

**Mercersburg Water Authority Meeting
Borough Hall, Mercersburg, PA 17236
March 20, 2025
MINUTES**

ATTENDING: Chairman Ed Twine, Vice-Chairman Jason Frey, Member Joe Creighton, Member Dr. Michael Pedersen, Member Jacob Morgan, Borough Manager Dawn Scheller, Water & Sewer Plant Laborer Donnie Keefer, Administrative Professional Pete Stotemyer, Engineer Lance Hoover, Solicitor Sam Wiser

ABSENT: None

GUEST(S)/PRESS: Dusty Stoner 119 South Park Ave Mercersburg, PA 17236, Lisa McCullough with the Mercersburg Journal

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

As a Fire Board Member for the Borough of Mercersburg and Deputy Fire Chief of the Mercersburg Fire Department, Dusty Stoner spoke voiced his concerns about the proposal of the Water Authority to begin charging the Mercersburg Fire Department for their water usage. Stoner provided the Authority members with a copy of a letter dated 3/19/2025 from The Office of the Fire Chief and another letter from Stoner dated 3/20/2025 detailing their concerns and all of the ways the fire department uses water. He also spoke about all of the ways that the fire department uses water and explained that water is a priority item included in most of their day-to-day operations. Activities that use copious amounts of water such as washing vehicles frequently need to occur to remove carcinogens and other potential harmful particles after responding to fire calls. Member Morgan explained the Water Authority's reasoning behind the proposal to start charging current non-paying customers for water was to account for "lost" water and revenue. Stoner's primary concern was adding an additional expense for the fire department who is already operating with a limited budget. The Authority discussed other options to fill up their tanks using hydrants located in the Borough. Stoner offered for the authority members to come to the fire station to see all of the ways the fire department uses water as well as showing the water authority the fire department's financial records so they could understand what the department's budget situation is. Chairman Twine shared his concern about Fire Department members washing their personal vehicles at the fire station. Stoner said that it should only occur if a member of the fire crew responded to a fire call using their personal vehicle, and it got dirty while parked at the scene. He also told the Authority that washing personal vehicles has been stopped, and for them to contact him if any of them see fire department members washing personal vehicles. He was open to paying for the water usage from the meter that services their kitchen, toilets, etc. The Authority would also like to know how much water is taken from the hydrants when fire tankers are being filled, and how that information can be gathered.

Chairman Twine asked if there could be a map and color chart created for the various hydrants located in the Borough. Manager Scheller that there used to be a map of the hydrant system and reports associated with, but she has not seen them recently. Stoner commented that the different colors represent the flow rate of the hydrants. Lance Hoover commented that the colors of the hydrants will need to be updated after the Park Ave Treatment Plant is constructed as this will alter the pressure of the hydrants. Stoner said that he could assign members of the fire department to make a list of the hydrants and their flow rates to share with the authority. Twine said that an official decision to charge non-paying customers has not been made yet, and that the Water Authority would take everything Stoner addressed into consideration.

TREASURER REPORT:

Member Morgan noted that a column for "Projected Budget" was dropped off of the report and if it could be added to future Treasurer's Reports. He also asked if the reports could be in portrait format. Manager Scheller confirmed that the changes will be made to the reports moving forward.

MOTION: to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending February 20, 2025, was made by Morgan, seconded by Frey, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve the Bills Payable List for the month ending February 20, 2025, was made by Pedersen, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MINUTES:

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

MOTION: to approve the minutes from February 20, 2025, with the addition that Manager Dawn Scheller was absent, was made by Pedersen, seconded Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

WATER AND SEWER LABORER'S REPORT:

Donnie Keefer provided a written report on said that there were issues with Zimm Well, Negley's installed a new pump. PWD replaced 1700' of wire that was discovered to be broken. Once the repair work was completed, the system only pumped ten gallons per minute instead of seventy-five gallons a minute. Negley's came back and noticed that the wet-end of the pump went bad, so that was replaced. Keefer said that when Zimm Well was reintroduced into the plant, it was over producing. Negley's said that the pump is rated for 65-75 gallons per minute, but it produced ninety-five gallons per minute. Keefer said that it is running artesian and overflowing. After speaking with Negley's, the pump was throttled back to pump seventy-five gallons per minute. Keefer also said that one of the soda ash pumps failed, and he installed a backup pump. He took parts from two existing old pumps and combined them to make another replacement pump.

Member Morgan noticed on the daily water usage report that the amount water being used daily went from 140,000 gallons per day to 180,000 gallons per day. Keefer and Lance Hoover stated that they account for the amount of water produced, but they can't account for where the water goes once it leaves the plant. Creighton suggested checking to see the water usage by route. Hoover said that the unaccounted-for water is quite high for the Borough and reduces the amount of revenue for the Borough. DEP recommends unaccounted for water to be under 20%, but the Borough is not there yet. Morgan also asked if we knew how much water the fire department was using from the fire hydrants so that amount could be recorded. Twine suggested a flow meter could be used by the fire department or a similar device installed on the hydrant they use to track the water they are taking.

PUBLIC WORKS:

Written report included.

SOLICITORS REPORT:

Sam Wiser stated that he didn't have anything to report.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

The remaining amount due to the Water Authority for the current billing cycle is \$14,074.26. The shut-off date is 3/31/2025. Three PWD employees have attended in-person training to prepare for their CDL license test. One of the employees has earned his permit. Manager Scheller reviewed the overtime expense report for 2024.

OLD BUSINESS:

Randy Brake the Chairman from Bear Valley Water met with Dawn Scheller to go over the letter he wrote dated March 13, 2025, detailing the bulk water rate that would be used to supply Mercersburg with water. A copy of the letter was included in the packet. In the letter, Mercersburg would not produce any of their own water, and Bear Valley would be the sole water provider with a minimum amount of 250,000 per day. The dollar figures listed in the letter are not exact, but an estimated cost for the associated costs and prices. Chairman Twine stated the numbers on the letter are based on speculation and thinks the actual figures will be higher.

Twine said he would like to know how much money has been spent to keep the water plant operating since the conversation about building well three began. The Authority discussed the various repairs and costs incurred to keep the current water plant functioning. Creighton said he would like to know the number of volts used at the motor at the current plant. Lance Hoover said that Negley's should be to provide this information.

Sam Wiser provided an update on the PENNVEST Loan for the Park Avenue Eater Treatment Plant Project. The bids for the project came in higher than expected. Due to the higher dollar, the Authority could qualify for grants to offset the cost, but there is no guarantee that a grant would be awarded. The current bids would be rejected, and new bids would have to be submitted. There is a chance that the new bids could be more than the ones currently received. The project will also be delayed. The Authority will be able to qualify for grants for future projects. The higher amount allowed for a longer long term of 265 months and a lower interest rate of 1%.

MOTION: to stay the course on the current Park Avenue Treatment Plant Project and not to withdraw the current credit application was made by Frey, seconded by Creighton, all ayes, motion carried.

The solicitor's office will proceed with revising the credit documents to have them ready to be submitted to PENNVEST before they meet on April 24, 2025. The loan will then need to be approved by Borough Council at their April 28, 2025, meeting.

MOTION: to authorize Lance Hoover to do an updated rate study was made by Morgan, seconded by Creighton, all ayes, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOTION: to approve two taps for property for the proposed APR Holdings LLC Preliminary/Final Land Subdivision Project was made by Frey, seconded by Pedersen, all ayes, motion carried.

Member Morgan asked if EDU's were being tracked so the Authority knows if they have the capacity to add more taps to the system. Lance Hoover said he doesn't know if that information exists. We can find out how much water is being produced, but tracking the current number of EDU's in use may be challenging to figure out.

Chairman Twine questioned some the charges on invoice #173992129 for \$13,455.81 including why more than one technician was required and why multiple service calls were needed for repairs.

MOTION: to approve payment of invoice #173992129 for \$13,455.81 from Negley's Water for service calls was tabled until Negley's explains the amount of the invoice was made by Frey, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to authorize the Solicitor's Office to draft a policy regarding the PWD emergency phone call matter at the recommendation of the Personnel Committee was made by Creighton, seconded by Pedersen, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to appoint Pete Stotemyer, Administrative Professional, as also the Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer with the proposed pay increase was made by Creighton, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve extending Dawn Scheller's Borough Manager Employment Agreement for an additional year was made by Pedersen, seconded by Frey, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to approve to close and transfer the funds from the Orrstown Money Market Account ending in 0691 to the Orrstown Money Market Account ending in 0704 was made by Frey, seconded by Pedersen, all ayes, motion carried.

MOTION: to enter into executive session was made at 9:12PM by Creighton, seconded by Morgan, all ayes, motion carried.

Regular session resumed at 9:52PM.

Engineer's Report

Lance Hoover recapped the bid opening for the Park Avenue Water Treatment Plant Project. Five bids for the general contracting were received, and two bids for the electrical contracting were received. The bid documents were reviewed and evaluated. Solicitor Wiser informed the Authority that the bid from Callas Contracting for the general contractor should be disqualified as they were deficient and did not use the appropriate bid form, not provided the necessary bid security, and not completing the non-discriminatory and solicitation forms.

MOTION: to disqualify Callas Contractors LLC bid for deficiencies was made by Morgan seconded by Pedersen, all ayes, motion carried.

Lance Hoover stated that since Callas Contractors LLC has been disqualified, a notice of intent will be awarded to use PSI as the general and electrical contractor. PSI will be required to provide bonding, insurance paperwork and other required documentation. Official notice of intent won't be issued until the April Water Authority Meeting. Chairman Twine asked if there would be an issue with having the same contractor to perform both the general and electric work. Hoover stated that it should be fine to have PSI serve as the contractor for both portions. Callas will be notified that they were disqualified by a letter that will be drafted by the solicitor's office. If all goes well, construction of the project should begin sometime in July or August.

The Borough is currently under a voluntary water conservation order. Chairman Twine suggested discussing implementing mandatory water conservation at the April meeting. Creighton asked what enforcement options exist for residents fail to comply with water conservation orders. Solicitor Wise

stated that he would have to review the Borough ordinance and provide guidance.

MOTION: to adjourn at 10:15 PM was made by Pedersen, seconded by Morgan, 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