The open trench will definitely be testable, but it cause the greatest amount of disturbance, and you would be replacing the lateral from the main the whole way to the viewport.

Mr. Bolby brought out that there are sections at Center Avenue, where they have to rehab because they are impeded by concrete duct banks, so they cannot replace in these areas. On the other side of the street the sewer laterals can be replaced because it is not impeded by those concrete duct banks. There are also other areas like this.

He said that one of the primary goals of the project is to get a viewport, or an inspection port, at each property connection. There are 2 methods of construction. One is a trenchless version, and the other would be to dig a hole and put a viewport in that way. He added that the trenchless is a specialty, and not every contractor does that. 99% of the other contractor s can do the traditional method of installing the viewport.

Mr. Bolby said that they are all appropriate and will give some level of improvement to the sanitary sewer system, now it is just deciding what methods might be preferred.

Discussion occurred regarding how the viewports could be used in determining various issues within the pipes. Also discussed were the connections, various techniques of rehabilitation and replacement, and costs.

It was mentioned that the homeowner currently owns to the main. With the project, MABS will take over the lateral from the main to the property line, but the homeowner will still be responsible for the costs if there are any clogs or issues.

Mr. Bolby said that, currently, the desire of the Authority is to complete an inspection and do a repair at resale.

Mr. Bolby said that there are 2 decisions related to the technique that the Authority needs to make: First, do they want to have a testable public side sewer lateral, or are they OK without one? Second, do they want to try and minimize disturbance? He said that this is what really separates the techniques.

Solicitor Cascio said that this is a policy decision that the Council & Authority has to make. It also protects the consumer who purchases a house, as well. It can eliminate uncertainty and provides a reasonable standard. So it is an incentive for all involved in a sale of a home. Solicitor Cascio mentioned that a homeowner may also decide to do the testing themselves if they may want to sale their property in the future.

Regarding sewer lateral testing at property transfer, Mr. Bolby said that the other option is wholesale testing. As you go through a do a project, each property owner would have 90 days to fix their sewer lateral if needed.

B. New Business:

a. Manager's Report – Update on Operations.

Mrs. Sizemore noted that the Municipal Authority has a letter of interest which will be recommended to the Council Board on April 22nd.

Mrs. Sizemore said that a Press Release has been sent to the Daily American. No confirmation has been received on whether it will be printed in the newspaper or not. If not, the same information is on our website. The information includes upcoming projects, where we are at with existing projects, and the rate structure.

She said that postcards will be sent out asking customers to update their contact information. Other Authority information will be included on the postcard, as well.

Mrs. Sizemore said that inventorying has been completed on the inside of 1,300 customers' homes with the Lead & Copper Project.

Potholing on the public side should be starting in mid-May.

There will be a combined Municipal Authority & Borough Council Meeting Monday, May 20th, 2024 at 5:00. A Public Outreach Meeting with a Consultant regarding LCRR will be held right before the June 24th Meeting.

Mrs. Sizemore mentioned that at the next combined meeting we will discuss the equipment need of a camera van. It will help support the existing rehab project with locating unknown sewer laterals. It will also help out with future operations and maintenance of the system. It is a piece of equipment that is outside of the budget so it would need financed.

Mrs. Sizemore mentioned that she is still reviewing the virtual trainings of the PMAA Workshops. She will also be attending the Management workshop on April 25th, 2024.

Lastly, she mentioned that the Municipal Authority article from the Pennsylvania Rural Water Association is now digital and can be viewed on our website.

b. Engineer's Report – Update on Status of Projects for Water, Sewer and Stormwater.

Mr. Bolby discussed the following updates to the Engineer's Report:

WATER:

1. Water System Capital Improvement Projects:

Mr. Bolby said that the roof is on the tank at Shaffer Run.

Kukurin is installing 12" water main on East Main, and they are moving along fairly well. They installed 250 feet and have not encountered any obstacles that slowed them down.

Center Avenue is also back and active. They are doing waterline connections now and they should be finished in the June time frame.

Kukurin is working along with Columbia Gas with restoration that will take the majority of the summer. Any resident complaints can be relayed to the Borough so it can be taken care of.

SEWER:

1. Assessment, Repair, and Abatement Plan (Hydraulic Overload):

Mr. Bolby said that the 537 is with DEP, so we are waiting on them. He said that he will follow up with them in the next week. As soon as that is approved, we will immediately submit the construction permits for the Brierwood section, west section and central section. Then approximately 3-4 weeks after that we will go with the north and east sections, with another 3 weeks between those.

There will be a lateral discussion at the next Joint Meeting. This is the area between the curb and the main line. It will need established within those construction permits.

Mr. Bolby mentioned that there was a Design Status Report with the direction received from the Authority & Council. The last time this was discussed was in 2022. There were no changes other than the lateral conversation concerning when testing was going to take place. Selections were made on manholes, and discussion on what lateral selection we wanted to move forward with took place.

We had an NPDES Permit renewal response that we provided back to DEP April 1st, 2024. They asked for a Compliance Schedule.

- c. Facility Reports for March – Provided on the portal for informational purposes.
- d. March 2024 Financial Statements – Provided on the portal for informational purposes.
- e. Water and Sewer Rate Schedules – Review and approval of the revised wording of the rate schedules. There have been no adjustments to any of the base rate, consumption rates or fees.

The Authority authorized Management to prepare a Resolution regarding the revised wording of the Water and Sewer Rate Schedules for the next Authority Meeting.

- f. Kukurin Contract No. 1, Change Order No. 8 – Acknowledgement of approval of Change Order No. 8 for Contract No. 1 in the amount of \$37,790.53 of approved extra work order claim.
- g. PennVest Payment Request No. 13 – Acknowledgement of approval of Pay Request No. 13 in the amount of \$1,452,369.79.
- h. Ligonier Construction Pay Application No. 9 - Acknowledgement of approval of Pay Application No. 9 in the amount of \$465,960.02.
- i. Darr Construction Pay Application No. 4 - Acknowledgement of approval of Pay Application No. 4 in the amount of \$95,727.60.
- j. Kukurin Pay Application No. 12 – Acknowledgement of approval of Pay Application No. 12 in the amount of \$848,178.36.
- k. Payment Application for Center Avenue Project - Acknowledgement of approval of Pay Application No. 4 in the amount of \$107,270.13 for utility upgrades in the scope of the Center Ave. Streetscape Project.

9. Adjournment

A. Adjournment

a. Motion to adjourn.

Mr. Flower moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Shaffer.

Motion Unanimously Carried

5:59 p.m.

B. Next Meeting

- a. Combined MABS and Borough Council Meeting on May 20th, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

Jessica Sizemore, Municipal Authority Manager