

**MINUTES OF THE
EASTON AREA JOINT SEWER AUTHORITY BOARD
August 19, 2024 Meeting**

- ❖ The regular monthly meeting of the Easton Area Joint Sewer Authority Board was held at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, August 19, 2024, at the EAJSA Administration Building, 50 South Delaware Drive, Easton, Pennsylvania 18042, with Zoom Meeting option. The meeting was open to the public.
- ❖ The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Mr. Robert Lammi. Mr. Lammi ordered the roll to be called at 5:00 p.m. Board Members were present in-person and via video conference option. Board members present at the call to order were as follows:

#	Member	Municipality	Term Expires	Present	Absent	Time Entered
1	Robert Blanchfield Treasurer	Palmer Township	12/31/2025	X		*
2	Jeffrey Bracken	Wilson Borough	12/31/2024	X		*
3	Luis Campos	City of Easton	12/31/2025	X		*
4	James Frank	Forks Township	12/31/2024	X		*
5	David Hopkins Vice-Chairman	City of Easton	12/31/2028		X	*
6	Paul James	West Easton Borough	12/31/2024	X		*
7	Robert Lammi Chairman	Palmer Township	12/31/2024	X		*
8	Joseph Mauro Jr	City of Easton	12/31/2025	X		*
9	Stephen Riegel Secretary	Tatamy Borough	12/31/2024	X		*
10	John Van Arman	City of Easton	12/31/2024			5:01
11	Robert Werner	City of Easton	12/31/2025			5:05
12	VACANT	City of Easton	12/31/2023			

*Beginning of Meeting

**Adjournment of Meeting

Board members attending via Zoom Meeting could hear each meeting attendee and be heard by each attendee.

❖ **The following personnel were in attendance:**

Mike Gaul (King Spry law firm, Authority Solicitor), Jeff Morgan (SC Engineers, Authority Engineer), John Schimmel (Authority Accountant), Chuck Wilson (City of Easton Operations Manager of WWTP), Alexandria Hoffman (City of Easton Assistant Operations Manager of WWTP, and Authority IPP Manager), Yuslenny Zorrilla (City of Easton Office Manager of WWTP, and Authority Administrative Assistant).

❖ **Agenda and any Amendment Approval:**

Van Arman entered the Board meeting at 5:01 pm.

A motion was made by Mr. Mauro and seconded by Mr. Riegel to approve the agenda without any amendments. **Motion Carried (9-0)**. Mr. Werner was not present at the time of the vote.

❖ **Minutes Approval:**

A motion was made by Mr. James and seconded by Mr. Mauro to approve the minutes of the Board's July 15, 2024, regular meeting, as presented. **Motion Carried (9-0, with Mr. Blanchfield abstaining)**. Mr. Blanchfield abstained from the vote because he was not present at the last Board meeting. Mr. Werner was not present at the time of the vote.

Mr. Lammi had an update on last meeting's minutes water use presented by Palmer, which was significantly high. Mr. Lammi met with the Palmer Township Financial Director, who confirmed numbers were correct. Mr. Lammi stated, following that statement, past years should have been higher, which Mr. Lammi questioned, because after Mr. Morgan met with them to discuss this, they were not taking out the diversion and numbers came down from 600 million to 400 million. Lammi thought this was the same situation. Mr. Lammi met with them twice to talk about this and explained to them what the consequences would be.

❖ **Courtesy of the floor:**

A member of the public, Mr. Dan Redman, was present at the meeting. Mr. Dan Redman, a resident of Easton for about 30 years. He got interested in finding out about us and because it is advertised on our website that it is open to the public. In addition to that, he is looking into a career change. Mr. Redman stated he drives by the plant on a regular basis and became curious about us. Furthermore, Mr. Redman has a military background, Navy Reserve, and recalls there was a sewage plant right at the base and had to work there during his drill weekends.

Mr. Lammi provided Mr. Redman with a brief history of the Authority, its organization, and its purposes.

Mr. Werner entered the Board meeting at 5:05 pm.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Attorney Gaul had no report.

ACCOUNTANT'S REPORT

Mr. John Schimmel, EAJSA Accountant, reported he had nothing more than the report he had submitted in the Board Packet. Mr. Schimmel stated that he had reached out to the Auditor, but he will elaborate on that under the Finance Committee section.

Mr. James made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mauro, to approve the July 2024 bills for payment in the total amount of \$69,503.74. **Motion Carried (10-0).**

Mr. Blanchfield made a motion, seconded by Mr. James, to approve the Bond Funds Requisition 24-C2024-08 in the amount of \$8,575.51 in accordance with the Authority Engineer's recommendation.

Motion Carried (10-0).

ENGINEERING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Hopkins was not present. Mr. Morgan provided the Committee report.

Mr. Morgan stated that, other than his report, he had one item to present to the Board for approval. It is the purchase of another switch breaker for the plant's main Switchgear, which is like the purchase discussed and approved at the last meeting.

Mr. Morgan asked Mr. Wilson to provide further details concerning the reasons for requesting the purchase of another breaker.

Mr. Wilson stated that on August 7, 2024, the plant was set to install the recently purchased breaker and put the Motor Control Center or the Switchgear back to normal and it was catastrophic failure with the generator tighten breaker, the plant was shut down partially for about 10 minutes, only half of the plant running. The plant was on generator, unable to get the Aerators going. Mr. Wilson added the primary side of the facility was running, also the Contact tank running and Primary. Mr. Wilson added BSI came to the scene as well as Ms. Hoffman who was at the plant at 2:00 am. Mr. Wilson added BSI got to the plant at 4:00 am, and he got to the plant at 5:00 am.

Mr. Wilson added a complete plant shutdown was done for about an hour to an hour and a half. Mr. Wilson added the Switchgear had to be removed as well as other components. Mr. Wilson added BSI got everything going. In addition, Mr. Wilson explained the process performed by BSI to get the plant going. The work created for the generator tightened. This process back feeds both sides of the plant, could not back feed down because the breaker was gone. In addition, the two breakers that were pulled out will be worked on to try to salvage them. Mr. Wilson added the plant needs another 2,000-amp breaker with a cost of approximately \$14,000.00.

Mr. Wilson said a complete shutdown has to be planned and scheduled and bring back up generators for the Aerators and Chlorine disinfection. Mr. Wilson stated two generators would work. One generator for the Aerators and from the old control building, and feed RAS/WAS and Chlorine contact tank with another generator. Mr. Wilson added this is still in the making, there is actually a third part to switchgear on both sides because the generator tightens had a couple of plates on the front side and back side but when that is done the transformers have to be disconnected and turn the generators off.

Mr. Lammi asked if two generators will be brought to the plant. Mr. Wilson explained that we will get two portables, and this procedure has been done in the past. When generators must be serviced, the portable generators are plugged directly into the tighten so the plant can run normally. Mr. Lammi asked if bringing in three would be the best course of action as a backup if anything goes wrong. Mr. Wilson stated it is actually a good idea.

Mr. Wilson stated it can work up to eight hours after it has been down. Mr. Wilson added, if necessary, some parts might have to be fabricated. Mr. Wilson stated the generator connector is a special metal called thin Nickel Cadmium receptable for the breaker.

Mr. Blanchfield pointed out Mr. Wilson discussed the major areas of the plant, he was interested to hear about the miscellaneous, such as the rest of the pumps, Headworks, among others. Mr. Wilson added Sludge can be built up in the Primary, Secondary Clarifiers, things will be a not as usual, but we should recover from that.

Ms. Hoffman stated if the plant is prepared for an event such as this one, there is enough time to make the preparations needed whereas this was an emergency. Ms. Hoffman added how with the only areas that went down, and the WAS been down for such a short window of time, was minor, compared as to how bad it could have been. Ms. Hoffman thanked BSI for showing up in less than an hour to assist with the emergency. Mr. Wilson also complimented them for their prompt response to the situation at hand.

Mr. James asked what the current configuration at the plant is. Mr. Wilson stated both sides of the plant are fully operational, if we lose one power a generator will pick up normally. Mr. Wilson provided an example, if the Primary side goes down, for a Switchgear reason, back feed would not be possible; generator will have to be turned directly to that side of the plant.

Ms. Hoffman the plant was running on the breaker purchased as an emergency, installed first that night when BSI came in at 2:30 am, and arrived only hours prior to the event. Ms. Hoffman added, the second breaker that was

out for repair was picked up and installed the next day.

Mr. Blanchfield asked the date of the occurrence. Mr. Wilson responded, August 7th. Mr. Wilson added the treatment is good but in August's report you will notice the Ammonia fluctuation from .1 to 2.3, but we are still within our limits which is 30. Mr. Hoffman added the reason for the spike is from the Ditches being off for a period. Mr. Blanchfield asked if the State must be notified. Mr. Wilson responded when the plant was down for an hour and a half a blend was needed and an extra sample was taken for Fecal and solids, but the results came back normal. Mr. Wilson this is not required to be reported but documentation will be kept and on the DMR.

Mr. Wilson stated the new breaker was supposed to be installed that same day as the event.

Mr. Lammi stated that anything that must be done quickly should be considered as an emergency.

Mr. Gaul commented that he was trying to understand the event that happened at 2 am in the morning and proceeded with some questions. Mr. Gaul asked for confirmation that the Plant staff's request is for the purchase of a second breaker with a cost of \$14,000.00 and whether the current circumstances should be considered an emergency. Ms. Hoffman clarified the state of emergency was presented at last month's Board meeting to replace this breaker that just failed, now this request is to purchase another breaker.

Mr. Lammi stated this is not normal and it should be under the same emergency request. Mr. Wilson confirmed this is not a normal operation and the plant is running on a shoestring and that this breaker should be expedited. Mr. Wilson stated he spoke to Mr. Morgan; BSI informed him the Switchgear is old and these breakers are getting hard to come by and we should put it on the Capital improvements for the future to replace the Switchgear.

Mr. Gaul stated the background on this matter is important. Mr. Gaul stated that the plant staff were describing a continuing emergency at the plant due to the lack of redundancy for Switchgear. The reason he brought it up is because there is only one quote of \$14,000.00. Between \$12,000.00 and approximately \$19,000.00, three quotes are normally required.

Mr. Morgan stated a number of these same breakers were purchased in the past when BSI did all the work. Mr. Morgan said that based on pricing and availability this is the same price and manufacturing from the same supplier of the two other spare breakers.

Mr. Gaul stated last time this request was made it was based on an emergency and the Engineer's Memo stated the sources are limited. The memo stated three people who were contacted and what the prices were. Mr. Gaul asked Mr. Morgan if there was documentation that supported multiple potential vendors were contacted on this occasion for proposals. Mr. Morgan said he would be able to obtain it from BSI if necessary but hoped it did not hold up an approval. Mr. Gaul stated he only needed this information for a basis to determine what to do next. Mr. Gaul asked if these component parts are specific to the way the plant was designed. Mr. Morgan stated yes, this is a Square D Breaker transfer switch, so a purchase of a special Square D 2,000 AMP breaker is required for this piece of equipment. Mr. Morgan confirmed what Mr. Wilson added earlier, these parts are becoming more difficult to obtain. Mr. Morgan added this transfer switch is about 25 years old. Ms. Hoffman added, obsolete rather.

Mr. Gaul stated the Authority is experiencing a continuation of what happened last month (July). Mr. Gaul stated that the motion would be that the Board finds it is a continuing emergency due to the lack of redundancy of the Switch breakers at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and after consideration of the obsolescence and difficulty in sourcing materials, the Board authorizes the purchase of the 2,000 AMP Spare Breaker at the cost of \$14, 175.00.

Mr. Gaul suggested a plan to be proactive and ahead of a situation like this, so an emergency does not become regular. Mr. Gaul suggested obtaining at least five of this equipment as a backup.

Mr. James suggested it would be ideal to replace the Switchgear with a modern version. Mr. Wilson added the cost could be half a million dollars, but he is not certain if that amount is accurate.

Mr. Morgan added the unit was inspected, five of the eleven breakers were in bad condition and looking into repairing those and looking into the future to replace the unit. Mr. Morgan stated the reason for asking for one breaker at the time is because an evaluation to replace it is in progress. Mr. Morgan added repairs are ongoing to keep it working until it is replaced soon. Mr. Morgan added the building had a lot of Ammonia, leaning gas, on the belt press which was cleaned up with the Centrifuge project and very humid which was fix the Air conditioning project. Mr. Morgan hopes to keep this unit in service and for a newer unit that will last more than 20 or 25 years and would improve the environment, doors, or insulation to keep this corrosion from happening in the future.

Mr. Wilson spoke to BSI Jim and Mr. Bob about some penetrations from the wall to electrical Conduent to get them sealed up to improve the atmosphere.

The consensus of the Board was that a continuing emergency still existed at the WWTP, as described by Mr. Wilson and Ms. Hoffman; there was an immediate need for action due to the lack of redundancy; only limited number of the required Switch breakers were available due to the obsolescence of the WWTP equipment; an effort had been made to see whether there were alternate procurement possibilities; and the price quoted for the Switch breaker was consistent with the Authority's most recent purchase.

Mr. Blanchfield made a motion, seconded by Mr. Riegel, to declare a continuing emergency at the WWTP due to the lack of redundancy of Switch breakers at the Plant, and, after consideration of the obsolescence and difficulty in sourcing materials, approve the emergency Purchase of a WWTP Switchgear Breaker for \$14,175.00. Engineer Memorandum #08-01. Motion Carried (10-0).

Mr. Lammi asked Mr. Gaul if there could be a motion where in an event of another emergency, action can be taken right way and approve the motion at the following meeting. Mr. Gaul stated he did not have an answer to that but agrees there should be a way to act on a rapid matter, but the Authority's rules and The Sunshine Act should be considered.

Mr. Gaul asked who would make this type of decision and a dollar amount allowed to be approved.

Mr. Gaul asked for a dollar amount and suggested the Engineering Committee could be appointed but also added they must follow the Sunshine Act. Mr. Lammi emphasized on some occasions the emergency at hand cannot wait at all, an immediate action must be taken on the spot. Mr. Lammi stated the plant cannot get shut down, and sometimes there is not time to wait for the Committee to meet up.

Mr. Gaul asked for a dollar amount to help give some perspective on the situation. Mr. Gaul added 1 million dollars is a large amount for one or three individuals to make the decision.

Mr. Gaul asked the plant employees for their input. Mr. Wilson stated it is difficult to say because it depends on the damage and pricing. Ms. Hoffman stated she does not think a dollar amount could be calculated. Mr. Gaul asked if the purchase of a new generator would help. Mr. Wilson stated even with a new generator it still be costly because the expenses it will bring, fuel, bring temporary generators, manpower to install them. Mr. Wilson suggested \$200,000.00 and asked Mr. Morgan for his opinion, and Mr. Morgan stated \$500,000.00.

Mr. Gaul stated \$500,000.00 is a large amount. Mr. Gaul asked Mr. Morgan if he knew of any other Authority's

process for situations like this. Mr. Morgan stated LCA would approve and work on the issue and come back to the Board afterwards for approval.

Mr. Gaul stated this situation is a bit different.

Mr. Campos stated the City has the capability to handle this type of situation under the Procurement law if in an emergency. Mr. Campos stated this should be discussed further upon his return and physical presence at the next Board meeting with some options.

Mr. Morgan stated historically The City would handle it and come back to The Authority for approval later. Mr. Morgan referenced an instance where a sewer incident on Route 611 happened and a million and half dollars were spent. Mr. Morgan added another occasion where there was Clarifier damage, it was managed and came back for authorization after the fact.

Mr. Campos stated the City of Easton would feel more comfortable knowing some of the parameters about the expense, especially if is a large amount.

Mr. Lammi, in response to Mr. Campos statement, stated we still need to go through a process. Mr. Lammi insisted the main concern now is the situation at hand.

Mr. Gaul stated there could be a difference of opinion about spending emergency funds, such as whether the expense should be limited to stabilizing the situation or can the best alternative repair for the cost be performed. Mr. Lammi stated is to stabilize it and keep the plant running.

Mr. Gaul suggested to look at this matter at the next Board meeting. Mr. Gaul stated half a million dollars is a large amount. Mr. Gaul added it is a lot of money for just one person, even with the consultation of Ms. Hoffman, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Wilson to be involved in a decision. Mr. Gaul stated with a smaller amount of money or more people involved. Mr. Lammi suggested \$100,000.00. Mr. Gaul stated it makes more sense than \$500,000.00. Mr. Gaul stated during this year there have been only two emergency situations. Mr. Gaul stated when making this type of decision it should be based on experience.

Mr. Blanchfield stated \$100,000.00 can be followed up, all members reside within the vicinity, have cell phone devices, and with a quorum of phone call authorization from the Board.

Mr. James agreed with Mr. Blanchfield.

Mr. Morgan asked Mr. Schimmel if the Authority has reserved contingency funds for emergency cases. Mr. Schimmel confirmed this.

Mr. Morgan stated he doesn't see anything wrong in getting initial work done, not able to have a meeting until a temporary repair is done and then work on the final fix until we get contractors in place, and materials that will qualify to get an approval for the long-term solution.

Mr. Lammi suggested going with \$100,000.00 for now if possible. Mr. Lammi added this exposes a situation where the Authority should come up with a process to have a contingency in case another emergency comes up in the future, a policy rather. Mr. Lammi stated right now the main goal is to make sure this plant does not shut down.

Mr. Gaul stated the motion should be to authorize the Chairman or Vice Chairman based on his availability and absence and with the consultation with the Authority's Engineer and the Plant Manager or Assistant Manager to

spend up to \$100,000.00 to stabilize situations until the Board can meet to discuss and approve some further action.

Mr. Morgan agreed with the motion presented by Mr. Gaul.

Mr. Gaul stated this motion is for the time between this meeting and the next Board meeting.

The consensus of the Board was to amend the agenda to allow a vote on the matter of authorization for limited expenditure during an emergency to stabilize temporarily WWTP operations. Mr. Lammi stated the agenda now is amended.

Mr. Mauro made a motion, seconded by Mr. Blanchfield to authorize the Chairman, or Vice Chairman, in his absence or unavailability, in consultation with the Authority's Engineer and the WWTP Manager, or Assistant Manager, in his absence or unavailability, to expend up to \$100,000.00 of Authority funds to stabilize WWTP operations during an emergency until such time as the Board has sufficient opportunity to consider and approve action to abate the emergency. Motion Carried (10-0).

Mr. Blanchfield asked if BSI picked up the emergency call by coincidence or if they have an emergency crew who manages this type of emergency phone call. Mr. Wilson said yes to both questions. Ms. Hoffman called BSI Jim who normally picks up the phone at any time. Mr. Wilson shared an occasion on the 4th of July where there was an emergency at the Lehigh Drive Pump Station and BSI Jim picked up the call and sent someone over right away.

Mr. Blanchfield stated we are confident we have that kind of quality service. Mr. Wilson stated BSI owner provided his personal contact number for any emergencies so he can be reached at any time.

Mr. Mauro asked Mr. Wilson if the plant has a list of all the assets the Authority owns and approximate ages, if it can be determined which ones are closed to need repair and should be on the Capital list for replacement. Mr. Wilson stated the plant uses a couple of different management programs, at this time Cartegraph is where all assets are listed, as well as maintenance forms are entered and followed. Mr. Wilson stated this incident was tracked down by an IR Scanner, all breakers are in the process of getting replaced.

Ms. Hoffman stated it will go on the Capital plan and we are establishing what is left to be upgraded for the five-year plan. Ms. Hoffman added work on the MCC is currently ongoing.

Mr. Blanchfield asked if it meant a complete change of Switchgear. Ms. Hoffman confirmed it.

Mr. Morgan stated the current Capital plan was from 2020-2025. Mr. Morgan stated at this time he is working on it for the end of this year, and which will be presented at the Engineering Committee and Board to review by the end of 2024 and then proceed with 2025- 2030. Ms. Hoffman added this plan will include the items the plant believes need to be replaced.

Mr. Wilson is grateful to the Board and its support because items that needed replacement, or limited are getting out, everything has been replaced, repaired. Mr. Wilson added other plants do not get enough funding as we do. Mr. Wilson added DEP expressed this is one of the nicest plants they come to.

Mr. Schimmel stated the Bond Redemption and Improvement fund is \$1,300,000.00 and based on upcoming analyses will be roughly \$200,000.00 which will be a total of \$1,500,000.00. This amount will be in the Bond Redemption and Improvement Fund available for an emergency.

Mr. Morgan stated in next month's meeting he will discuss approval to advertise for Lehigh River force main project for bid and temporary construction easement.

Mr. Morgan exited the meeting.

Mr. Lammi explained to the guest what Mr. Morgan's next month's meeting discussion topic was.

Mr. Lammi stated the plan is to install a new 16-inch line under the river to replace the current one which was installed back in 1928. The pipeline will be drilled underneath the river.

PRETREATMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Mauro stated the Committee met on August 1, 2024.

Ms. Hoffman stated there was a positive hire of the Assistant Industrial Pre-Treatment Program Manager position, Ms. Olivia Bamford. Ms. Bamford started last week. Ms. Bamford did her internship at City Hall in the Community and Economic Development Department. Ms. Hoffman stated Ms. Bamford is learning quickly and will be a great member of the team.

Ms. Hoffman stated in the Board packet she included an insufficient fund letter she sent out to UAE Petroleum. Ms. Hoffman stated a check was received but it bounced. Ms. Hoffman sent out a letter but has not received a response. Ms. Hoffman stated mailed off another invoice and sent a second notice with an insufficient fund letter which was sent mail certified. Ms. Hoffman has not received any response.

Ms. Hoffman believes Attorney involvement might be necessary sometime soon. Ms. Hoffman stated as of now no payment has been received.

Ms. Hoffman suggested putting this matter on the agenda for next month's Board meeting to discuss further if needed.

Mr. Gaul agreed with Ms. Hoffman, if the Authority must bring any action, it should be on the agenda for next month's Board meeting.

Mr. Lammi said this matter can be discussed at the next IPP meeting which will meet before the next Board meeting.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Blanchfield provided a brief update regarding the Bond Refunding. Mr. Lammi would also provide one. Mr. Blanchfield stated Mr. Schimmel would be able to provide an update about the 2023 Audit.

Mr. Lammi provided an update on the Bond Refunding. Mr. Lammi stated the Authority Board previously decided the Authority would proceed with the refunding if the saving percentage was above 3% on the Bond. When the Advisors tried to proceed with the sale of bonds, the percentage was 3.314%. Mr. Lammi stated that because the goal was met, the sale of bonds occurred. The closing will be on August 29, 2024.

Mr. Schimmel stated he was in touch with the Auditor. Mr. Schimmel handed over all documents to Mr. Steve Kutsuflakis who is in charge now; a draft audit will be submitted in mid-September. There was only one question open for the Authority to respond to. Mr. Schimmel stated he will contact Fulton Bank to ask them to please expedite the document needed by the Auditor.

INSURANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Lammi stated there is no report.

OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Wilson reported an update on item 3, the A2 Aerator Electric Motor went out for rebuild last month, will be back next week. Mr. Wilson stated the job was well done, however some extra repairs had to be made with a value of \$2,0000.00. Mr. Wilson stated this is the first big job BDS is doing at the plant.

Mr. Wilson stated BDS gave us a good Bid because they were getting Co-Stars certified and they had to win a good Bid to get the certification.

ADDITIONAL REPORT

❖ **Old Business:** N/A

❖ **New Business:** N/A

Mr. Lammi asked Mr. Gaul if there was a reason for an Executive Session. Mr. Gaul responded, there was not.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. James and seconded by Mr. Riegel, and unanimously carried, at 6:01 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Yuslendy Zorrilla
EAJSA Board Recording Secretary