

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF FOX METRO WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT
HELD WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2020**

The Board of Trustees met in a regular monthly meeting at 9:30 A.M. in the offices of the District at the Water Pollution Control Plant on Wednesday, December 16, 2020. Present were, Trustee Judith S. Sotir, Trustee Michael Funkey (via phone), Trustee Christopher F. Childress (via phone), Trustee Dave Krahn (via phone) and Trustee Randall H. Brown (via phone). Also present were Attorney Gregg Ingemunson (via phone), Manager Thomas F. Muth, District Engineer, John Frerich from Deuchler Engineering (via phone), Assistant District Manager, Jimmie Delgado, Assistant District Manager Karen Clementi, Human Resources Coordinator, Patrick Divine, Project Engineer Drew Zeipen (via phone), and Norma Rodriguez.

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The bills were presented and read. It was moved by Trustee Funkey that the bills be allowed as read, ratify and approve the checks drawn during the month of November, 2020 in the amount of \$2,882,051.81, Motion was seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the bills be paid as presented.

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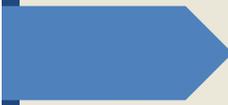
It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Treasurer's Report for November, 2020 be approved as submitted.

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It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote, and the Motion was unanimously carried that the minutes of the November 18, 2020 Board Meeting be approved as written. Each of the Trustees having received and read copies of said minutes before the meeting.

In Public Comments, Trustee Sotir on behalf of the Board congratulated all of the employees who celebrated birthdays in the month of December.

Manager Muth congratulated Lab Supervisor, Tim Rubis on his 20 years of service at the District. Tim began his career at Fox Metro as a lab analyst and for the past three years has been the Lab/Environmental



Compliance and Pretreatment Coordinator. Tim has done an exceptional job this past year and has demonstrated excellent leadership and management capabilities in getting us through the COVID pandemic. He filled in performing duties when his department was down team members due to COVID. He performed river samples, lab and commercial samples. Manager Muth and the Board congratulated Tim and thanked him for his flexibility and great job performance.

Manager Muth introduced Plant Operator Scott McPeake who will be retiring on January 1, 2021. Plant Supervisor, Joel Ilseman congratulated Scott and thanked him for his 32 plus years of service at the District. Scott began his career at the District in the Operations Department, he moved over to the Maintenance Department for Approximately 10 years and he went back to the Operations Department in 2009. Scott is a valued member of the Operations Team and has extensive knowledge of the Plant. He is very capable of identifying mechanical issues and solving them. Manger Muth said Scott will be missed and he along with the Trustees thanked Scott for his work ethic and wished him well in his future endeavors.

Manager Muth introduced Miguel Vazquez and Ben Humm from the Maintenance Department. He advised the Board of an incident that happened on October 14, 2020 that involved these two individuals. Miguel and Ben were finishing the day sweeping the road at a work location South of US 30. A lady stopped and asked for directions and first asked them how to get to Batavia and then to Chicago. She seemed very confused and that concerned them because she was dressed in night clothes and wearing slippers. The lady left and Miguel and Ben decided to follow her. She drove into Hinckley and was driving 70 mph in a 30 mph zone. Miguel and Ben caught up to her by the Sugar Grove airport and they talked her into going into the Sugar Grove Fire Station to get some help. She complied and the fire and police department were able to contact her family and was able to reunite with them. Miguel has a relative that is an EMT in Sugar Grove and updated him later that night that the lady was alright.

Manager Muth said Miguel and Ben did the right thing, they could have ignored the signs but they didn't and for that he and all of Fox Metro Management are very proud of them. Manager Muth and the

Board thanked them for being good Samaritans and congratulated them in being the December Pride recipients. Trustee Sotir stated that these two individuals are outstanding Fox Metro employees and as a family of Fox Metro we care about other people. She said the Board appreciates what they did and caring about other human beings is what we do here at the District.

With no other Public Comments, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Regular Board Meeting be temporarily adjourned for the Committee of Local Improvements.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned at 9:45 A.M.

In the Committee of Local Improvements Manager Muth discussed the 2021 District-wide Goals and they are the following:

1. Meet or exceed all environmental permit requirements (NPDES, Biosolids, FESOP (air quality)).
2. Work toward accident-free workforce. Safety Committee will present the 2020 results at the next month's Board Meeting.
3. Complete the following capital improvement projects: Some of the projects were delayed due to COVID but construction has resumed and will complete the projects in 2021.
 - New O&M Building Phase II and Phase III
 - Building K Raw Sewage Valve Replacement
 - Building B Odor Control Project – Grit Tank Covers and Vapex Unit
 - F Aeration Tanks Phase II Repairs
 - Building N Overhead Door Repairs
 - Fiber Optic Duct Bank Cable Installation Project
 - Oswego Pump Station Electrical Upgrades
 - Orchard Rd. Pump Station Electrical Upgrades
4. Initiate the following capital improvement projects:
 - M-5 Cover Replacement/ DCM-4
 - F Aeration Tanks Phase III Repairs

- B-1 Building Bar Screen Replacement and Rehabilitation valuation, Begin Design
- B00 MCC Replacement Design
- H3, H4, H5 Influent Vault Evaluation
- New North Aurora Pump Station Construction – this project is currently in design and will be in construction approximately in June of 2021.

5. Continue cross-training and education initiatives.

6. Successfully complete departmental team goals.

7. Update Employee Policy Manual.

2021 STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Maintain continuity of operations while adequately protecting staff during COVID-19.

2. Complete rate study.

3. Facilitate communication with elected officials at the Federal, State, and local level.

4. Assist with Board of Trustees elected board member transition, as needed.

5. Continue public education on various wastewater initiatives, as appropriate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion ensued and Manager Muth answered the Board's questions in detail.

With no other matters to come before the Committee of Local Improvements, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Committee of Local Improvements adjourn and the Regular Board Meeting reconvene.

The regular meeting reconvened at 9:55 A.M.

Attorney Gregg Ingemunson addressed the Board requested authorization to approve a Grant of Easement between the Village of North Aurora and the Fox Metro WRD. He requested some changes on the document and they will be completed. It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that Resolution No. 982, Grant of Easement between the Village of North Aurora and the Fox Metro WRD be approved.

Mr. John Frerich addressed the Board with the Engineer's Report and requested approval of Partial Payment No. 17 to Whittaker Construction, in the amount of \$1,009,097.95 for O&M Building Phase II Improvement Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 14 to Whittaker Construction in the amount of \$102,789.20 for H5 Clarifier and H3, H4 and H5 Vault Improvements Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 6 to Whittaker Construction in the amount of \$76,692.14 for Aeration Tanks Walkway Repairs Phase 2 Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 6 to Whittaker Construction in the amount of \$10,300.36 for Building B3 Odor Control Improvements Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 3 to Valley Electrical Contractors, Inc., in the amount of \$10,751.00 for Oswego Pump Station Electrical Upgrades Project.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 1 to Frank Marshall Electric, in the amount of \$4,108.50 for Orchard Road Pump Station Electrical Upgrades Projects.

Mr. Frerich requested approval of Partial Payment No. 1 to Red Feather Group, in the amount of \$52,020.00 for the Oswego Pump Station Phase 2 Improvements Project.

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It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Engineer's Report be approved as published and payments be made as requested.

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Manager Muth addressed the Board with the Managers Report. He requested authorization to seek bids for Building B Odor Control Project to be opened January 20, 2021 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of Trustees Meeting. After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried to authorize to seek bids for Building B Odor Control Project to be opened January 20, 2021 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of Trustees Meeting.

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Manager Muth requested authorization to seek bids for the Fiber Optic Improvements Project to be opened January 20, 2021 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of Trustees Meeting. After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried to authorize to seek bids for the Fiber Optic Improvements Project to be opened January 20, 2021 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of Trustees Meeting.

The next item discussed in the Manager's Report was the VFD Replacement at Building K-2. Manager Muth reported to the Board that there are 4 large pumps in Building K which is the wet weather flow pumping station. He said 2 of the VFD's have failed and that means that there are two pumps that have the capability of pumping the wet weather flows which would reduce its capability. Last month staff ordered two VFD's, each costing \$30,000.00. Because the cost of these two VFD's cost more than \$40,000.00 Manager Muth needed to report this to the Board. The purchase of this equipment was an emergency and this equipment is vital in case there is a rain event and the plant is required to pump 54 mgd. This cannot be accomplished with two pumps. The BFD's are scheduled to be delivered in January and will begin the replacement project immediately.

The next item in the Manager's Report was the Streambank Stabilization Project. Manager Muth said staff was hoping to have that project completed by now. What has transpired is that staff contacted the on-site Contractor, Whittaker Construction, and



asked for a proposal for this project. They gave the District a very good proposal because they have the equipment and manpower that is needed on site. Whittaker had difficulties at another project and this is why this project is delayed. Staff received a price for this project of \$38,000.00 from Whittaker and they agreed not to exceed that price to complete this project. This is approximately one third of what it would cost if the District would have gone out to seek bids from other contractors to complete this project. Staff wanted to take advantage of the weather and the low flows in the river. Staff has all the necessary permits and there is a window of opportunity to complete this project before March when the spawning takes place in the river.

With no other business to come before the Board, Manager Muth requested Executive Session to discuss Personnel, review the past six months Executive Session Minutes and related matters.

Before going into Executive Session, Trustee Funkey wanted to discuss the Biobot Program. There was extensive discussion regarding the contract and renewal in the November's Board Meeting. Trustee Funkey inquired if there was any new information regarding this matter. Karen Clementi reviewed with the Board a summary of the Biobot program that was included in this month's Board Meeting packet. Trustee Childress said the Board is waiting to hear how Kendall County Health Department is utilizing the data that Fox Metro is providing and are they benefitting from this data in order to validate the expense the District is incurring for this program to the ratepayers. In reviewing the Summary, it appears that the cost to do the testing on an annual basis would decrease from \$50,000.00 to \$15,000.00 if the District uses a new laboratory (GT Molecular) to perform the testing. This is not a large expense but it is important to find out what the County Health Department is doing with the data that is being provided to them.

We know that the testing provides early detection of the COVID virus in the sewer water and it can predict a surge in COVID cases in the area, but is the Health Department using this data at a County level to alerting the public? Trustee Funkey agrees with Trustee Childress' comments and stated that even though \$15,000.00 is not



a large amount of money the question is who is using this data and who is relying on it and receiving a benefit from it. Karen Clementi said staff does not have that answer for the Board at this time. Staff is still trying to get a response from the Kendall County Health Department but know that they are overwhelmed at this time. Karen has placed several calls to different individuals at the County and State Level and is waiting for a response. She has also contacted Copley Hospital and Advocate Medical with no response and at this time staff cannot provide the answers the Board is seeking at this time.

Jimmie Delgado stated that staff has received information from other Wastewater Districts. In Southern Illinois, the University of Illinois is partnering with some of the Wastewater Districts in that area and they are providing the University with samples. By these Wastewater Districts partnering with the University, it saves them manpower and the expenses of running the tests and the costs are absorbed by the school. Unfortunately, Fox Metro does not have that advantage and the summary provided to the Board has some very good points regarding the importance of public health.

Trustee Funkey inquired how the results of these tests are published. Karen said the results are sent to the Kendall County Health Department, they are also posted on Fox Metro's Facebook page, which has received a lot of public interest and the results are also posted on the District's website. Staff has also reached out to the Illinois Department of Public health to inquire if they are interested in receiving this data.

Trustee Childress stated that even though the Board does not have the information that they are looking for, he is not looking to abandon this program at this time and believes is a great measure and a great indicator when a rise of COVID cases is going to occur. It seems to him that some of the best sources of understanding to see what Direction the District is going with this is to know what the Health Department is doing with this data. He said perhaps at a future Board Meeting the Health Department could come in and present what they are doing with the data in order for the District to justify the expense. Trustee Funkey agrees with Trustee Childress and the way he understands it, the data is two weeks ahead of when



a rise in COVID cases are going to occur in the area. He said that this seems more beneficial to planning strategies than any other tests. Manager Muth said staff has been contacting the local hospitals with the tests results and believes this is very valuable data that they are being provided.

Trustee Sotir said Chicago is also performing these tests and believes the important part of these tests is that Fox Metro is posting the results in the District's website and on social media and the public is seeing it helping them to try and get a handle on what is going on because the more information Fox Metro provides to the Public the better prepared they will be.

Trustee Sotir said the concept behind this is that if we go into a national resource databank, the information can be utilized not just locally, but nationally as well as to give a better handle of what is going on. Karen said that is how Biobot brought that concept to the District. She has spoken to Biobot and they are not ready to use the data yet. This is very experimental to do on a national scale. It has been done on a smaller scale but not nationwide. It is challenging to get the data at the quality and techniques that it needs to be. This is an opportunity for Fox Metro to be a real leader in the Midwest. Fox Metro participated in a webinar recently and the end of the webinar most of the questions were being directed to us instead of the other wastewater agencies that were participating and that is because Fox Metro is taking leadership. Manager Muth added that \$15,000.00 is a small price to pay for information that is being utilized for the public's benefit. Trustee Childress said he and the rest of the Board agree that the data is valuable but the question and issue is that we are not hearing how the data is being used to benefit the public. Manager Muth said Boston and Chicago who are doing this testing are providing the information to the hospitals and doctors who are treating COVID patients and is providing them a warning of the status of the COVID virus in the waste water and alert them of spikes of the virus in the water so they can prepare for the surge in COVID cases they are going to receive. Trustee Sotir stated that we don't know if the local health departments are not utilizing the information because they are receiving the data from Fox Metro but staff has not received a response from them stating how and if



they are using the data. Discussion ensued regarding how public health agencies are currently overwhelmed and understaffed and perhaps they do not have time or manpower to review the data but it will become more helpful as we monitor this through time and they have more time to review it.

Trustee Sotir believes this is a long term project and it is going to go on beyond this particular pandemic because this is information that needs to be reviewed in the future as well. What Fox Metro is trying to accomplish is to establish a baseline so in the future in case we have to go through another pandemic we have a better chance of obtaining the information that is needed.

Trustee Childress asked what Biobot is doing with the information that is being generated. Karen said they are not doing anything with it at this time because they are also overwhelmed with the amount of data that they are receiving nationally. She said that Biobot has not been able to deliver what they promised and that is the reason staff wants to go with GT Molecular who has been a lot better to deal with for a third of the price and also their customer service is better. She believes their data reliability is better and their technique is better as well. Trustee Childress said it doesn't sound like Biobot is doing what they said they were going to do. He said it would be good to bring the Health Department or John Deitrich from Rush Copley to hear from him if this is good information for his doctors to have at the hospital in order for them to act quickly and see where their needs are going to be and to see when the spikes in the COVID virus happens to alert the public. He said we are not the experts and does not believe Fox Metro should be the one to alert the public. Trustee Funkey agrees with Trustee Childress and would like to see the District continue with the testing but it sounds like the information is being disseminated on our website and Facebook and a lot of people are receiving the information and find it interesting but that does not justify the expense the District has incurred to do it. He would like to know who is using this data and that it is being used for some type of benefit to the public. Discussion ensued regarding the cost of manpower to the District to perform sample testing.



Trustee Krahn inquired what the City of Chicago is doing with their data. Karen said they are currently keeping it in house and are only sharing it with the University of Chicago because they just began their testing. She did speak with their Lead and she said that currently they cannot get a hold of the Chicago Health Department because they are so overwhelmed and understaffed. Jimmie said that he shared this information with Waubese Community College president, she sits on Rush Copley's Board and she was very interested in this information. Jimmie also reached out to John Diederich and has not been able to receive a response from him. The issue right now is that this is more of a strategic tool and with the hospitals being as busy as they are, they are in emergency mode. Jimmie said that Fox Metro's staff is asking the Board to commit more time in order for staff to obtain more answers and see if they can obtain some relief to their partners and see if there is interest. If there is no interest, perhaps Fox Metro can partner with another District to share the cost or take another course of action.

Trustee Sotir stated that another fact is that all agencies are overwhelmed by information at this time and are trying to figure things out. This means that in the future if there is another type of pandemic that would use the validity of this data, that we have at least a base to work from. Some historical data that we can work with in the future.

Trustee Sotir said she believes this program is worthwhile and if the District can get the testing performed for \$15,000.00, it is a minimal costs. She said she also believes this is one of the responsibilities that a District the size of Fox Metro in the State should be performing. Manager Muth said staff will try to get the charges reimbursed by the State under the Care's Act. Jimmie said staff is still trying to receive some of the COVID reimbursements. Fox Metro is to receive approximately \$30,000.00 for COVID expenses that have to be submitted. He said to date, the Biobot program has cost the District \$24,000.00 and now Karen has found another vendor, GT Molecular, that will charge \$15,000.00. This will also give us a tool to fight seasonal flu. Trustee Childress asked if staff can provide information to the Board if this can be reimbursable at the January Board's Meeting. Jimmie said staff



will research and will provide information to the Board. Trustee Childress also suggested staff reach out to the University of Chicago to see if they are interested in sharing and comparing data. Karen said that staff currently have different ideas but are not ready to bring to the board at this time because they are in the planning stages. She has a call in to different cities and towns around the area like, Oswego, Plano and Yorkville. She said she will give more information regarding this at the next Board Meeting.

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At this time it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that this meeting be temporarily adjourned for Executive Session.

Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned for Executive Session at 10:40 A.M.

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It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress put to vote and unanimously carried that the Executive Session be adjourned and resume the Regular Board Meeting.

Regular Board Meeting reconvened at 11:33 A.M

10740

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Executive Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2020 to November 18, 2020 be approved as recommended by Attorney Ingemunson and Manager Muth.

10741

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried to approve the recommendations of the committee with regard to Manager Muth's pay increase as proposed in Executive session and his eligibility for the efficiency incentive bonus.

10742

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Childress, put to vote and unanimously carried to approve the annual wage increases for all non-union employees effective January 1, 2021.

There were no decisions made in Executive Session.



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With no other business to come before the Board, it was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Childress put to vote and unanimously carried that this meeting be adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 11:20 A.M.

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