

Northern Westchester Joint Water Works
NWJWW Board of Trustees Meeting – June 17, 2022

Convened at 11:07 A.M.

Adjourned at 12:00 P.M.

Present:

Richard Becker, Chairperson	Ray Reber, Consultant
Jeffrey Scott, Vice Chairperson	Tom Wood Esq., Attorney, absent
Robert Scorrano, Treasurer	Donna Albanese, Recording Sec’y
Matthew Slater, Trustee, absent	Ken Rundle, Yorktown Water Service Superintendent
Matthew Geho, Operations Director	Michael Cunningham, Town of Cortlandt Deputy Town Attorney
Catherine Paget, Business Director	

A motion was made by Trustee Scott to adopt the May 13, 2022 minutes. Motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 3-0.

Review draft agreement for Town of Cortlandt’s use of 74 Locust Avenue

Trustee Becker mentioned that the Town of Cortlandt wants to help out the EMS at New York Presbyterian Hospital. They had been stationed there and the hospital is going to remove them and use the property for a different purpose. It was suggested that we use 74 Locust Avenue. The Town of Cortlandt would take it over for a term of 3 to 5 years and use the upper floor which is the main level and pay for any renovations. Trustee Becker said that we will have someone come in for animal control, put new screens up and paint. They will maintain the building and pay the utilities. There is a temporary parking structure that they would relocate from their current spot and use their own DES workers to put that up. Thus, there would be no expenses to the Joint Water Works.

Mr. Geho said that presently the property is being maintained by our landscape contractor but we will pay for the landscaping because it is already part of the agreement and address it next year. We have a roofer scheduled to come in and clean the gutters and address any issues. He feels that if there is something structural that needs to be addressed it should be addressed jointly.

Trustee Becker is hoping to use the summer months to get 74 Locust Avenue ready because the EMS have to be out before the Fall. Mr. Geho will get a key for them.

A motion was made by Trustee Scott to approve a draft agreement for the Town of Cortlandt to use 74 Locust Avenue for EMS workers. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 3-0.

Discuss function of and request permission to bid Catskill pumps VFD replacements

Mr. Geho reported that we are in the position of preparing the budget for next year and we are looking at procuring spare parts and equipment that we would want to have shelved in the event that we have an emergency. Two of the things we planned for this year were 1) new compressors at the Amawalk facility and 2) rotating assembly for the raw water pump station. Upon reviewing both of those components, we can get away without replacing them this year and the cost of those have increased tremendously. We want to take the funds allocated for these projects and invest it in new VFD's for our clear well and DAF pumps at the Catskill facility. We feel it would be a better use of money.

Trustee Becker asked if this puts us at any risk if there is a water main break and we do not have the valves. Mr. Geho mentioned that the valves we are buying for Distribution are still good and we are looking to procure those valves. Regarding the rotating assembly we were going to purchase, we had replaced 2 in the past 10 years. We have 3 pumps and we only run 2 of the pumps so we always have a spare pump. It is not as critical of a component. .

Mr. Geho reported that there is \$18,500 in the budget for these components. We budgeted \$6,500 for the rotating assembly and it is now coming in at \$12,000. When metals come down in price, we will buy another one and shelve it. Mrs. Paget asked if we are bidding out the supply and install or are we just procuring the supply and are we getting a contractor to install? Mr. Geho said that we could bid out the procurement and integration and have Acorn Electrical do the install. We have a great relationship with our electrician.

A motion was made by Trustee Scott to bid the Catskill pumps VFD replacements. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 3-0.

Review results and request award of Bid #2022.5 Chemicals and Residuals bid

Mrs. Paget reported that annually we bid out Chemical and Residuals from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. There is no change in the type of chemicals. Trustee Becker asked how do the prices compare to last year's bid. Mrs. Paget presented a comparison with a list of chemicals with prices for the last 4 years, the average price and that price compared to this year's bid. The spreadsheet reflected an average cost. The last time we had this level of cost inflation was in the 2008 through 2010 period..

Mr. Geho mentioned that over the course of 4 years there was a 62% increase in cost for Polyaluminum Chloride. The Amawalk Plant has a much less quality of water for production and we use a lot more of the coagulant here. Both he and Phil Walko discussed and they are cutting the Amawalk Plant production in half. They will try to run the Plant at the minimum just to satisfy demand so that we can keep that chemical cost in check for the next year. .We do not have any Catskill aqueduct shutdowns that we are aware of.

Trustee Becker said when we charge our customers, the end users, basically they are paying 2 fees. They are paying the cost of the water that we pay to get the water plus the cost to process the water so our costs are now increasing and should we be addressing the situation. Mr. Geho

mentioned that for the rest of the year we are covered in our water rate so there will be no change and we will absorb the cost. In 2023 it will depend on how the Board wants to set the agenda for next year. There will be an increase but some may be able to be absorbed throughout the functions.

Mrs. Paget reported that the New York City Water Board held their public hearing and they are raising the rate 1.4% on July 1, 2022. We always prepare the budget for a 10% increase because historically it works for us. The lower than anticipated increase will offset the increase in chemical costs. Mr. Reber mentioned that on an average New York City Water Board will be about 10% a year but this year it is less. We have to be careful because next year there can possibly be an 18% increase. We have to look at the longer term increase and our customers have to realize that. Mrs. Paget mentioned that keeping the 10% increase tends to smooth it over a number of years.

Mr. Geho said that purchasing water is about 60% of our O and M budget. The chemicals are about 25% so 25% of our budget will increase at least 50%. The other 60% of our major drivers are increasing 1%. We have been getting hit with fuel surcharges for residuals removal. We have spent about \$4,400 so far in surcharges.

Mrs. Paget reported that during the same bid, we include residuals removal but we did not get any bids for this. Our suggestion is that when we adopt the resolution to award the chemicals we would ask permission to rebid the residuals removal and award it at the July meeting. There was confusion with the companies that normally bid the residuals. The company we are currently using Tam Enterprises will honor their current price through the end of July.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Bid #2022.5 Chemicals and Residual Removal and rebid residuals to be awarded at the July Board meeting. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Review results and request award of Bid # 2022.6 Electrical Contractor Services

Mr. Geho mentioned that we have been working with Acorn Electric for the past 3 years. They are very responsible and the only company that bid and they held their price stable. Mrs. Paget mentioned that when we advertise on Bidnet we have pages of people who have access to the bids so we know it is going to multiple vendors. On this one, 13 contractors downloaded the bid documents and we also advertised with the Journal News. Mr. Geho spoke to some electricians and some do not like to deal with prevailing wages. Acorn Electrical has trouble-shooted VFD's and installed motors as well as high voltage stuff. When we get the VFD components in, Acorn will do the electrical. We pay them about \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year from us which is not much.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Bid # 2022.6 Electrical Contractor bid to Acorn Electric. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Review results and request award of Bid #2022.7 HVAC Contractor Services

Mr. Paget mentioned that 18 companies downloaded the bid document for HVAC services and there was only one bid from HRR Industries who had been awarded the bid 2 years ago. Mr. Geho said that we have been working with them for the last 5 years. They do maintenance on our boiler and air conditioning, preventative and any trouble shooting we might have.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Bid #2022.7 HVAC Contractor Services to HRR Industries. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Request extension of 2021 Lab Services RFP

Mrs. Paget said that we had an RFP in 2020 for Lab Services. This would be a second-year extension for Pace Analytical who for the last few times we bid this out, they were the only lab that had bid. Mr. Geho mentioned that we request courier service and some labs do not provide it. Most labs are in the Midwest and they use Federal Express which is problematic with holding time and compliance issues. We request the courier part of the lab bid. Mrs. Paget mentioned that to extend Pace Analytical's agreement works in our favor because they agreed to all unit pricing terms so there is no inflationary increase. If we put it out to bid, they issued a generalized email to all their customers that they would be increasing their prices. Mr. Geho mentioned to Trustee Scorrano that if the Town of Somers wants to be part of this he can reach out to us for any lab sampling they need.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to extend lab services for Pace Analytical for a one-year extension. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Request approval of budget transfers dated June 13, 2022

Mrs. Paget reported the budget transfers are moving money through lines items in departments but there is no increase in the overall budget. There are a couple of operational things we needed. We did not budget anything in Catskill equipment and they needed a mobile lift table so we are moving money from the tool budget to cover that expense. At the Amawalk plant, the lawnmower and weedwhacker needed to be replaced. This expense will go into Amawalk equipment. Miscellaneous Plant supplies for both Catskill and Amawalk and also Plant Maintenance and repair at Amawalk is to reallocate the 2022 budget request to facilitate needs at the Amawalk Plant which is upcoming.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve budget transfers with the budget remaining the same. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approve 3-0.

Request approval to canvass list for vacant Billing department position

Mrs. Paget mentioned that at our last Board meeting we discussed that we always had four full time positions in the billing area to help provide the level of service for 18,000 accounts among the three different municipalities to make appointments, do billing, and collections. Earlier this year we had hired Ms. Dawn Kennedy as a part time employee. Ms. Julie Busha had retired at the end of last month and that happened to match well with Ms. Kennedy's ability to go into a full time spot. She mentioned that she was working with the County for two reasons. One is to fill the 4th position and to get more functionality out of the 4th position without a huge increase of projected salary cost. This will help with succession planning because there are four people both in Administrative and Billing who have the ability to retire in the next two years. We cannot have 18,000 water accounts, perform a meter project and keep operations going with that level of in and out. The County came back to her this week with a recommended position which is a Senior Account Clerk position. We never had a Senior Account Clerk but it will function not where the Water Billing Superintendent is and not where Ms. Albanese is for both Administration and Billing. It is not an Intermediate Clerk where Ms. Kennedy and Ms. Rios are. That position can assist in both departments and give that functionality.

Mrs. Paget's other request is the salary of that position. She received a salary survey from the County ranging from \$57,000 to \$80,000. She would like the Board to consider allowing us to canvas the list and with a salary range from \$57,000 to \$62,000 which would put the person in the middle range and we could consider experience at a future point. Since we had a part time position and not four full-timers, it is in this year's budget and we can absorb it so there would not be any budget increase and we can move forward and have the office situated.

Trustee Becker said that Mrs. Paget had a discussion when she was at Town Hall with their comptrollers and billing so he asked if this impacted that. Mrs. Paget said that it compliments it. You need someone within the Town to be able to be a check for the work we are doing here and to have that communication open so that they were assured that accounts were being handled appropriately both within the Town and the Water Works. There are 4 employees within the next two to three years that would be eligible to retire. This would be succession planning. Mr. Geho said that there are 2 Directors and if one decides to retire without someone in succession we could have a situation. Trustee Scorrano said that the Town of Somers has a succession plan as it's more prevalent if someone retires. Trustee Becker asked Mrs. Paget how does this help with her succession plan. She said just to know that everyone has a crossover of duties to support staff.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to allow Mrs. Paget to canvas a list for the vacant Billing department position for a salary range from \$57,000 to \$62,000. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Request renewal of tenant rental agreement for 82 Locust Avenue

Mrs. Paget mentioned that we entered into the 82 Locust Avenue lease agreement in 2020. When we rent to an employee, we usually use data by the Westchester County Planning Department to have a feel for what affordable rents are. The rental rate was \$2,148 in the 2020 year. When we discussed this last year to do the extension we took into account factors that the increase last year was minute and it is the same for this year.

Mr. Geho mentioned that Mr. Walko does the house maintenance and treats the house as if it was his own. It is not taking additional resources from other employees nor do we have to call out contractors. Since we had an issue with the landscaper, Mr. Walko has been mowing the lawn. He is the Chief Operator who is second in command. He also pays his own utilities.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to renew the rental agreement for 82 Locust Avenue with no additional rent increase. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Request reimbursement to Business Director for NYS GFOA conference hotel expense

Mrs. Paget mentioned that in April she attended the GFOA conference in Albany, NY. She is requesting reimbursement for the hotel expense since she had to book the hotel early.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve reimbursement to Business Director for the NYS GFOA conference which was held in Albany, NY from April 6 through April 8 in the amount of \$327.96. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Request approval to issue purchase order for lawn maintenance equipment

Mr. Geho mentioned that we had a 15-year-old tractor at the Amawalk Plant. We hired a

seasonal employee to help us and there was damage to the equipment. We cannot find lawn mowers. We had called around and no one wanted to give us a price quote. We found a Zero Turn lawnmower that we can get in two weeks for \$3,600. He is requesting that the requirement to get quotes or anything written that we can deviate from normal protocol and take what has been given to us verbally and purchase the least expensive one that will get the job done. As an offset to this, we had budgeted \$15,000 for landscaping this year for this property which we will not be spending since we are doing the work in house. Mr. Geho asked if any of the Towns have any old pieces of equipment that they can give us? No one had any. We will be mindful of who operates that new lawnmower.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve the purchase of a new lawnmower in the amount of \$3,600. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Mrs. Paget mentioned that we need approval for four sick days used by an operator, Mr. Frank Romeo. The days are in addition to him using three days for childcare for a new family addition and are to care for his wife. We bring it to the Board for approval because the four days exceeds what the Union contract stipulates is allowable without a note. This is just a formality.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve an additional four sick days for Mr. Frank Romeo who had to care for his newborn and wife. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Attorney's Report

Mr. Cunningham mentioned that everything has been quiet.

Business Director

Mrs. Paget stated that at the last Board meeting the union contract was ratified. We have increased the rate for the employees so they are compensated at the new rate which is a 2.75% increase. The increase for 2023 will also be a 2.75% increase. We also paid out retroactive pay last week from January 1, 2022. We have a few language items that are still open and we expect to resolve those items before the next Board meeting. This has to do with bereavement leave and the types of uniforms we provide.

While we adopted additional policies in accordance with regulations, it has been almost 20 years since the handbook was prepared. Mr. Reber had the pleasure of preparing it back then. She spoke with Mr. Cunningham about a draft but now that the union agreement is settled we can use that and incorporate some items into the new Personnel Handbook and bring it to the Board for consideration hopefully by the Fall.

Mrs. Paget mentioned that they are continually working with the Cortlandt staff regarding billing issues to be rectified.

Operation's Director's Report

Mr. Geho mentioned that the Department of Health has finally responded to our application for the new pump at the Catskill Plant. It took them seven months to get back to us. We have fourteen comments that we have to respond back to them. We will look to get the bid out by August for a September approval. This is to streamline efficiency for the new interconnect going

to Cortlandt and reduce electrical consumption at Catskill.

Mr. Geho said that we requested from the DEP to install a level indicator in the aqueduct. It took them ten days to give us an approval and today that level indicator will be online. Our summer help was able to dig a trench and Mr. Jason Wohlberg will get all that work done in house. We have been wanting to do this for a long time and it is now complete. It will help us maintain prime on our raw water pumps when the DEP changes flows in the Catskill aqueduct.

Mr. Rundle said that the meters are on the way. Mr. Geho said that Mr. Ferreira did order for the Town of Cortlandt some smart gateways that we are going to try to integrate into our storage tanks. This might be a step forward for the telemetry project we are trying to get done. He has been in contact with Ms. Catherine Brosnan and Mike Preziosi from the Town of Cortlandt engineering department about the new interconnect off NWJWW's 24" transmission main.

Consultant's Report

Mr. Reber mentioned he has had various discussions with Mr. Geho.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker at 12:00 P.M. to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0

Resolution # 2022-50

A motion was made by Trustee Scott to adopt the May 13, 2022 minutes. Motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-51

A motion was made by Trustee Scott to approve a draft agreement for the Town of Cortlandt to use 74 Locust Avenue for EMS workers. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-52

A motion was made by Trustee Scott to bid the Catskill pumps VFD replacements. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-53

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Bid #2022.5 Chemicals and Residual Removal and rebid residuals to be awarded at the July Board meeting. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-54

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Bid # 2022.6 Electrical Contractor bid to Acorn Electric. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-55

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Bid #2022.7 HVAC Contractor Services to HRR Industries. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-56

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to extend lab services for Pace Analytical for a one-year extension. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-57

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve budget transfers with the budget remaining the same. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approve 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-58

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to allow Mrs. Paget to canvas a list for the vacant Billing department position for a salary range from \$57,000 to \$62,000. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-59

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to renew the rental agreement for 82 Locust Avenue with no additional rent increase. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-60

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve reimbursement to Business Director for the NYS GFOA conference which was held in Albany, NY from April 6 through April 8 in the amount of \$327.96. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-61

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve the purchase of a new lawnmower in the amount of \$3,600. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.

Resolution # 2022-62

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to approve an additional four sick days for Mr. Frank Romeo who had to care for his newborn and wife. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scott. Motion approved 3-0.