

## **MINUTES**

### **SEWER ADVISORY BOARD (SAB) MEETING** **JANUARY 26, 2023**

The regular monthly meeting of the Upper Allen Township Sewer Advisory Board was held on January 26, 2023, in the Upper Allen Township Municipal Building, 100 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

#### **MEMBERS**

Dan Hower, Chairman  
Bob Haines, Vice Chairman  
Karen Overly Smith  
Kathleen Ferrari

#### **TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS**

Jim Cochran, Commissioner  
Jeff Walter, Commissioner  
Barry A. Cupp, Sewer Dept. Director  
Kodi Hockenberry, WWTP Supt./Asst. Sewer Dept. Director

#### **GHD ENGINEERING SERVICES**

Joel Kostelac, P.E.

Chairman Hower called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all. Roll Call was taken by Recording Secretary, Sherie Minich.

#### **WELCOME OF NEW MEMBER**

Mr. Cupp welcomed the Board's newest member, Kathleen Ferrari. On December 21, 2022, the Board officially appointed her to a five-year term, which expires in December 2027.

#### **REORGANIZATION OF BOARD**

Chairman Hower made a **MOTION** to elect officers of the Upper Allen Township Sewer Advisory Board as follows:

##### **2023 Elected Officers:**

- Chair: Karen Overly Smith
- Vice Chairman: Bob Haines
- Secretary: Dan Hower

**SECONDED** by Mr. Haines. **ROLL CALL:** carried unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**  
**NOVEMBER 17, 2022**

Chairman Hower called for approval of the Minutes of the November 17, 2022, meeting. Ms. Overly Smith made a **MOTION** to approve the Minutes of November 17, 2022; **SECONDED** by Mr. Haines. The Motion carried unanimously.

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

There was one visitor in attendance at the meeting. The gentleman was asked to come up and introduce himself. He approached the podium and stated his name was Kyle Knipe, of 304 Manchester Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011. Mr. Knipe is hoping to be a township resident later this Spring. He owns a parcel of land upon which a house is being constructed and he is wanting to speak of the billing of the sewer charges, as the sewer main has been connected to his home; however, he has no functional sewer lines or plumbing in the house. Chairman Hower stated that during public comment Mr. Knipe could come back up and his issue can be discussed.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**GRANTHAM WWTP SLUDGE DEWATERING SYSTEM  
UPGRADE AND MISCELLANEOUS IMPROVEMENTS**

Mr. Cupp advised the Board that we will be receiving bids through PennBid electronically on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Kostelac stated that we have received a dozen or so questions from bidding contractors. He also discussed the fact that we have a handful of previous contractors that we know are looking at it -- GC and EC. We will take bids on the project as Barry mentioned next week. On the procurement side of things with the screw press vendor, we got the updated submittals, specifically those with regard to the conveyor. They have everything they need at this point, and after February 1, assuming things go according to plan, we will try to award the bid that night if possible. If not, it will have to be a few weeks later and then we will be off and running.

**SEWER DEPARTMENT BUDGET**

On December 21, at the Board of Commissioners meeting, The 2023 budget was adopted. Mr. Cupp stated that he gave everyone a draft copy of the budget in November. There were no questions or comments regarding the budget.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **LISBURN ROAD TRUNK SEWER COVID-19 ARPA H2O GRANT APPLICATION**

Mr. Cupp informed the Board that he learned about an opportunity to apply for the above-referenced grant and that this project will be financed in part by Rider Musser Development LLC. We contacted Rider Musser to be sure that they would be willing to commit to the project, should we get the grant, to which they responded that they would commit. Their share is roughly 20 percent of the costs. We will hopefully hear something regarding the grant award by July or August of 2023. If we receive the grant, the project must be completed by 2024.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Knipe approached the podium again and stated his name and address as noted previously. He said he is a future tenant of 329 Pennington Drive, Mechanicsburg, PA. He came to the meeting because he had a concern about the billing of sewer rental charges for his property at 329 Pennington Drive. His property has been connected to the sewer main since the end of July 2022; however, the home has no water, nor does it have any plumbing fixtures that could be used to dispense anything into the sewer line. Mr. Knipe believes it is unreasonable to charge someone who doesn't have occupancy in a structure. Mr. Knipe further advised that he had spoken with Mr. Cupp and other folks in the sewer office earlier last year, and it was stated at that time that the billing begins upon the sewer line connection because contractors dispense things into the sewer main, such as drywall dust or paint or other such construction materials. Since 2006, this has been the policy of the Township to charge the owner once the property is connected to a sewer main, at which time a sewer bill is initiated.

Ms. Overly Smith asked if rental units could be used as an example, such as an apartment building owner having a complex with five or six rental units and say two of them being unoccupied for say a year. It was stated that by Ordinance, the owner of the property still must pay sewer bills for all units, even those with no occupancy and no revenue. Mr. Knipe stated that the apartment is a structure with functioning plumbing. His point is he does not have functioning plumbing. Not only does he not have occupancy, but he also doesn't have a single device in the home that functions to discharge anything into the sewer line.

Mr. Cupp explained the way this subject all came about years ago was when sewers were completed, Township crews would go out and routinely test the sewers. Part of the testing would involve lamping the sewers where staff would actually look down the pipe and see what was in the pipe. In later years, the Township started televising the sewer lines. This is when the Township discovered that builders had been using the plumbing fixtures and discharging waste, including what appeared to be drywall paste and paint. Mr. Cupp said this was an ongoing problem for years and there was a lot of discussion with the Board about this. The solution to rectify the situation was to enact an ordinance which triggered the sewer billing at the time the building sewer lines got hooked up to a Township lateral. At that time, the Township urged developers and the builders not to connect the building sewer until right before the Certificate of Occupancy goes out to avoid this very problem.

Commissioner Cochran stated that the majority of a sewer bill is to support the infrastructure that handles the sewer flow. Once an owner of a property within the Township connects to the infrastructure, they are helping to maintain that infrastructure, regardless of the flow.

Commissioner Cochran explained that infrastructure encompasses all of the pipes that carry your sewer away to the treatment plant. He further went on to say that whether or not the Township has a thousand gallons of sewage go through the wastewater treatment plant or a hundred thousand gallons of sewage go through, the infrastructure to convey the sewage and maintain the wastewater treatment plant still have to exist. Commissioner Cochran stated he just got done building a home, moved in 2019, and went through the same thing that Mr. Knipe is dealing with. Commissioner Cochran paid for his sewer before he ever moved in, but realized it was because he hooked up to the infrastructure and now had a responsibility to support the infrastructure, even though he was not generating any flow at that location.

Mr. Knipe stated he doesn't entirely understand how that can be used as a justification. He said nothing that he is doing in the house is affecting the overall infrastructure. Commissioner Cochran stated he will need that infrastructure to be in place and by tapping into it now, he has already indicated he is part of this infrastructure. Mr. Knipe said he thinks it would be more reasonable for that to occur with occupancy. Discussion ensued and Commissioner Cochran stated that the reason he is not using the sewer is his builder's fault, it has nothing to do with our Sewer Department. Mr. Knipe's builder put the building sewer in early and now he has been waiting months for him to finish the house and move in. Commissioner Cochran suggested an analogy where if someone wanted to reserve an airplane ticket for July but doesn't want to pay for it until they actually get to the airport. You are reserving capacity, you are reserving that seat and you pay for it when you reserve that seat, even though they are going to hold your money all the way until July.

After much discussion, Commissioner Cochran explained that the Township is only allowed to have so much capacity and that the treatment plant can only handle so much sewage. In addition, the Township has developers that come in and pay for capacity before they even pay for the house. In major developments, the Township is already planning for that capacity to be used, and it has asked the developer to pay for that up front. Commissioner Cochran asked if Mr. Mumper had to pay for reservation capacity or not and Mr. Cupp said he did. Mr. Mumper paid for the capacity for the houses, and when the developer or builder extends a building sewer to that lateral, he is then using the infrastructure, whether putting anything through or not. Mr. Knipe is connected to the infrastructure and that capacity is his. Mr. Knipe said he appreciated that explanation and found it interesting; that is the first time such an explanation has been given. Mr. Knipe stated he still doesn't love it, but he guesses he understands it for the most part.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Chairman Hower asked for a Motion for adjourn and Karen Overly Smith so moved, Bob Haines made a second. The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

**THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 23, 2023, AT 6:30 P.M.**