

Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Fox River Water Reclamation District held on Monday, April 13, 2020 at the Administration Building at 1957 North LaFox, South Elgin, Illinois. **Due to the Governor's Stay Home orders this meeting took place by Teleconference.** Present in the office was President Bruce Corn. Vice President Benjamin Bernal, Clerk/Treasurer Gary Hyman, Trustee Steve Rauschenberger, were present via teleconference.

Staff present in office included Executive Director Bob Trueblood and Technical Services Director Beth Vogt. Assistant Clerk Kim Narvaiz, Attorney Doug Schefflow and Human Resources Manager Fran Venegas were all present via teleconference.

President Corn called the meeting to order at 9:09 A.M.

**APPROVAL OF MARCH 13, 2020 BOARD OF TRUSTEES MINUTES**

Trustee Rauschenberger made a motion, seconded by Trustee Hyman, to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2020 Board of Trustees as written. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Bernal, Hyman, Rauschenberger. Nays, none.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**APPROVAL OF CASH DISBURSEMENTS**

President Corn read aloud the cash disbursement totals per fund. Disbursements for the Sewer Revenue Fund \$622,244.30, Capital Improvement \$1,067,414.83, and Depreciation & Replacement \$510,903.01.

Trustee Hyman made a motion, seconded by Trustee Rauschenberger, to approve the Cash Disbursements as presented. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Bernal, Hyman, Rauschenberger. Nays, none.

**REVIEW OF CONNECTION PERMITS**

Technical Services Director Vogt reported that staff issued seven commercial permits in between meetings. Approximately \$12,000 was collected at this time in connection permit fees in addition to the previously collected service fees.

Trustee Hyman made a motion, seconded by Trustee Rauschenberger, to approve the Connection Permits as issued. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Bernal, Hyman, Rauschenberger. Nays, none.

**REVIEW OF CONTRACTS AND PURCHASE ORDERS**

Executive Director Trueblood reported that there were three purchase orders over \$10,000 issued in-between meetings. The first was to RJN Group, Inc. for the ADP CSO Structure Evaluations. This was previously approved by the Board. The second purchase order was to Revere Electric Supply Company for SCADA Hardware spare parts. The third purchase order was to Bob Ridings for a new 2020 Ford F250, which was also previously approved by the Board.

**FOIA REQUESTS**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

**MOTION TO APPROVE FFCRA COMPLIANCE**

Trustee Hyman made a motion, seconded by Trustee Rauschenberger, to approve the Emergency COVID-19 Absence Policy as presented. The Family First Coronavirus Act approved by the Federal government requires employers take numerous steps to protect employees in the workplace and to provide sick leave for employees should the employee or a family member become directly impacted by COVID-19. Executive Director Trueblood is recommending that the Board approve exclusion of the District from the Act and instead offer employees 40 hours related to COVID-19. Human Resources Manager Venegas clarified that this would be an entirely separate bank of hours available to employees until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, which at that time the hours would expire. Trustee Rauschenberger asked why staff is suggesting only 40 if under the Act, 80 hours would be provided. Executive Director Trueblood responded that given the District's sick policy many employees have a significant bank of sick time already available to them to use.

Trustee Rauschenberger commented that he believes if the District excludes themselves from the FFCRA Act, then staff will not be able to apply for any federal aid regarding wages at a later time. Trustee Bernal asked who we have consulted with to confirm we can exclude ourselves from this act. HRM Venegas commented that she has been in direct contact with HR Source who is the Districts HR consultant and they provided several options the District could implement. HRM Venegas also consulted with Attorney Scheflow and HR staff at other District. Trustee Corn commented that he has heard from local public works departments that they are also opting to exclude themselves from the FFCRA Act.

Trustee Hyman asked if staff has a plan if all staff were to become ill at once. ED Trueblood commented that the wastewater plants are connected to SCADA as are the lift stations and thus can be remotely monitored and some operations can also be done remotely. If on site work

is needed, members of other Districts in IAWA could be contacted to step in and walked thru specific operations over the phone. Trustee Bernal asked how staff morale has been and how everyone has been adjusting to the new temporary schedules. ED Trueblood responded that things are going well and he has not heard any complaints on the schedule.

There were no further questions; President Corn called for a vote. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Bernal, Hyman, and Rauschenberger. Nays, none.

At this time Trustee McCormack was now present via teleconference.

**MOTION TO APPROVE 1-YEAR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ENHANCED NETWORKS**

Trustee Rauschenberger made a motion, seconded by Trustee Hyman, that Executive Director Trueblood be authorized to sign the 1-year Information Technology Support Services Agreement with Enhanced Networks for \$75,600. TSD Vogt point out that the agreement for this year has no increase in fee from the current contract. Trustee Rauschenberger asked if staff is happy with the support they receive from Enhanced Networks. TSD Vogt responded yes. When the District first signed an agreement with Enhanced Networks, they were a new company starting up and since then almost 5 years later they have greatly expanded and improved their capabilities. ED Trueblood commented that he knows a few other local agencies use Enhanced Networks for their IT as well and they are also pleased with the level of performance.

There were no further questions; President Corn called for a vote. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Bernal, Hyman, Rauschenberger and McCormack. Nays, none.

**MOTION TO APPROVE RETAINER AGREEMENT FOR ATTORNEY SERVICES**

Trustee Rauschenberger made a motion, seconded by Trustee McCormack, to approve the Retainer Agreement for Attorney Services as presented.

There were no questions; President Corn called for a vote. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Hyman, Bernal, Rauschenberger and McCormack. Nays, none.

**BUDGET REVIEW- DISCUSSION ONLY**

Executive Director Trueblood touched on a few items regarding the approved Tentative Budget, since there have been some significant changes in the world since the last board meeting which could have budget impacts for the next fiscal year. Since Governor Pritzker's blanket announcement for citizens who were not able to pay their utilities during the COVID-19 pandemic should not worry about losing service has staff concerned that revenues could be significantly less than budgeted and we want to be prepared for the outcome. With this situation and lower commercial and industrial water use, staff thinks it would be best at this time to delay the

anticipated 5% rate increase that would have gone into effect sometime early summer 2020. Also with the predicted revenue shortcoming, the District is looking at a 10% reduction in staff costs in the current budget. This reduction will come from currently available positions or soon to be available positions not being filled at this time. It is not the intention of staff to let any District employees go at this time.

Executive Director also commented that staff had budgeted for a 10% health insurance increase for the FY 2021 budget. After talking with Dave Syverson from Gallagher Insurance, the actual numbers will be closer to a 5% increase saving the district a substantial amount of money related to healthcare. With all these measures to reduce costs in the Fiscal Year 2021 budget, staff still may have to transfer some of the funds from the sale of Skyline Water to cover the temporary loss in revenue due to COVID-19. Trustee Bernal asked if there are any Capital Projects that can be delayed until things normalize. TSD Vogt commented that there are not too many new projects scheduled for this year as the phosphorus removal projects both at the North Plant and ADP really get under way. TSD Vogt continued that most new projects would be in the design phase during this fiscal year. ED Trueblood commented that TSD Vogt is doing a great job working with lobbyists to see if there may be some funds available to help Districts with construction projects that are shovel ready.

### **TECHNICAL SERVICES REPORT**

Technical Services Director Vogt commented that related to the budget discussions, IAWA and WEF have both been tracking interest in Congress in a new stimulus measure likely to include funding for “shovel ready” construction projects. The stimulus package is expected to be structured similar to the ARRA stimulus in 2009. In support of providing that funding to wastewater projects, IAWA has sent letters to Senators and Representatives from Illinois. Trustee Bernal commented that he was very impressed by the letter that was sent out and is hoping they will get a response.

### **STAFF REPORT OF ONGOING STUDY, DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS**

Technical Services Director Vogt provided a written update on all projects. TSD Vogt commented that contractors are continuing to work during the state shut down. Contractors have been instructed to maintain safe distances from other workers and to not come in contact with District employees if not necessary. All contractors are using their own facilities and should not be in District buildings. However, some contractors have indicated potential delays in the projects due to various suppliers and transportation vendors closing operations due to the COVID-19 situation. It is currently unknown what the full extent of the delays will be at this time.

Staff is expecting to see change orders for both Pump Station 31 and the Digester projects to present to the board for approval at the next meeting. Additionally, the Digester project has reached substantially complete and punch list items are almost completed. Final paperwork is being compiled to close out the project, and the final application for payment is anticipated at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

Executive Director commented that the archeologists have concluded their investigation at the North Plant regarding the headstone that was found. The District has been given a complete release to continue construction and it has been suggested that either the headstone be donated to a history museum or be destroyed.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Executive Director Trueblood wanted to take this time to comment on how pleased and proud of all the efforts made by all FRWRD employees during these unprecedented times. Staff has made many changes that have gone a long way towards protecting employees and the District will continue to monitor and make changes as needed.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Attorney Schefflow provided copies of his March 31<sup>st</sup> invoice detailing services rendered for the month. Board Members had no questions or comments. Trustee Bernal asked why the reduction in the monthly retainer agreement amount. Attorney Schefflow responded that although his hourly rate did increase, the hours estimated per month are lower with the reduced amount of Board meetings.

Trustee Bernal wanted to take a quick moment to thank all FRWRD employees for their continued hard work during these difficult times.

**ADJOURN**

As there was no additional business, Trustee Bernal made a motion, seconded by Trustee Hyman, to adjourn the meeting at 9:56 A.M. The next meeting is scheduled for 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 27, 2020. Ayes, Trustees Corn, Bernal, Hyman, Rauschenberger and McCormack. Nays, none.

Respectfully Submitted

Kim Narvaiz, Assistant Clerk

APPROVED:

Bruce R. Corn, President

Gary Hyman, Clerk-Treasurer