

**SOUTH MONMOUTH REGIONAL SEWERAGE AUTHORITY  
MINUTES - CAUCUS MEETING – MARCH 12, 2015**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The Caucus Meeting of the South Monmouth Regional Sewerage Authority was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 12, 2015.

**Moment of Silence and Salute:**

Led by Chairman Thompson

**Announcement:**

This meeting was called in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act in that an announcement of the same was mailed to the Asbury Park Press, the Coast Star; and to the Clerks of our member municipalities on February 13, 2015. The minutes of this meeting will be available after Board approval at a subsequent meeting.

**Roll Call:**

**Present:**

Commissioners Burne, Cory, Farrell, Lynch, Mattia, McLean, Nicol and Thompson.

Messrs. Bonello, Bujak, and Ruppel.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

Mr. Bonello reported that during the month he has worked with Mr. Ruppel on several of the items he will review with the Board during his Executive Director Report.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

**SYSTEM STATUS**

**Lake Como Pumping Station**

Mr. Ruppel reported construction at the Lake Como Pumping Station continues to be on schedule. Pumps have been operational for the past two weeks and the contractor has demobilized. As a requirement of the FEMA Grand Award, staff has been facilitating the demolition of the old Lake Como Pumping Station. Authorizations for the demolition have been received with exception of the NJEIT, which is expected shortly.

**Pitney Avenue Pumping Station**

Mr. Ruppel reported that the old building has been removed and the site is now ready for the contractor to begin construction. Concurrent with this, the mobile trailer is also under construction.

### **Belmar Pumping Station:**

Mr. Ruppel reported that the Authority has received its TWA permit for the Belmar Pumping Station, but are still awaiting the CAFRA permit. Staff has forwarded the final plans and specifications to the NJEIT for their comments. Once comments are received, tentative plans include, advertise in April, receive bids in June, then complete an internal review with the funding agency in order to be in the position to award the contract in July 2014.

### **Gas Production Pilot Program:**

Mr. Ruppel reported that the Authority has been reviewing options to increase the generation of more gas thus reducing its electric consumption. The Authority currently uses feed stocks in its digester. One of the options he has been investigating is a gas enhancement product that is being used more frequently within the State. The Authority has been approached by the Company several years ago and at that time stated this gas product could increase the Authority's Digester's gas production, however, failed to demonstrate it could be cost effective to the Authority when not using its current method. Due to the Authority's reputation, the Company again approached SMRSA to suggest the possibility of doing a pilot program using their product at no cost to the Authority. After a 90 day pilot, the Authority will evaluate and determine whether there has been an increase in gas production. The Authority will have the option to discontinue the pilot program at any time or have the option to extend the pilot should it be necessary to evaluate the data or for a longer period of time.

Mr. Ruppel reported that he also had a meeting with NRG, a company contracted by TGM who is the regional grid provider of electricity to New Jersey and Maryland. Concurrently, Mr. Ruppel also met with NRG's contractor and after some discussion, staff is evaluating a program with them that may help the Authority to reduce its load demand during certain summer days where energy demand is high. Mr. Ruppel will keep the Board of Commissioners apprised of its developments.

### **Spring Lake Billing:**

Mr. Ruppel reported he and staff met with representatives from the Boroughs of Spring Lake and Belmar regarding their 2015 sewer usage billing. Spring Lake had completed their budget and felt their bill had increased significantly. Mr. Ruppel explained to the Board of Commissioners this was not a result of SMRSA sewerage use charges as it only increased 2.68%, but Spring Lakes increase was directly flow related. He stated the initial inquiry to SMRSA was questioning the increase in their billing and hoping it was a mistake. Mr. Ruppel explained that every municipality is billed using the same billing algorithm. Authority staff was then asked to attend a meeting with the Borough Administrator, Engineer, Mayor, and a Council member where he explained that each town's bill is driven by the amount of flow their town delivers to SMRSA for treatment at a fixed cost. The primary way to control costs is to control the amount of product their town delivers. Subsequent to this meeting, staff did provide a considerable amount of requested information.

**Outfall Project:**

Mr. Ruppel reported he was contacted by CDM Smith Inc. in reference to resurrecting the Outfall Project which was ready to be deployed but was delayed due to Super Storm Sandy. The Authority is obligated to use these funds for this project. Internally the Authority used those funds for Sandy relief efforts, however, these funds have since been reimbursed by FEMA and are now ready to be used as was intended. He stated that he requested CDM Smith to submit a proposal to begin the engineering design work necessary to bid the project.

**Pitney Avenue FEMA Grant:**

Last month, Mr. Ruppel reported to the Board of Commissioners the assigned FEMA representatives working with the Authority two years ago writing the Project Worksheet (PWs) used an incorrect formula for the calculation of the Grant award. Staff has been working with FEMA to resolve the discrepancy regarding the “50% rule” for the Pitney Avenue Pumping Station, but at this time, he does not have anything new to report. The PW created for this project classified Pitney Avenue as an “improved project” and since \$450,000.00 is greater than 50% of \$750,000.00 the building met the burden of FEMA’s “50% rule”. Staff is currently re-submitting all the requested documentation submittals and calculations. Mr. Ruppel stated that as the Authority meets the burden, it is his hope that this will give FEMA the ability to fund this project. The issue is, the “50% rule” funding utilizes 404 funds (disaster relief, restoration, etc.). Even though, the Inspector General of the United States is admitting FEMA made an incorrect determination (not just in this instance but in other similar events) the 404 funds cannot be used for this type of application. Since the Authority has a signed PW and has received and used a majority of the funds already, it just needs to be determined if these funds can be withdrawn from other funding.

**Operator Positions:**

The Authority currently has two open operator positions, the first was a long-term budgeted vacant position and the second is the result of the recent notification from Mr. Stephen Wuchter that he is retiring from SMRSA. Mr. Wuchter has been with the Authority for 27 years and is a very highly valued employee who will be missed. Mr. Ruppel stated that it may be necessary to recruit from outside of SMRSA to fill these positions as there does not appear that there are any current employees that have the required skills or qualifications.

**AEA & Wave Award:**

Mr. Ruppel reported that this year’s AEA Utility Conference far surpassed prior conferences in its subject matter, speakers, and information disseminated. WAVE Awards were also presented during this conference and in the past, the Authority or its staff has nominated other staff members or Authorities for a WAVE Award, however, this year, he was contacted by the AEA-WAVE Chairman who nominated Mr. Bujak as an award recipient for the Exclusive Up and Coming Award.

**PUBLIC PORTION:**

It was moved by Commissioner Mattia and seconded by Commissioner Burne to open the public portion of the

meeting. All Commissioners voted aye. As there was no public present, a motion was made by Commissioner Mattia and seconded by Commissioner Burne to close the public portion of the meeting. All Commissioners voted aye.

**ADJORNMENT:**

Commissioner Burne made the motion to adjourn the Caucus Meeting. Commissioner Mattia seconded the motion. On voice vote, all Commissioners voted aye.