

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF FOX METRO WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT  
HELD WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2020**

The Board of Trustees met in a regular monthly meeting at 9:30 A.M. in the offices of the District at the Water Pollution Control Plant on Wednesday, November 18, 2020. Present were, Trustee Judith S. Sotir, Trustee Krahn, Trustee Michael Funkey (via phone), Trustee Randall H. Brown (via phone) and Trustee Christopher F. Childress (via phone). Also present were Attorney Gregg Ingemunson (via phone), Manager Thomas F. Muth, District Engineer, John Frerich from Deuchler Engineering (via phone), Assistant District Manager, Jimmie Delgado, Assistant District Manager Karen Clementi, Human Resources Coordinator, Patrick Divine, Project Engineer Drew Zeipen (via phone), Jim Savio from Sikich (via phone) and Norma Rodriguez.

10721

The bills were presented and read. It was moved by Trustee Childress that the bills be allowed as read, ratify and approve the checks drawn during the month of October, 2020 in the amount of \$2,710,015.52, Motion was seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that the bills be paid as presented.

10722


It was moved by Trustee Childress seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Treasurer's Report for October, 2020 be approved as submitted.

10723

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote, and the Motion was unanimously carried that the minutes of the October 21, 2020 Board Meeting be approved as written. Each of the Trustees having received and read copies of said minutes before the meeting.

In Public Comments, Trustee Sotir on behalf of the Board congratulated all of the employees who celebrated birthdays in the month of November. The Board also congratulated Trustee Sotir who celebrated her birthday today.

Manager Muth congratulated Engineering and Field Supervisor, Keith Zollers on completing his Master's Degree. His work and effort at the



District is outstanding. Mr. Zollers thanked the District and the Board for their help and support to all employees who want to obtain higher education.

Manger Muth also congratulated Maintenance Foreman Jeff Severson in completing his Associate's Degree. Jeff has been an employee at the District for approximately seven years and a Maintenance Foreman for four years. Jeff has accomplished some outstanding things for the District and over the past four years has raised the expectations of the Maintenance Department and its employees because they have taken more accountability and ownership and the District has a much better team as a result of that. Recently Jeff has taken control of the Biosolids Program along with Maintenance Supervisor, Chris Morphey and the District has had the best year to date. Management staff has great confidence in Jeff and know that he will do a great job for the District. For these and other reasons, Jeff was selected to be the Employee of the Month of November. The Board presented Jeff with a Certificate of Appreciation and thanked him for his work and dedication at the District.

10724

With no other Public Comments, it was moved by Trustee Krahn, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Regular Board Meeting be temporarily adjourned for the Committee of Local Improvements.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned at 9:45 A.M.

In the Committee of Local Improvements Jimmie Delgado introduced Jim Savio from Sikich to discuss the Annual Audit with the Board. He distributed Annual Financial Reports from Sikich.

Mr. Savio reviewed the highlights of the audit with the Board. He explained the specifics of the Financial Report and audit. He noted that the Audit contained a clean opinion and that means that financials were represented fairly in all aspects and the auditors did not have concerns regarding the District's audit. He stated his firm issued an unmodified opinion which is the highest level of assurance that can be provided to the District.

10725

With no other matters to come before the Committee of Local Improvements, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Committee of Local Improvements adjourn and the Regular Board Meeting reconvene.

The regular meeting reconvened at 10:00 a.m.

10726

At 10:00 A.M. Manager Muth opened and read aloud bids received for Building B Odor Control – Vapex Odor Control Procurement as follows: Vapex – Total Bid \$124,360.00; The Engineer’s estimate for this project is \$142,000.00. This bid is for the procurement of the equipment. There were other contractors that showed interest in the project but none submitted a bid. After extensive discussion and based on recommendation of staff, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Krahn, put to vote and unanimously carried that the bid from Vapex, for \$124,360.00 be accepted pending specification review and approval by District and Deuchler staff.

Attorney Gregg Ingemunson addressed the Board and stated there was no Attorney’s report this month.

Mr. John Frerich addressed the Board with the Engineer’s Report and requested approval of Final Payment No. 49 to River City Construction, in the amount of \$765,569.27 for the South Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements Project.

Mr. John Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 16 to Whittaker Construction, in the amount of \$666,019.98 for O&M Building Phase II Improvement Project.

Mr. John Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 2 to Mechanical, Inc., in the amount of \$51,313.38 for Building P3 HVAC Controls Upgrades.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 13 to Whittaker Construction in the amount of \$270,504.90 for H5 Clarifier and H3, H4 and H5 Vault Improvements Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 5 to Whittaker Construction in the amount of \$107,082.45 for Aeration Tanks Walkway Repairs Phase 2 Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 5 to Whittaker Construction in the amount of \$98,060.18 for Building B3 Odor Control Improvements project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 2 to Valley Electrical Contractors, Inc., in the amount of \$28,952.00 Oswego Pump Station Electrical Upgrades Project.

10727


It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Krahn, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Engineer's Report be approved as published and payments be made as requested.

Manager Muth addressed the Board with the Managers Report. He stated that the District has a Streambank Stabilization Project which has plans completed and all permits in hand. Staff may have an opportunity to work with a general contractor that is on site who has all the equipment required for this project and buy the product and have him perform this work on a T&M basis rather than going out to bid. Manager Muth said he is going to hold off from requesting authorization to seek bids for this project because he believes the major part of this work can be accomplished for less than \$40,000.00. He said he will report to the Board next month and added that there is money in the budget for this project and believes it can be accomplished for significantly less cost.

10728

Manager Muth requested the Board approve the Holiday Schedule and Board Meeting Dates for 2021. It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Holiday Schedule and Board Meeting dates for 2021 be approved as submitted.

Manager Muth continued with the Manager's Report and stated that recently the District had 12 employees return to work due to them being quarantined because one of their co-workers tested positive for COVID at the Lab. Unfortunately, as of this morning Operations lost 4 additional employees who will have to



quarantine because there is one employee on the second shift that tested positive in the Operations Department.

Manager Muth discussed with the Board the temporary trailers that have been leased to house and separate employees during the pandemic. He displayed images of what the trailers look like, the features and amenities each trailer provides. There are two trailer setups located at the South Plant. One trailer is for the Supervisors and Foremen and contain office space as well as lockers, washrooms and a breakroom. The other larger trailer houses half of the Maintenance, Electrical and Automation Departments. It provides lockers, washrooms, and a lunchroom. There is another trailer located at the Orchard Road pumping station that houses half of the Field Operations staff.


Management has received positive feedback from employees with regard to these trailers. They feel safe, comfortable and are satisfied with all the amenities provided in these trailers.

Fox Metro staff is doing their best to try and keep all of their staff and families safe during this pandemic.

The next item discussed is the Solar Project. Manger Muth said the solar system is very close to being completed and operational. He displayed drone footage of the approximate 7,000 solar panels that have been installed at the property. He said they are currently waiting on GRNE to complete part of their work on this project.

Manger Muth said that since the last Board Meeting, GRNE has bored underneath the railroad tracks and they have connected to one of the District's substations by Building T. A stone buffer still needs to be installed between the solar panels and green area. Fox Metro staff has taken control of maintaining the brush and has also removed some of the trees that were located to the South.

Trustee Childress inquired last month regarding a public relations events with regard to this project. Karen Clementi has been working with GRNE with regard to this and tentatively plan on having a ribbon cutting ceremony event in April. Karen said that GRNE is taking the lead on this because they have the resources




and it would be a good public relations opportunity for them as well. GRNE will provide the District with signs to put up and also with a portal so the public can actually see what kind of energy is being produced and the cost savings. Tentatively planning a ribbon cutting ceremony in April due to COVID. Karen said she will provide more information to the Board as it becomes available.

Trustee Funkey said Congressman Foster was very interested in the Solar Project when he attended the South Plant Open House last October. He said it would be a good idea to contact his office and invite him to this event. Karen stated that was the first thing she discussed with GRNE. She said the plan is to invite all of the elected officials and Congressman Foster was first on the list. This would be a tremendous public relations opportunity for any kind of elected official.

Manager Muth said that Montgomery has submitted this project and the Village of Montgomery has been deemed one of the greener cities in the state as a result of this solar project.

The next item discussed was the ASCE Award. Manager Muth said he was very proud of the District to receive the American Society of Civil Engineer Award along with Deuchlers. This award is presented to engineering projects that exhibit the greatest engineering skills and represent the greatest attributions to Civil Engineering progress. The association filmed a video at the South Plant and it was played for the Board.

Manager Muth stated that a couple of months ago it was discussed with the Board the cover procurements and mixers for Digesters M3 and M5. Staff estimated the cost to be \$1.45M at that time. He wanted to report to the Board that with collaboration of staff and Deuchlers there is a contract with Walker Process to bring in the covers and mixers for \$1,267,350.00. Staff is currently in a position to sign this contract today and begin building this project. Discussion ensued, Manager Muth answered all of the Board's questions in detail.




The next item discussed was the Bio Bot program. Karen gave a presentation and outlined the results of the wastewater sampling of the outflow of Boulder Hill through November 3, 2020. She said the Bio Bot program began at the end of May and caught the tail end of the last peak of COVID. Karen showed graphs indicating the trend of the wastewater tests results. There was a graph that showed COVID test results were low in the summer. She also showed a graph displaying the result of the October 29, 2020 wastewater sample it showed a spike in COVID concentration particles.

Karen said the purpose of this program is an early warning system to catch the waves of COVID as they come through the wastewater. Once she received the results of this sample she immediately sent it to the Kendall County Health Department and advised them of the significant spike of COVID in the wastewater. She stated this test result was the highest ever with over 700,000 virus concentration particles. She said at one point in the summer the virus concentration was almost down to zero.

She also displayed a graph of the hospitalizations in Illinois and it displayed the number of patients actively hospitalized with COVID by date. The graph showed a spike of hospitalizations in April and May, a significant drop in the summer and a huge spike again in late October and early November which follows the same trend as the wastewater testing. Karen reviewed the rest of the presentation and explained the wastewater test results and COVID infection rate in more detail. She explained that the District missed a couple of samples due to the Lab and Pretreatment being short staffed.

Karen said it is difficult to make any conclusions based on a couple of data points in November but staff is pleased with the trend line overall. Staff now has to decide whether if the District will continue with Bio Bot and continue getting the data. There has been discussion in the committee to perhaps switch to another vendor that is more economical. She said YSD is beginning to collect data out of Yorkville so there is an option to switch to the same vendor that they are using. By using the same vendor, District can track Yorkville's waste stream as well as Fox Metro's



and get Kendall County Data comprehensively to get more data points to combine all the test results.

Trustee Brown asked if the equipment would be the same if Fox Metro switched vendors. Karen said the equipment would be the same as well as the technique in collecting the wastewater samples. The new vendor has offered to collect the samples but since Fox Metro staff has already been doing this, they feel very confident that they can keep doing the sampling in house which saves the District money. It is also convenient to have the vendor as a back-up in collecting samples for a small fee.


Trustee Funkey inquired since the results that have been obtained are so close to the results published by the State, what is the benefit to continue to test these samples and to provide this data? Does this help the ratepayers in the District and the people in the State of Illinois? Karen stated there is a benefit to this testing because at the peak is mirrored one week to ten days early. Karen said this is kind of like the canary in the coal mine because what this does in time, it predicts when the spike in COVID cases are going to happen. It is also used as early warning system to Kendall County and even Fox Metro's staff because the results are shared with them as well.

Trustee Funkey inquired if the results Fox Metro obtains are two weeks ahead of the State. She said they were because people do not show symptoms of the virus until five to eight days after being infected but they are shedding the virus immediately in the waste stream and that is the key to this testing.

Trustee Childress asked what this testing really does? He said it would be nice to hear from the Health Department and state that they have to have this data because they are doing something with it. He said everyone knows that COVID cases are rising but asked what has been done differently as a result of obtaining this information, spending the money and benefits to the rate payer. Trustee Funkey concurred and ask what the benefit of this testing was.

Trustee Childress said they are getting the results after the fact and inquired if there was a warning to the Health Department as a result of the data and if there is a warning, and is the Health Department






using this data to alert the public. Karen stated that she will follow up with Kendall County Health Department again. She said there has been communication with the Health Department but they are extremely busy. Staff will be more proactive and inquire what they are actually doing with the data that is being provided to them and see if they respond. She said she will give a report to the Board at the next Board meeting and see if it is worth the expense. Fox Metro has a six month contract with Bio Bot and it needs to be decided if Fox Metro is going to continue with program, go with another vendor or Bio Bot.

Manager Muth said if cost is a concern, the District can go with another vendor because the information provides the District a baseline and information also. Trustee Funkey asked if the Illinois Governor's office using our data, it is known that they want this data and are they collecting this type of data from other Sewage Treatment Facilities. Karen said the answer to that was no and almost everyone has dropped out because of the expense perhaps for the same concerns that this Board is expressing. Trustee Funkey asked if Fox Metro was the only Sewage Treatment facility in the State that is continuing with this testing. Karen said Fox Metro was the only one to her knowledge but now that there are more economical vendors, other facilities are beginning to ramp up. Peoria was also performing the test but Karen was not sure if they were opting to pull out of the program. Jimmie Delgado said he can inquire through our locals through IAWA but Chicago and possibly North Shore are still performing the tests. Karen stated they are performing the tests but they are not using Bio Bot, they are doing the testing on their own.

Trustee Funkey stated he just wants to be confident that the expense is justified and there is someone relying on this data and obtaining a benefit from it. Trustee Sotir asked the differential in price from the other companies. Karen said the differential was approximately one third of the expense. Discussion ensued regarding the benefits to the healthcare organizations of the testing.

Karen stated that staff negotiated the price of testing quite a bit lower to do the six month contract. Karen said the cost for the six month contract is \$960.00 per sample and the total cost for the six months approximately \$23,000.00. Jimmie said he can provide all that




information to the Board and there have been a lot of very good points raised at this meeting regarding this program. He said perhaps the District will have to look at that alternative vendor but this is a nice program and it was not designed initially for COVID, it was initially designed to look at other infectious diseases and also to look at areas that are having issues with opioids. There are far reaching consequences to the data but we have to figure out who is using the data and who has access to it. Jimmie said he will research this and have information for the Board next month.

Trustee Childress said the District has spent \$23,000.00 in the last six months and the question is if the District has gotten their value. He added that if the data was used to alert the public it would be worth some value. Discussion ensued and Karen explained in detail and answered all questions regarding the graphs provided in the presentation and the number of cases reported in the County, the raw data provided by the Health Department and what we are actually testing and picking up in the waste water.

Trustee Childress said it would be nice to hear from the Health Department and even the State to see if they are using the data that is being collected from these samples as a marker. He said he considers this data to be very helpful because not everyone is getting tested because there are some people that do not have any symptoms and are positive for the virus but these people are shedding the virus in the wastewater stream so this data would be more useful in projecting COVID cases. Trustee Childress also inquired if the expense of performing these tests can be submitted to the State. Manager Muth said The District will submit the expense of the testing to the State as part of a grant and will have to wait and see if it is approved.

Trustee Brown stated that if Kendall County is not using the data, perhaps the District can work with another health department that can find a benefit from this data. Karen said she will have a discussion with Kendall County Health Department about this and added that this is where we tie in with Yorkville and combine the data together to provide a more powerful tool. She added that she believes all Health Departments are very overwhelmed right now. Discussion ensued.



Trustee Childress said if staff decides to form a committee regarding this, he can be part of this committee and volunteers to reach out to the different facilities to see if this is data they can use and perhaps use other points of testing besides Boulder Hill. Trustee Funkey said he may call Linda Chapa LaVia, who is now on the Governor's cabinet. He said she should have access to the Governor's representative that is in charge of this and see if we can get straight to the State of Illinois and obtain some contribution and acknowledgement that this testing is a benefit.

Manager Muth advised the Board that the COVID virus has been a constant challenge at the District and Jimmie Delgado, Karen Clementi and Pat Divine continue to do a great job. District staff has been extremely cooperative and flexible throughout this period and we are doing very well.

Trustee Childress said he knows these are tough times and the Board appreciates all of the District staff work and effort is doing to keep all of its employees safe.

Manager Muth advised the Board there will be no Executive Session this month.

There being no further business to come before the Board, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that this meeting be adjourned.

Board Meeting Adjourned at 11:10 A.M.

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