

**WEST HANOVER TOWNSHIP AUTHORITY**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**November 4, 2020 @ 6:30 p.m.**

*30 participants including board, staff, engineer and solicitor*

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Fowler called meeting to order at 6:31 pm

**2. ROLL CALL:** Secretary – all board members present

**3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:**

a. Workshop Meeting Minutes of October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Mr. Fowler called for a motion for approval

Mr. Steinmeier motioned; Mr. Shradley seconded. Ms.

Zimmerman abstained as she was not present at the meeting.

Motion passed

**4. CORRESPONDANCE: None**

**5. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mr. Fowler reminded credit applications must be approved by the Authority no later than the December 2, 2020 Board Meeting to be included in the 2021 stormwater billing and is not retroactive to 2020. Mr. Fowler also reminded that delinquent accounts after 12/31/20 will not receive credits in 2021. The final installment for Keystone Collections is due 12/1, Keystone should be sending a reminder.

Mr. Fowler informed that WHTA has become a member of the PMAA, free membership for remainder of 2020. Mr. Fowler stated the WHTA joined in October. Estimated pricing for the 2021 membership is \$900 -\$1000 and that is based off authority revenues.

**6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Richard Enck 7112 Hillside –

State map provided by Mr. Rosario still did not provide clarity. Mr. Fowler stated that map was done by HRG. Mr. Eck also mentioned a friend of his that spoke with HRG and there was a discrepancy on credits. He wanted to give a heads up that his friend will be contacting Alex at HRG this week.

Mr. Enck asked if we can keep record of how many participants attend the Authority meetings. Mr. Fowler advised Mr. Enck there were about 30 participants on the call including board, staff, HRG and solicitors. Mr. Fowler asked Alexis if she can add number of participants to the meeting minutes. Alexis responded she can do that.

Tina Baker – 487 Hershey Rd.

Proponent of the flat fee. Would like this to be fair to the non-urbanized area residents.

Diane Allen – 7400 ?

Asked if the meeting agenda can agendas be attached to zoom invite email?

Alexis stated she will attach the meeting agenda to the invitations in the future. If the agenda is needed for tonight's meeting it is on the website.

Mr. Fowler asked if there were any other public comments. There were none.

Mr. Fowler stated he is moving HRG up in the meeting agenda.

Bruce Hulshizer from HRG presenting the rate study and low impact parcel automatic credit. Mr. Hulshizer stated if the low impact parcel is automatically applied, that would be estimated \$73,000 revenue loss from authority for the Authority. The initial budget Authority budget allowed for more.

Mr. Fowler stated 15% non-urbanized automatic credit was similar at about \$75,000. This automatic low impact credit would be \$73,000 on top of that with the other credits. Mr. Fowler asked the Board make note of this.

Mr. Steinmeier asked if the study dealt with different levels of fees to give us an idea of fee structure?

Mr. Fowler responded they were looking at \$137 flat fee for single family residential, depending on how that is defined, 2 options for tiered, estimated for same ERU system, and what new fee would be based off the approved budget.

Mr. Steinmeier stated his concern for the fees are too high for some residents. Asking about 5 tier system. He was also concerned for residents on the lower end and said they need to be careful about increasing resident's fees by doubling or tripling. Mr. Steinmeier agrees with the tier system but still wants the high fees lowered. Flat fee defeats the purpose of the MS4 program because he believes you are not encouraging people to fix their stormwater issues. He asked Mr. Hulshizer if he had any ideas?

Mr. Hulshizer suggested lowering our 800 square feet to 500 square feet, which is industry standard. Mr. Wakefield agreed with Mr. Hulshizer and advised you cannot go lower than 500 square feet and believes that should be the way to go.

Mr. Steinmeier asked about properties below 500 square feet and shouldn't everybody be paying something? He mentioned we have requirements by the state and DEP but don't get any assistance from them so in turn it comes from the residents. Mr. Steinmeier stated he would like to see the higher bills around the \$200-\$300 range.

Mr. Hulshizer believes most of the higher end residents would fall into the low impact parcel credit of 40%. Capping could be a legal concern.

Mr. Wakefield stated you cannot cap because fees must reasonable and arbitrary. No justification for treating people above lines differently. It won't fly.

Mr. Wakefield stated the rate is a product of what is necessary to achieve compliance. If you lower rate, you still must fund them. The only other way is a tax increase, so the rate structure is the only one that is justified.

Mr. Steinmeier responded that is something we must try to solve to make it affordable for residents.

Mr. Fowler asked Mr. Hulshizer if he was able to compare other municipalities he works with. He'd like him to scan all clients and see if they have come up with any method to decrease the large bill. Mr. Fowler reiterated that some larger bill residents have larger properties, those may not qualify since they mostly have barns. Farms are not included. Their high fees are based off impervious area.

Mr. Steinmeier mentioned residents ask him how they are benefiting from MS4 when they see no result from the program. What services are being done because they see no improvements.

Mr. Fowler asked Mr. Hulshizer to send an email with the results so we can think about it before our next workshop and stated we need to decide on the billing method for 2021. Mr. Hulshizer will do that. He believes it might be better to see what the ultimate end fees would be if low impact and non-urbanized credits were applied to give a point of reference. Mr. Fowler stated they could be maxed out at the 50%. That could mitigate the cost of the \$73,000. Mr. Fowler asked Mr. Hulshizer if there was a way to figure that out and Mr. Hulshizer responded yes.

Mr. Fowler asked if any other board members had questions for Mr. Hulshizer. No further questions.

## **7. PRESENTATIONS, STAFF & BOARD REPORTS:**

### **a. Public Works**

Mr. Fowler updated the summary of projects for Public Works:

We have approved a total 9 projects totaling \$68,000. So far, they have completed \$17,000 of that, two projects that represent about \$50,000 may or may not get completed by the end of the year. Mr. Fowler asked if board has any questions with that report. No further questions.

### **b. Finance**

Mr. Fowler, we have two invoices to approve:

- 1 Capital Region Council of Governments – MS4 ad - \$40
- 2 HRG – 8/31/ - 10/4 \$7,924.86

Mr. Fowler asked for a motion to approve both invoices

Mr. Shradley moved for those to be paid, seconded by Ms. Zimmerman. Motion passed.

Mr. Fowler, next item: Approval / Denial of credits

- 3 Approve: C-94 James Rudy, rain barrel credit \$52
- 4 Approve: C-95 Shirley & John Martin, low impact development & Riparian Buffer \$221
- 5 Deny: C-93 James Douglas, low impact credit (not qualified), calculations did not include all identified impervious area. Pervious pavement – additional information requested on 10/16 but no information has been received to date.

Mr. Fowler entertained a motion to approve credits for Rudy and Martin.

Moved by Mr. Steinmeier, seconded by Mr. Shradley. Motion passed.

Mr. Fowler entertained motion to deny Mr. Douglas. Ms. Zimmerman moved, seconded by Mr. Steinmeier. Motion passed.

Mr. Fowler stated the Mid Penn Bank Balance as of 11/2/20 - \$754,359.75, which is up \$500,000 from the end of September

#### **8. AUTHORITY REVENUE BUDGET:**

Mr. Fowler stated there were two items to discuss: policy issues affecting revenue budget and to review 1<sup>st</sup> draft of revenue budget for 2021

Mr. Fowler started with the policy issues: identify if we want to continue the policies we have been operating under or make changed. First is adjustment for impervious area adjustments appeals, current policy is no fee for appeals. Mr. Fowler proposed current fee is continued and no fee charge for adjustments appeal. Fee for credit applications, current policy is \$25 application fee plus reimbursement of engineering cost. Proposal is to continue current policy. Application of credits: current policy is any resident who is current receive credits, if you are not current you don't get a credit. Our policy is silent on a cutoff date.

Mr. Fowler stated in discussion with Keystone, they will allow resident's a post mark date of 12/31/20 with a few days mail lag time. Mr. Shradley questioned how much time that gives Keystone to adjust bills with turn around time. Mr. Fowler responded Keystone will notify us 10-15 days into January with delinquent accounts. We need to prepare a billing sheet in assistance with Light Heigel. They think it can take 3-5 days to update the 2021 billing info and send that back to Keystone. Bills should go out mid-February.

Mr. Shradley asked when first payment is due, and Mr. Fowler believes March 15. There will be quarterly installment options. Mr. Shradley Asked if we needed a motion to change policy.

Mr. Fowler asked Mr. Wakefield do we need a motion?

Mr. Wakefield responded we have a lot of flexibility under rates, rules and regulations. You may want to do comprehensive motion after you go through the list to ratify for the sake of consensus.

Mr. Fowler stated we most likely will be changing our rates rules and regulations by the end of the year as a result of adopting a new billing method.

Mr. Fowler asked what happens if resident becomes current in the middle of a billing cycle? What do we do about credits for 2021? Policy is credits are not applied retroactively on existing bill. If you are delinquent at the end of the year you forfeit credits for 2021. We are about 20% delinquencies. If that doesn't improve, this is going to be a big issue.

Mr. Steinmeier and Mr. Shradley agreed.

Mr. Fowler, Mr. Shradley, Mr. Geppert and Ms. Zimmerman had a roundtable discussion on the Covid credit, delinquencies, impact on the 2022 budget, billing cycle being the calendar year, forfeiting of Covid credits due to delinquencies, Keystone bill modifications with becoming current, allowing of credit to accrue? This can be decided on later, it doesn't affect the 2021 budget. Fowler stated "non-payers" are going to force our rate to go higher. Incentive to become current in 2021. Mr. Shradley believes giving an extra year is a long time. They've known they have a bill since March of 2020. Mr. Fowler and Mr. Shradley agree move to July 2021 for the extension provided then you lose the credit. Mr. Steinmeier believes that is fair. Mr. Geppert believes it should only be for 1 year.

Ms. Zimmerman asked how people will know about this. Mr. Fowler responded we are thinking of doing a mailing in December after new billing method and rate are selected. Alexis is getting quotes. Plan to amend parcel information to include a detailed calculation of 2021 bill to for individual parcels. There is not enough room on the Keystone bill to list all credits. They will list gross and net bill. Property owners should know their bill in January before they receive the bill in February. Covid Credit forfeit date changed from 12/31/21 to 7/15/21.

Mr. Fowler next item: SALDO permit review and inspection. 100% reimbursement on engineering costs by developers or individuals. Propose to continue current policy, that is also the township's policy. We have \$20,000 in our expenditure budget for engineers for permit applications which would be reimbursed from applicant.

Mr. Fowler moved onto the next item. Annual inspection cost on approved credit application – current policy is none. Next year we are required to inspect the credit applications once a year. We haven't decided whether we should bill the applicants. Mr. Fowler proposes they should not be billed and be a general cost of the authority. HRG doesn't think it would take more than a day to do inspections. Mr. Steinmeier and Mr. Geppert agree.

Mr. Fowler motions to approve these policies. Mr. Wakefield stated subject to as amended.

Fowler asked for a motion. Mr. Shradley moved, seconded by Mr. Steinmeier. Motion passed.

Mr. Fowler stated revenue budget (first draft): estimated \$423,000, 2021 stormwater fees, stormwater permit fees, credit fees, reimbursed SALDO fees, credit fees less Covid credit, Covid on delinquent it would be reserved not paid out. Approved adjustment appeals, cost of stormwater credits, estimated delinquencies, budgeted 15% delinquencies now at 23%. Revenue budget will be adopted December 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. Low impact credit automatic? Mr. Fowler asked the board on thoughts of that being automatic. 20% would fall into this. About 900 are eligible, only about 70 have applied.

Mr. Fowler asked the board their opinion on turning the low impact credit into automatic? Mr. Steinmeier, Mr. Fowler, Ms. Zimmerman had a discussion on automatic credits affect fees going up. Mr. Fowler responded we would have to raise our ERU fee \$7 to fund automatic credit. Ms. Zimmerman thinks it should be automatic, believes it will save administrative and engineering costs. Mr. Shradley agrees but asked if it is reviewed on an annual basis? Mr. Fowler confirmed and said we need to do thorough review of our credits and what we want to keep and get rid of. We are the most generous with the percentages we give. Mr. Fowler assumes we all agree this should be automatic? We will do that in a motion at a later meeting.

Mr. Wakefield confirmed that most municipalities are making the low impact credit automatic.

## **9. OLD BUSINESS:**

Mr. Fowler reminded agenda items need to be submitted to Alexis by EOB on Thursday before Authority meeting

Alexis updated on Rain Barrel Workshop. Alexis talked to Matt at Dauphin County Conservation District; West Hanover received grant money for rain barrels, but supplier is closed due to Covid. Once supplier opens, virtual workshop and pick up. No estimated date.

## **10. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **a. 711 project at 7600 Allentown Blvd.**

Mr. Fowler role of Stormwater Authority? HRG says we can review the plan. Once this complete we will have an obligation to inspect the stormwater facilities. Mr. Shradley asked if those were the annual inspections. Mr. Fowler confirmed. Ask Janet with any questions.

Mr. Fowler moved onto the second item relating to policy to posting documents on the website before / after meetings? We follow the Township's lead which is they don't post draft documents and only finalized documents. We have no policy as to what we should post and when. Mr. Wakefield advised to be judicious. Some advisory materials that qualify as pre-decisional and deliberation material that are not subject to public disclosure under the right to know law. Reports of counsel from engineer may still be confidential. Mr. Wakefield is in favor

of transparency but there are instances where you must be mindful however no formal policy is needed. Mr. Fowler asked the board what info we think the public should get before a meeting? Mr. Shradley has no problem posting if its not legal and approved through Mr. Fowler / township manager.

Mr. Fowler asked Alexis to send documents with agenda to zoom addresses. She responded she would.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY COME BEFORE THE BOARD:**

Mr. Fowler, we discussed the deadline for delinquencies re: for 2021 Keystone billing – 12/31 and postcard mailer to residents explaining new billing method and how to calculate their bill.

Mr. Fowler discussed a proposal from Light Heigel which was an open-ended agreement. They have a contract with the township. They are doing work for the storm water authority but under the township's contract. They are billing the township without us being notified. It would be the same scenario we have with HRG Retainer agreement. Items related to billing, parcel data, items board may ask Light Heigel to do. Not ready to approve the proposal tonight. Mr. Fowler asked the board if they think it is good idea to have separate agreement? Mr. Shradley agreed it's a good idea. Mr. Fowler asked all board members to send any comments with agreement send to Alexis and she can compile. Mr. Fowler, Mr. Shradley & Mr. Wakefield will go through it.

Mr. Fowler asked if the board members had any other business. There were no comments.

**12. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Lori Fehr – 7214 Linglestown Rd.

Asked if the \$25 they paid for the application fee for the low impact credit be refunded?

Mr. Fowler proposes that if it is made automatic, they would refund.

Mike Kreiser – 483 Hillside Road

Asked if the public will have an opportunity to review rate study before workshop? Mr. Fowler responded that since we have not had any additional comments from the board, we will have HRG make it final and make it available to the public to review before the workshop. Mr. Kreiser then asked how are services provided rationally related to the fees charged? Agrees with Mr. Steinmeier. He understands everyone must pay for the stormwater system. Proponent for a flat fee.

Mr. Fowler reminded the fee and budget of stormwater authority is not solely related to MS4; it also deals with flooding issues. You still use township roads; we are required to repair those along with sinkholes, street sweep and provide services.

Mr. Wakefield stated Mr. Fowlers comment was on point. He added the concept behind credits policy is for level of service.

Corinne Hankins - 7732 Franklin Drive

Asked to confirm the last Keystone payment date? Mr. Fowler confirmed it was December 1<sup>st</sup>. On Aug 27<sup>th</sup>, submitted paperwork to the township sinkhole when that may be fixed. Mr. Fowler will talk to public works. Ms. Hankins is a proponent of the flat fee is most fair. Thinks its all very difficult to understand.

Tina Baker –

Understands we all must pay and wants it to be fair. Proponent for flat fee.

Laurie Daubert – 7384 Fishing Creek Valley Rd.

Flat fee proponent. Asked why are we paying HRG to administrative work for simple questions? Mr. Fowler agreed and stated that is one of the reasons we hired an administrative assistant. Ms. Daubert questioned mailer of new billing method. Mr. Fowler stated the letter will describe the new billing method and include a link to the parcel data and look up the detailed description of your bill with credits.

Richard Enck – 7112 Hillside

Questioned why West Hanover Elementary doesn't have ERUs listed on the website. Are they still under construction permit? Mr. Fowler stated we will check that out. Mr. Enck believes the high rates are dependent on engineering, need to get that knocked down. Mr. Fowler responded estimated down about a third for the 2021 budget. Those are design costs for 2 pollution reduction for the mandated MS4 permit.

Alexis asked the public if there are any other questions. No further questions.

### **13. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**

- a. Gloria Zimmerman – Thanked Bob for running the meeting. Thank Alexis for walking into this with no knowledge and for doing an outstanding job so far. Also thanks to Bruce at HRG, who is working very well with us.
- b. Mike Geppert – Thanked Bob for running the meeting. He would like to see the budget decrease over the years. He can't foresee it increasing.
- c. Max Shradley – seconded Gloria
- d. Don Steinmeier – asked about the Lakeside project. Mr. Fowler responded HRG is awaiting the permit from DEP by the end of the year. It has been approved by the wetlands section, waiting final approval. Mr. Steinmeier agreed Alexis has been doing a great job. Finally, stated we need engineers and lawyers.
- e. Robert Fowler – great job Alexis, she stepped in and is performing well with adverse conditions. Relating to the budget, we may be able to control engineering costs through Dauphin county regional stormwater program. Value in participation is engineering and training costs. Thanked everyone for participating.

#### **14. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Fowler asked for a motion to adjourn.

Moved by Ms. Zimmerman, seconded by Mr. Shradley. Motion passed

Meeting adjourned 8:42

**Special Meeting: Authority Adopt 2021 Rate Method November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 @ 6 pm**

**Next Regular Authority Board Meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 @ 6:30 pm**