

# Northern Westchester Joint Water Works

## NWJWW Board of Trustees Meeting – March 21, 2025

Raymond A. Reber Catskill Water Treatment Facility 2065 East Main Street, Cortlandt Manor, NY

Convened at 10:06 A.M.

Adjourned at 11:10 A.M.

A.M. Present:

<b>Edward Lachterman, Chairperson</b>	<b>Matthew Geho, Operations Director</b>
<b>Richard Becker, Vice Chairperson</b>	<b>Catherine Paget, Business Director</b>
<b>Craig Rodrigues, Treasurer, Absent</b>	<b>Michael Cunningham, Attorney</b>
<b>Robert Scorrano, Trustee</b>	<b>Donna Albanese, Recording Sec'y</b>
<b>Charles Peterson, MID Representing Commissioner</b>	

A motion was made by Trustee Scorrano to adopt the February 28, 2025 minutes. Motion was seconded by Trustee Lachterman. Motion approved 3-0. MID Commissioner Charles Peterson refrained from voting.

### **Review results of and consider award of Engineering Services RFP for Amawalk**

Mr. Geho reported that we had four RFP submittals for the Amawalk engineering services. The prices ranged from \$972,000 to \$2,500,000. This includes the table tops, design through bidding and design services during construction. The RFP was different steps into 3 phrases. The lowest bidder was Woodard and Curran at \$972,000. They said they were being very aggressive with the bid. This is all for the PFAS mitigation at Amawalk which is going to be pending with the implementation in 2029 when the regulation will be law. We have 4 years to get to that point.

Mr. Geho sent out an email because the DEP is going to have a press release regarding the chloride concentrations in the Amawalk reservoir. We have the data that supports this and it has been climbing. We are about 100 milligrams per liter which is about 50% of the secondary MCL. By 2050, the city is proposing we will be exceeding the secondary MCL which could be additional treatment. The only way to treat for chlorides is reverse osmosis which becomes very cost prohibitive and very wasteful.

When Mr. Geho spoke to Mr. Bill Richardson from the DEP, he asked what the DEP's stance would be if we wanted to run a pipe to the Delaware aqueduct. Mr. Richardson said that they would support that idea and that the DEP advocates we have multiple sources on aqueducts and get off the Croton system. Mr. Geho thought what if we abandon the Amawalk reservoir, we can

run a pipe to Bedford, NY (~5.5 miles). We can tap into the Delaware aqueduct which would be comparable water quality we have off the Catskill System, which would not have the chlorides, organics or the PFOAS compounds to deal with. Trustee Peterson asked if this qualifies as the secondary source and Mr. Geho said yes. The Delaware aqueduct is coming out of the PePacton reservoir up in the Catskills. Trustee Scorrano said five and a half miles would be a long run.

With Amawalk water we are spending \$3.80 per thousand to treat and with Catskill water we are spending \$1.08 to treat. In 2024 Amawalk produced 577,000,000 gallons and cost us \$2.2 million. Catskill produced 1.7 billion gallons and it cost us \$1.9 million. It is less expensive to treat water at the Catskill Plant. If we were to switch to the Delaware system, that \$2.2 million price tag would drop down to \$650,000 a year to operate that plant with a savings of \$1.5 million a year. If we take the PFAS and add that into the equation~ \$1 million a year to operate. We are looking at \$2.6 million to \$3 million to operate the Amawalk facility at its current quality.

Mr. Geho mentioned that if down the road we had to do reverse osmosis for the chlorides then that would be a game changer. He said that he is proposing we award the engineering contract to Woodard and Curran for \$972,000. When he spoke to Mr. Steve Robbins, this was not on the table with the RFP. He mentioned that this could be included into the feasibility analysis into the tabletop and do the actual calculations to see what that number would cost. Mr. Geho sought a couple of different formulas to try to figure out that cost and there are two different equations he was able to work out. Both led to the same point of \$18 to \$22 million to do the pipe line installation. Trustee Peterson asked was it \$30 million to do the PFAS remediation. Mr. Geho said we can narrow it down to about \$17 million for that work.

He thinks this is something that can be a benefit for the future of the NWJWW residents. One would be a higher quality water and second a cheaper price. He said what would be the hurdles for the Department of Transportation to get under 684. Mr. Geho feels it is a possible alternative to a bad situation. It is unfortunate that the reservoir degraded to the point it is at. He thinks that we are going to see more systems moving off the Croton system because it is not feasible to treat. Trustee Scorrano said that long term connecting to the Delaware is a cheaper alternative then doing everything you want to do at the Amawalk Plant by upgrading the PFAS etc. Mr. Geho said that it removes that from the equation.

Trustee Scorrano said that if we award the contract to Woodard and Curran and decide to go down that second route, would they be able to put this into the initial study? Mr. Geho said that no matter what the outcome of the feasibility analysis and tabletop would be whatever we choose to go with they will draw a permit and we get approved. If we decide that it is \$70 million to run this pipe and it is just not feasible to do then we are going to go back and look at the other options which would be Granular Activated Carbon (GAC). .

Trustee Lachterman asked what is the additional hourly rate fee for construction inspection and Mr. Geho said that would be a number to be worked out. He feels that the whole project is about 100 hours. The cost per hour is \$135 so it would be another \$10,000 to \$15,000. Mr. Geho said that Woodard and Curran are going to hook up to the Delaware with this price. They have \$60,000 in allowances. There may not be any additional costs because if they do not go into

those allowances then that would be what we use for full time construction inspection. Trustee Scorrano said we have known that we have to do this work no matter what. Mr. Geho said that the Catskill facility is producing 70% of the water throughout the course of the year and the Amawalk Plant is just the backup plant.

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, there was supposed to be a shutdown of the aqueduct in which the Amawalk Plant would have been producing all the water for the entities. If the DEP calls and says we need you off the aqueduct, we have to shutdown the Catskill Plant. If we looked into abandoning the Amawalk facility and go into negotiations with Peekskill, we are then talking about upgrading the pump station off of Hollowbrook and major capital investments there. We would be back to square one with less than desirable quality water.

Trustee Becker asked if we had looked out for grants for this. Mrs. Paget mentioned that she contacted Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) and explained to them as the Water Works as their own entity would be interested in pursuing grant opportunities. She needs them to answer the question for us as an independent agency we can do so or if the towns need to do the grants on behalf of the Water Works because of the ownership and restrictions under the unconsolidated laws. For example, we cannot levy taxes or issue debt. She made the request but the EFC has to research with their own legal department. She feels that when we go through this process we will land with who has to borrow what. Mr. Geho said that with the EFC you have to have a project already a year out to avoid the deadline. Mrs. Paget said that it is in the engineering specifications to include that any work that they do for us would also be in accordance and meet any grant requirements so that is what they are preparing on behalf of the NWJWW. Mr. Geho said that they have grant writers and procedures for pursuing grants and additional fundings.

Trustee Becker asked about the PFAS litigation and Mr. Cunningham said that we still do not know our numbers yet and our attorneys have not even given us any indication yet. He mentioned that they are issuing now what they call scores which is an equation where it is how bad is your water and how many people you treat. We have not received our score yet. The score uses a multiplier against whatever sort of multiplier they come up with as far as the dollar amount. Mr. Geho said that we did submit data for 2025 that shows a 40% increase in our PFAS background concentrations, which will increase our base score.

Trustee Becker asked Mrs. Paget to keep them informed on the grants and if there are any issues, the various communities can write to the assembly people and utilize them to work together.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Woodard and Currant the RFP in the amount of \$972,293 for engineering services for the design and upgrade of the Amawalk Water Treatment Plant. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 4-0.

### **Attorney's Report**

Mr. Cunningham said that Walgreen's recently opened and they would like to get an easement over the property because one of our pipes are running through there. He is requesting assistance from Mr. Dan Ciarcia or Mr. Adam Rodrigues from the Town of Yorktown. They are hoping to get the easement before the certificate of occupancy.

### **Business Director's Report**

Mrs. Paget reported that the Water Works field work audit is complete. She has a draft of the financial statements and we are reviewing our records and preparing to concur with their findings. She will ask that Mr. Alan Kassay from PKF O'Connor Davies to come and present the audit at the April Board meeting.

The re-levies for the 3 entities are complete and Mrs. Paget and the billing department have been working with the assessors and tax receivers from all the members.

Mrs. Paget mentioned that we had previously talked about asset valuation for insurance purposes and she would like to get 3 quotes. Our insurance renewal starts late summer so if we are entertaining this idea, we should start this process now to have the valuation done before to make sure we are not under insured. We know the asset values are higher and why can't we just go ahead and increase them, but the insurance companies and the underwriters will not accept that. They want an independent opinion as to what those values are.

Mrs. Paget reported that our employee handbook is outdated and we need to have it updated.. Mrs. Paget said that we never modernized the employee handbook for 12 hour shifts and the employee handbook is now over 10 years. She would like to pursue in getting some professional quotes. Trustee Lachterman mentioned that his Human Resource employee is going to try to take this on too. Mrs. Paget said that it is hard to do this in house on your own. Trustee Lachterman said Mrs. Paget should ask about piggybacking because there may be some additional opportunity depending on the price. Mr. Cunningham said that the employee handbook is an extremely labor-intensive process. Paget would like to get quotes and include potential for more business if the price is right, then come back to the Board.

### **Operations Director's Report**

Mr. Geho reported that the demolition at 78 Locust Avenue is complete and he thanked the Town of Cortlandt for their assistance. It was leveled, back filled and seeded. In the future we can figure out what we would like to do with the property.

We finally received our 2024 Cargo van which had been ordered last year and is currently being used by the Maintenance Department.

Mr. Geho mentioned that we are working on some security upgrades. We are also working on radio communications to bring tank signals to our SCADA system. He will be working with the individual town superintendents to create a program to view all the tanks and flows and leak detection monitoring system.

A motion was made by Trustee Scorrano at 10:41 A.M. to enter into executive session. The motion was seconded by Trustee Becker. Motion approved 4-0.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker at 11:07 A.M. to exit executive session. The motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 4-0.

Mr. Geho mentioned that NYSEG increased 400%. In 2024 we used 223,000 kilowatt hours for the month and we were charged \$22,000. This year we used 86,000 kilowatt hours, one third, and we were charged the same amount. We pass that bill to our members and unfortunately there is nothing we can do about it. There is an opportunity that maybe we can look at purchasing our power a day ahead through New York Independent System Operators (ISO) and we may be able to save some money. Trustee Lachterman asked is there a way we can do solar and Mr. Geho said there is not that kind of power even if it supplied 30% of power. We do not buy the electric from NYSEG they are just the delivery so we buy it through a third party and the delivery charges are high. Trustee Scorrano said that they are only allowed to hedge up to 70%. He said it is not NYSEG just the pass-through rate.

Mr. Geho said that since 2011 because the Board has allowed us to make advancements in technology and upgrade the facility, he went back to grab the data sets from 2011 and 2023. Montrose does not get electrical surcharges. During that time in 12 years. The Town of Somers water demand increased 57% and there is only a 20% increase in the electrical surcharge. The Town of Yorktown water demand increased 1% and is holding steady and the Town of Cortlandt had a 12% increase in their water demand and the costs decreased 23%. This includes all the increased costs through the years. We have been making changes with the automation and VFD's which makes a tremendous difference in electrical consumption.

It was noted that the Board is allowing Mrs. Paget be allowed to use up to 8 sick days to care for her mother who is having a procedure during the month of April.

A motion was made by Trustee Scorrano to make the permanent appointment of Mr. Edward Bagen to the position of 1A Water Treatment Plant Operator under the New York State HELPS program regulation effective March 21, 2025 with no change in compensation or benefit's currently in place. A motion was seconded by Trustee Becker. Motion approved 4-0.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker to allow Mr. Cliff Kummer, Senior Office Assistant/Office Manager to work one day per week at his current rate post retirement. This will end no later than August 31, 2025. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 4-0.

A motion was made by Trustee Becker at 11:12 A.M. to adjourn the meeting. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 4-0.

***Resolution #2025-31***

*A motion was made by Trustee Scorrano to adopt the February 28, 2025 minutes. Motion was seconded by Trustee Lachterman. Motion approved 3-0. MID Commissioner Charles Peterson refrained from voting.*

***Resolution #2025-32***

*A motion was made by Trustee Becker to award Woodard and Currant the RFP in the amount of \$972,293 for engineering services for the design and upgrade of the Amawalk Water Treatment Plant. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 4-0.*

**Resolution #2025-33**

*A motion was made by Trustee Scorrano to make the permanent appointment of Mr. Edward Bagen to the position of 1A Water Treatment Plant Operator under the New York State HELPS program regulation effective March 21, 2025 with no change in compensation or benefits currently in place. A motion was seconded by Trustee Becker. Motion approved 4-0.*

**Resolution #2025-34**

*A motion was made by Trustee Becker to allow Mr. Cliff Kummer, Senior Office Assistant/Office Manager to work one day per week at his current rate post retirement. This will end no later than August 31, 2025. A motion was seconded by Trustee Scorrano. Motion approved 4-0.*

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