

Mercersburg Water Authority Meeting
Borough Hall, Mercersburg, PA 17236
January 16, 2025
MINUTES

ATTENDING: Chairman Ed Twine, Vice-Chair Jason Frey, Member Joe Creighton, Member Dr. Michael Pedersen, Member Jacob Morgan, Water & Sewer Plant Laborer Donnie Keefer, Administrative Professional Pete Stotelmyer, Manager Dawn Scheller

ABSENT: None

GUEST(S)/PRESS: Andy Abel 100 Academy St. Mercersburg, PA 17236, Jill Tetro 36 W California St Mercersburg, PA 17236, John Lutzow 36 W California St Mercersburg, PA 17236, Randy Brake 420 Lindman Dr Chambersburg, PA 17202, Mark Heckman 3669 Parnell Dr Mercersburg, PA 17236

Chairman Twine called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and opened the floor to Public Comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Jill Tetro mentioned that her water bill was almost \$900 this quarter, and her bill is usually around \$200 - \$300. She has no leaks and 3 people are living at her residence. PWD replaced the meter, but PWD has already disassembled it, so it cannot be tested. Manager Scheller and Chairman stated the amount owed could be reduced to the average of her previous statements. The adjustment will be made, and a new bill will be sent. This item is listed under "New Business" to be addressed later in the meeting.

Randy Brake stated that he is the Chairman of Bear Valley Water Municipal Water Committee. He said they were saddened by some of the comments that were made at the last Mercersburg Water Authority meeting and posted in the Mercersburg Journal about Bear Valley not being interested or caring about the issue of supplying water to Mercersburg. He also mentioned the article stated that at the last Mercersburg Water Authority meeting it was voted on to cease communication with Bear Valley to reach a joint decision which they felt was unfair. He stated that Bear Valley has spent approximately \$6,000 - \$7,000 in engineering fees since the first meeting with Mercersburg on how to best supply their water. He said that Mercersburg never answered questions that the engineer needed answered in order to proceed. Although an exact estimate isn't available, he said that the cost to connect to Bear Valley water would be approximately 3.5-4 million dollars. DEP is looking for boroughs and municipalities to consolidate resources, so connecting to Bear Valley would be a benefit in that regard. Mr. Brake stated that their reasons for attending the meeting were to express Bear Valley's commitment to the project and to seek solutions for both sides, and to answer any basic questions. Specific questions could not yet be addressed.

Chairman Twine expressed his concern about obtaining easements from the landowners to lay the piping required to connect to Bear Valley's water supply. Mr. Brake stated that Bear Valley is currently dealing with easements for 6-7 miles of water line to connect Bear Valley to Hamilton Township, and based on previous experience, he doesn't think that easements will be a major concern. He also stated that connecting to Bear Valley would allow for water to be supplied to the schools, and the project would be able to obtain grant funding. Chairman Twine also mentioned that if the water line came through Cove Gap, Mercersburg wouldn't have as much work to do on their end. Brake said that the engineer brought up the issue but never got an answer. He said that engineer stated that to service the 59 residences in the Cove Gap area would require a pump to be installed, and that cost should be around \$100,000.

Twine mentioned that he previously stated that he believed the water line should come via Mountain Rd. and asked Mr. Brake why he didn't want to pursue that route. Brake stated that it is a cost factor because it's a longer route which requires more water line to be installed, and there is limited growth in that area. He also said he thinks that DEP would work with the borough with grants and deadlines if they decide to connect with Bear Valley, and DEP wants to know that all options have been explored.

Member Frey stated that he didn't recall in previous discussions that Bear Valley would supply 100% of the water to Mercersburg. Mr. Brake agreed but said that is the only way that grants would be awarded. Frey also mentioned that the borough had to meet a specific timeline set by DEP. Brake responded stating that DEP wouldn't hold firm on the timeline if work is being done on the project, and fines are only levied if there is no movement. Member Morgan asked what the capacity of the Bear Valley water plant is, and if it able to provide the amount of water that Mercersburg uses which is approximately 200,000 gallons per day. Brake stated that they currently are able to produce 1.5 million gallons per day, and their new plant is capable of providing 2 million gallons per day. Morgan asked what size water line will be used to make the connection, and Brake said it would be 8" or 10" line. Morgan also asked how the water from Bear Valley would be billed. Brake said it would be per 1,000 gallons at a municipal rate which would be competitive, but there are too many variables involved yet, so he isn't able to provide a figure. Morgan asked who would be paying for the water line. Brake said that money would be pooled together from the parties involved in order to obtain grant money. Twine asked how long the project would take to be completed, and Brake said he thinks it would be about 2 years.

Creighton asked if the engineer had a concept or drawing of the project. Heckman responded that a hydrological study was done, and it determined that the route they would like to run the line works with the pressure better in that geographic region. Twine asked where the new line would tie into the existing water lines in the borough. Brake said that it would have to tie in somewhere that has existing 8" line.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

MOTION: to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending December 31, 2024 was made by Morgan, seconded by Frey, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve the Bills Payable List for the month ending December 31, 2024 was made by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MINUTES:

MOTION: to approve the minutes from December 19, 2024 was made by Morgan, seconded by Frey, all ayes, motion carried.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT: Not scheduled to be present. Memo provided.

ENGINEER'S REPORT: Not scheduled to be present.

WATER AND SEWER LABORER'S REPORT:

The electrician that the borough currently contract through, Marshall Stuff, is planning to retire, so the borough will need to find another electrician. Stuff will continue to help out for the time being. The borough is currently buying chemical pumps through USA Blue Book which are warranted, but no service is offered. When a pump needs to be serviced, USA Blue Book ships a replacement pump,

and the faulty pump is shipped out. The borough has to pay the shipping charges to send the pump, and to have it returned. Keefer said that he reached out Control Systems 21, PSI, and Heritage Environmental to see who else carries and services chemical pumps. He said that Heritage Environmental has better prices on the pumps than USA Blue Book, and they will service the pumps at the current locations. They currently don't sell the actuated valves that are currently being used at the water plant, but they may start to carry them. PSI and Control Systems 21 will not work on any equipment that uses chlorine gas, but Heritage Environmental will. Keefer said he is looking to reduce cost and lead times, and he thinks that buying from Heritage Environmental will do that. Heritage Environmental is working on a quote for a direct drive shaft for motors in the water plant that currently need to be replaced frequently. The direct drive shafts should last longer than what is currently being used. Twine said that we need to get several estimates before proceeding. We need to get the best product, at the best price with the best service.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

The water bills for January 10, 2025 have been mailed. This is for the October through December 2024 billing cycle, and, at the moment, the remaining amount owed is \$166,135.70. The borough office will begin training on Quickbooks next week as the borough will be handling it's own accounts payable. Cohick will just be used for payroll. PWD employee Jim Miller resigned effective January 3, 2025, and council has authorized hiring a replacement. Interviews may be held at the February 3, 2025 Personnel meeting. Pete will begin scheduling meter replacements, and he will create a training manual for his administrative position. Pat is working on revising the manual for her position as the billing clerk. The audit for 2024 has been scheduled for May, and the report should be available in July. The audit report for 2023 is completed. Morgan questioned the additional charge of \$14,000 for the audit report. Manager Scheller said that it was for the extra time to make adjustments to the report.

PUBLIC WORKS: Written report included.

OLD BUSINESS:

Addendum #2 to the contract documents for the Water Treatment Plant at Park Avenue Well Project was reviewed. A mandatory pre-bid meeting is scheduled on February 3, 2025 @ 9 AM, and the bid due date is February 12, 2025 @ 10 AM.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: to authorize additional 2023 audit expense noted on invoice 288824 from Boyer & Ritter dated 12/18/2024 was made by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to accept the 2023 audit documents was made by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to reimburse Dawn Scheller \$500 for the payment to the Franklin County Clean Water Fund was made by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to consider customer request for payment plan regarding 36 W California St quarterly bill was made by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to authorize the Solicitor's Office to draft an RFP for specialty services, for example

contracted electrical work needed for plant operations was tabled.

MOTION: to enter into executive session for possible utility easement and right-of-way acquisition and personnel matters was made at 8:13PM by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

Regular session resumed at 9:34PM.

MOTION: to adjourn at 9:35 PM was made by Creighton, seconded by Pedersen, all ayes, motion carried.

These meeting minutes were transcribed with the use of Pete Stotelmyer's meeting notes and have been respectfully submitted for approval.

Date Approved: _____ **Motion Made By:** _____ **Seconded:** _____

Dawn L. Scheller, Borough Manager

SEAL