

# APPROVED MINUTES

## SARATOGA COUNTY SEWER COMMISSION No. 1 MINUTES OF JUNE 3, 2021 3:00 PM at the Treatment Plant

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Howe, Bisnett, Cannon, Doyle, Fillion, Hotaling, Keegan, Lansing

**COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED:** None

**ALSO PRESENT:** Dan Rourke P.E., Executive Director; Anne Gorman, Confidential Secretary; Chief Operator, Gene Hutchings; William Bills, Maintenance Manager; Andrew Marsden, Assistant Maintenance Manager; Michael Naughton, Assistant County Attorney; Sam Shulman, Legal Student Intern; Ridge Harris, Deputy County Administrator

Chairman Howe welcomed everyone to the June 3, 2021 Saratoga County Sewer Commission meeting.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Led by Commissioner Bisnett

Executive Director Rourke and Chairman Howe welcomed Deputy County Administrator, Ridge Harris (via teleconference call) and said glad to have him join us. Deputy County Administrator Harris thanked them.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS:** Chairman Howe said when County Administrator Bulger was here a few meetings back, he said he understood and realized what we are going through with our mandatory projects coming up, and he eluded to the fact that the County Board would be looking at us to share some of the federal money the County received for the \$44.6M Covid relief bill. Chairman Howe said he has all the faith in the world in Mr. Bulger and that he will try to make that happen. Chairman Howe asked the Commission if they felt it appropriate if he and Executive Director Rourke pinned a letter to the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors (BOS) explaining our big dollar items and where we're at, as well as how a portion of that money could benefit us and the County as a whole by the Sewer District receiving some of those funds. He said we have our ammonia project, the interceptor relining project and the biosolids project that total approximately \$90M that needs to be satisfied and he wanted to hear the Commissioner's thoughts to see if they felt it appropriate to put it in writing and formally ask the BOS to consider the Sewer District when the money is allocated. Commissioner Fillion agreed to penning a letter and formally asking.

Commissioner Hotaling added maybe there is some grant money to be offered as well. Commissioner Doyle said he also agreed that we should be asking for some money. He agreed with the major projects, the effect that it has on the County and even the County's growth is affected by what we do and that a well versed letter is appropriate. Commissioner Bisnett offered to put something in the letter that is going to show the impact of the \$90M and how much we are going to have to bond and what it is going to do to potential cost structure and our debt structure so they can get a picture of what it is really going to do to us if we get nothing. Executive Director Rourke said he agreed and said that was a very good point. Commissioner Cannon agreed to go forward with a letter and asked to see a draft with all the things subsequent to this discussion for review. Executive Director said he can do that and share it via email for feedback. Chairman Howe said that is why he was asking today because he wanted everyone's input. Chairman Keegan

commented if this is successful, it might be a good idea to direct a similar type of letter yearly. Chairman Howe entertained a motion to authorize Executive Director Rourke to draft a letter to share with the Commission for comment and subsequent submittal to the County BOS for review.

*Commissioner Keegan made a motion to authorize Executive Director Rourke to draft a draft letter to share with the Commission for comment and subsequent submittal to the County BOS for review and consideration to receive some funding from the \$44.6M Covid relief bill that the County received. Commissioner Hotaling seconded the motion. Discussion involved including Attorney Naughton for his review and comment. Motion passed: 7 Ayes, 1 Absent, 0 Nays.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES of May 6, 2021.** *Commissioner Doyle made a motion to approve the minutes of May 6, 2021. Commissioner Fillion seconded the motion. No discussion. The minutes of May 6, 2021 were approved. 7 Ayes, 1 Absent, 0 Nays.*

## **2018 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**Regional Biosolids Handling Facility** – Executive Director Rourke reported we are still working with Arcadis on that feasibility report for the different options of moving that biosolids facility to here on site and only handling our sludge. He said the hope is that we have a draft report in a few weeks to be able to be ready for the grant funding that typically opens in July with applications due in September. Executive Director Rourke said there is approximately \$500M in grant money for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), WEA, IMG, etc. so we have our pulse on those to be able to make sure we are aligned as best as we can for that biosolids project to be sitting in a good place for funding. That being said, with those applications, the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) who doles out this money for New York State requires certain boxes to be checked for funding applications. Executive Director Rourke said a couple of those require motions. We are not doing any of those motions today but one will be a bond resolution and the other will be a State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) determination. He reminded this was done for the Joint Biosolids project a few years ago and there are steps that need to be taken to submit applications this year. He said it might seem preliminary but that is the nature of the beast if you want to go for funding with the EFC.

Commissioner Bisnett asked how defined do we need to be with submitting these applications. He said we do not really have a plan yet and inquired if that has an effect on our ability to receive a grant. Executive Director Rourke said we need a solid engineering report that has defined metrics, multiple options, cost benefit analysis, and annualized costs and returns. He said the hope is that this report will be finalized mid July and will provide all that information. Executive Director Rourke said that was the resolution we passed last month to get Arcadis working on the report so we can be prepped to hit those deadlines.

**Ammonia Related WWTP Upgrades** – Executive Director Rourke said we are continuing to work on the 60% of design and should be receiving cost evaluations for a couple of different processes shortly, including different chemical feed processes, different chemicals and blower technologies that we are analyzing, if we can utilize existing technology here or not, based on what we need and what we have currently. He said this is another project that we are going to be moving forward with some of those same SEQR and bond resolution requirements in order to receive grant funding. The only resolutions we passed for our big projects currently is for the Joint Biosolids project, which is null and void at this point and we also passed a resolution for our interceptor relining project to submit an application for the Office of State Comptroller (OSC). He added this might be a busy summer with public hearings and bond resolutions to make sure we are set up to get funding for these projects.

Commissioner Hotaling said one of the things that are going to come about is if Global Foundries (GF) goes after FAB 8.2. He asked if we are going to be set enough to go to the BOS to maybe get some money to help with that project because it is one of our top (3) big projects. Executive Director Rourke said that will definitely be a part of the letter that we submit in reference to potential economic development within the County and maintaining existing development in the County as well. He said as far as GF's cost contribution outside of the \$44.6M that is really the County's and he thinks those conversations absolutely need to happen. Executive Director Rourke said he is waiting to get that final basis of design report from our engineer so he can have meaningful conversations with an actual number to understand what a true ask would be and to loop in this Commission as well as the BOS and the County Administrator's office so that everyone understands that this ask is eventually coming. Commissioner Hotaling said this is a promise that the County is going to make and it isn't in our normal scope of work. He said the other (2) projects are definitely a major part of our growth, but this is not in our normal scope.

## **2020 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**Environmental Benefit Project (EBP)** – Executive Director Rourke reported the solar field officially started up as of May 28, 2021, it is finally printing money and is pretty much 100% complete. Chairman Howe asked what percentage of electricity the solar field would generate. Executive Director Rourke said we spend approximately \$800,000.00/year in electricity and the solar field will generate approximately \$57,000.00, so it is a little less than 10%. Commissioner Keegan asked how much it cost to put install. Executive Director Rourke replied remember this was part of our consent order with NYSDEC. It was the choice to invest in our own infrastructure as opposed to cutting a check to NYSDEC for fines that dealt with violations. It was worth while because we got an incentive back from NYSERDA to install the solar panels. He said the total cost out of pocket was approximately \$1.3M with an 18 year payback. Chairman Howe said this is good and we have satisfied that portion of our consent order with NYSDEC. Executive Director Rourke said it needed to be completed by May 31, 2021 and it's nice to see it producing electricity before that deadline in the consent order.

*Commissioner Lansing arrived 3:18PM*

**Storage Building/HVAC and Roof Replacement Design** – Executive Director Rourke said his apologies for the agenda showing a status update, but this is actually a motion to award with a proposal from Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) for the increased cost provided in the agenda packet. Executive Director Rourke informed the Commission the initial scope of service did not include storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) or site survey. Initially we didn't think it would be necessary, but the building got a little bigger and the area disturbed got a little bigger as well. He said when we looked at the wetlands delineation we were really close to some army corps and state wetlands so there will be some permitting for encroaching on wetland buffers which is all defined on the last page of GPI's proposal. Executive Director Rourke said these scope items were not in the original proposal as the projected disturbed area was less than 1 Acre. Executive Director Rourke added there may be some overlap with our ammonia project in terms of SWPPP and he is working with both entities, Barton & Loguidice and GPI to understand if one SWPPP makes sense or if two are needed. He added we chose to do a not to exceed amount incase another entity wants to take some of that weight off and it is not just a lump sum paid to GPI when the work is not complete and GPI was good with that. Executive Director Rourke said we would just need a motion for the increased cost for the additional work in an amount not to exceed \$37,250.00 which will increase the total cost of the project from \$240,115.00 to \$277,365.00.

*Commissioner Doyle made a motion to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to authorize an amendment to the agreement with Greenman-Pedersen, Inc (GPI) in the amount of \$37,250.00 to prepare a site survey and Storm water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), increasing the total contract to a not to*

*exceed amount of \$277,365.00. Commissioner Hotaling seconded the motion. Discussion involved the previous change order for the air handling unit and SWPPP inspection reports not included in the proposal that are to be billed out of the existing 400 hours in the existing \$240,115.00. Motion passed: 8 Ayes, 0 Absent, 0 Nays.*

**Interceptor Relining Phase VIIB** – Executive Director Rourke gave a status update. He said we are reviewing the plan set as we await approval from the OSC for the additional funds needed for our rates to do this project. He reached out to the engineer, M.J. Engineering and will be scheduling a meeting in the next couple of weeks to understand exactly what we need to finalize. A few weeks after that we will reach out to different municipalities affected to see if there is anything else needed after the original meetings held with them ensuring that this is a successful project.

Chairman Howe asked Executive Director Rourke when he is looking to break ground. Executive Director Rourke said it is dependent upon the OSC and if we can get approval within 60-90 days of submittal, which was approximately 30 days ago. He stated we are looking to go out to bid mid September to October with bids due back in November, and hopefully break ground in January or February. Chairman Howe asked how long it would take to accomplish. Executive Director Rourke said the schedule is interesting because it is 14 miles. He said we are going to rely on the contractor to be able to modify their bid for how many crews they want to put on site. Some of the bigger companies may be able to put a couple of crews onsite, work from the ends and meet in the middle to work faster as opposed to a smaller company that would leak that schedule out. However, the big schedule issues are obviously weather and working municipality to municipality. For example, the City of Saratoga Springs we will not be doing any work over the summer or during July and August because our line runs right in front of Saratoga Performing Arts Center (SPAC). Another municipality where the schedule really matters is Mechanicville. The City requested work to be done by DOT on Routes 4 & 32 and they have been requesting this for years so they want to make sure this project does not hinder that in any way. Lastly snow removal in Mechanicville and where our pipe goes can become an issue, so those things will all get hashed out with the contractor to make sure that they understand. With all of that said, Executive Director Rourke guessed it would take approximately 12 to 18 months to complete.

Chairman Howe said when the bypassing occurs he would love to see some digital photos to share with the Commission when that project takes off. Executive Director Rourke said we can do that. Commissioner Hotaling asked on the bid process, how much more does it cost during the winter months as a lot more resources are used to steam and put the pipe in the ground. Executive Director Rourke replied that is an interesting question, he said keep in mind the pipe is buried 6 to 8 feet in the ground, so you're not getting the wild temperature swings as much as you would up top. He said what's interesting is when it's really cold and the ground is boned up well, driving excavators over it doesn't affect it as much as when a warm winter where the ground can get torn up and up and restoration costs go through the roof. Executive Director Rourke said a lot of it is restoration dependent, so it's hard to say that it would be a cost increase during the winter.

**Riverside (Stillwater) I&I Reduction Design** – Executive Director Rourke reported the Engineer Chazen said their plan set is currently going through Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QAQC) internally and should be submitted to us in a couple of weeks. He said the project is budgeted construction wise this year and he is hoping to get those plans in hand, reviewed, and out to bid in the next couple of months to get that work going.

**Saratoga Springs Pump Station and F.M. Evaluation and Design** – Executive Director Rourke reported the project is moving along nicely. One of the sub-vendors, Siewert Equipment came out and tested our Morris pumps at the station yesterday. They are putting it through its paces to understand the efficiency of

those existing pumps, which was part of the scope to see if we want to rebuild the existing pumps or put in new pumps, so they are currently working through that analysis.

## **2021 CAPITAL PROJECTS**

**LED Lighting Upgrade** – Executive Director Rourke said as you can see we got new lights in here. Centrica has done a lot of work inside the plant, outside with the pole lights and the bay lights but unfortunately, they ran into a supply issue. Their vendor said bulbs would be here in 2-3 weeks and it turns out it was 2-3 months so the contractor is approximately 60% complete and waiting for that supply of lights to come in, get delivered and finish the rest of the project. Executive Director Rourke said, all in all, it is a really big difference and a good pairing with the solar project and with both we will be saving \$100,000.00 a year in electricity.

**Secondary Clarifier Gate and MCC Replacement** – Executive Director Rourke reported we are still awaiting the final report on the clarifier testing that was completed in late April by the engineer, Wright-Pierce. The Motor Control Center (MCC) replacement is going well, the engineer is actually on site today testing some of our old transformers as well as performing MCC inspections and the project is progressing nicely.

**CMMS & Asset Management Implementation** – Executive Director Rourke reported there were (2) kick of meetings held last week, (1) with the software vendor, Utility Cloud and (1) yesterday with our engineer, Barton & Loguidice going over what to expect looking at data voids that we may have, going over consequence of failure, determinations, different risk matrices that we are going to want to generate from this program. He said there were some really good conversations and they are going to move forward with that during the summer and hoping we are lucky enough to get an intern to assist us with some of that data migration and data gathering.

Commissioner Cannon said there have been discussions on inventory and inquired if there was some way to track that with barcodes. Executive Director Rourke replied it's not easy to do because we would end up having to create our own barcode system. Unfortunately, it would be nice if vendors had something that was standard but that's not necessarily the case. He said this program will help us with our assets that are currently in use, it will help us with preventative maintenance and reactive maintenance work orders and tasks and allow us to gather all of our information in one space. He said it is not necessarily going to be an inventory management software platform. Commissioner Cannon asked who would oversee all of that. Executive Director Rourke said it would be the management team. He would rely heavily on Assistant Maintenance Manager Marsden who has worked a lot on our (GIS) Geographic Information System. That inventory of pipes and manholes as we add to it, our maintenance crews go out and GPS it then come back and create a file to put into the software platform. He said as we go, we would rely on maintenance and the Quality Assurance (QA) department once we understand the process. Executive Director Rourke said the help it is going to give with planning and allocating resources and people, the time saved with that will be put towards managing the system as well.

Chairman Howe asked if we were at risk for exposure to cyber attack or hacking through the working process itself. He said he knows a lot of things need to happen to operate the system but is there a potential for somebody to access our computers and cause havoc and do we had a process in place that. Executive Director Rourke said our SCADA system that controls everything is on a dedicated fiber ring that is within our plant. The only access that we have into that is a sonic wall and a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection directly to General Controls and that is secure. Commissioner Fillion added that is very secure. Commissioner Bisnett asked if it was more of a risk if they get hacked. He said a lot of times it's not the site itself, some of the big hacks are on the companies that are protecting businesses, they tunnel in and it can be

a big problem. Executive Director Rourke said it's a really good point, General Controls is really tied into the nanotech facility down in Albany so, he would hope that is even more secure. Commissioner Fillion asked if this was a site to site VPN that was constantly open 27/7 or only when they want to connect and use it. Executive Director Rourke said he does not think it is open but he will ask that question. Commissioner Hotaling asked if we were to lose power, how fast does the software or computer respond to the generator backup and has there ever been a power down to see if it works. Executive Director Rourke said the power goes out fairly often here. The computers bounce back okay but not quick enough to get our main sewage pumps up and running. We need an operator when the power goes out to go to our main influent pump building to start those pumps back up manually because our SCADA system does not do that automatically. He said there are issues sometimes where the power goes out and the (PLC) Programmable Logic Controller loses its program because of a power outage which ends up causing a headache for Gene and his team because now things need to run in hand until we can get General Controls back here to reload the program. To reiterate, Executive Director Rourke said it does respond but sometimes not quick enough. He added sometimes we have UPS's (uninterrupted power supply); they are okay but unreliable as the batteries die every 2-3 years. He said it ends up being we find which UPS's are bad when the power goes out. Executive Director Rourke said the asset management program will help check and verify these things, when they were replaced or installed, etc. Chairman Howe asked Executive Director Rourke to make sure and double check we are doing everything we can to make sure we are protected with those connections and processes. Executive Director Rourke said he will.

Commissioner Fillion said with the solar panels feeding back into the system is there was a way to tap into that for battery storage in case of an emergency. Executive Director Rourke said one thing we are looking at with the ammonia project is electrical upgrades to get rid of the piecemeal generator setup that we currently have and put (2) 4160 generators in that run the entire facility. Executive Director Rourke said he is waiting for cost estimates to see if it fits within what we need to do, but that is part of the plan.

**Technical Determination of Local Limits** – Executive Director Rourke gave a quick status update. He said the project is moving forward, the contract is out for execution and we are hoping to get started next month.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

**Staffing**–Discussion – Executive Director Rourke said something we don't typically bring up here is staffing. We talk dollars and cents a lot but we don't talk staffing. He said with staffing there are obviously costs associated with that. Executive Director Rourke stated we are growing like crazy here. For example, in 2012 we processed 11,000 invoices through here in that year; today we are up to almost 17,000 invoices a year. We obviously have Ballston Lake sewer coming online soon and we were recently talking about Heritage Springs potentially looking at being handed over and obviously there are the new developments. So, he wanted to have a discussion about staffing because there are a few positions that he thinks we could add here that would assist us greatly, one being a purchasing clerk to help Bill, Andrew and Gene with all of the stuff that we have to buy. Executive Director Rourke said we have to buy so much stuff and follow our purchasing procedure by getting (3) quotes, obtaining information and entering it in the system. This can sometimes take up 60% of their day making phone calls, gathering information and getting quotes. Executive Director Rourke said maybe we can get someone technically savvy who understands what we are looking for and allow these guys to manage, plan and do other portions of their job instead of searching websites to get quotes. He said the other 2 or 3 positions were more in the maintenance department as we are expanding not only in the length of pipe but in the diameter as well as in our area. The sewer system is getting bigger and bigger and we would be looking at hopefully adding a couple of maintenance positions as well. He said he says all this to say, he would like to hear the Commission's thoughts on that and then eventually if it all makes sense today, not having to finalize who, or what but if the Commission thinks

increased staffing may make sense, he will go back, run some numbers and come back to the Commission with titles, costs and salaries that might make sense.

Chairman Howe said it ultimately would need County Board of Supervisor's (BOS) approval. Executive Director Rourke said yes it would need BOS approval absolutely, but he was hoping to in that same vein as our initial discussion today, a letter from the Commission saying we have discussed this and we think it makes sense, just to bolster our case because an increase in staffing gets looked at, and it should because it's a forever cost a lot of times and that's expensive with all the fringe benefits that come with the County. Commissioner Bisnett asked if these were unique titles or if they were civil service that has to come off a county list. Executive Director Rourke said we would have to think about that, it could be either. Most of our maintenance department is non-competitive and not civil service. Commissioner Hotaling asked if these jobs were already created on the County list with the pay and scale. Executive Director Rourke said he would look at the compensation schedule and try to match it, the only thing he said he would say might change is we have a truck that requires a CDL license and we don't have a position here that requires a CDL license, so maybe one of the positions we look at is an Motor Equipment Operator (MEO). Chairman Howe said to Executive Director Rourke he really appreciates his opinion in needing additional staffing. The Commission agreed to include the staffing discussion in the letter to the BOS.

Executive Director Rourke said it can at least be mentioned the funding letter and folding in the growth conversation. He said the reason he is hesitant to answer is the change over in administration, which means a change in the way things are requested that he is not quite sure how it is going to happen yet. He is assuming it is not going to be that much different but the County is going to have a budget process and he doesn't know the timing of it. That is why he was hesitant to say (1) letter or (2) separate letters but he thinks folding it all into (1) with a subsequent letter if needed. Chairman Howe asked Executive Director Rourke to prepare a draft letter for the Commission. Commissioner Doyle offered (2) separate letters because they are (2) separate things. Executive Director Rourke said he agreed whole heartedly, the narrative of growth would be mentioned to bolster the fact that funds are needed and the request itself would absolutely be something separate. Commissioner Doyle said there's no doubt we are doing more with less right now and we can only go so far and we need more people. Chairman Howe said there would be more to follow on that.

**ATTORNEY REPORT** – Attorney Naughton reported to the Commission that had in hand the settlement agreement in the amount of \$500,000.00 for the 2008 plant expansion litigation, which he will need Chairman Howe's signature after the meeting. Chairman Howe inquired if we were officially no longer in litigation. Attorney Naughton replied we are officially still in the middle of it until the settlement is signed by all parties and filed. Chairman Howe thanked Attorney Naughton for his effort in getting that expedited.

Attorney Naughton introduced Sam Shulman, a legal intern for the summer. He said Sam lives in the Town of Milton and is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year laws student at Albany Law School. Sam is working on something that could potentially benefit the Sewer District. He's working on a putting together a filing system protocol for contracts in a share drive for all departments to access all of the contracts with the County. Attorney Naughton said Sam is going to come up with the policies and procedures manual as well as the filing naming and protocols for that share drive. Commissioner Cannon asked what was driving the need for the database. Sam said all the County contracts are in paper form in the Attorney's office and this would be digitizing and scanning the contracts and having them online for easier access. Attorney Naught said they get request each week for copies of contracts and this would be a mechanism for Executive Directors of departments to have access to those contracts almost immediately. Attorney Naughton said that is all he had to report.

Commissioner Cannon asked for a follow up on the COVID wastewater testing and if we found anything. Executive Director Rourke said we stopped testing back in February and there was a loose correlation, the problem became communication with our Department of Health and how we could best help them. We were

beginning to see correlation but they were so buried. Executive Director Rourke said he was lucky enough to get a meeting with the commissioner to help him and have him understand the data to a point where he could use it. We were beginning to see correlations but once February came and the weather was horrendous, we decided to stop testing. Commissioner Cannon thanked him for the update.

**DEDICATIONS** – None

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Bisnett and seconded by Commissioner Fillion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**Next meeting July 8, 2021  
3:00 P.M. at the Treatment Plant**