



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
OF FOX METRO WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT  
HELD WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2024**

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 February 21, 2024. Present were Trustee Judith S. Sotir, Trustee Michael Funkey, Trustee Randall H. Brown and Trustee Chuck Nelson. Also present were District Manager Karen Clementi, Regulatory Manager Tim Rubis, Controller Linnea Scherer, Human Resources Coordinator Dan Rivera, Plant Manager Joel Ilseman, Senior Project Engineer James Kerrigan, IT Supervisor Dan Vargas, Engineering and Field Supervisor Keith Zollers, Senior Administrative Assistant, Norma Rodriguez.

11274

It was moved by Trustee Funkey that Mr. Scott Gryder be appointed as a Trustee of the Fox Metro Water Reclamation District. Motion was seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that Mr. Scott Gryder be appointed as the new Trustee of the Fox Metro Water Reclamation District Board of Trustees to fill the vacancy left by David Krahn.

Mr. Gryder gave a brief introduction and thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve as a Trustee. Trustee Gryder is from Oswego and is an attorney in the Title Insurance field, he previously was the Chair of the Kendall County Board, he was also a Library Trustee. He has been on many planning commissions and he is currently on the Oswego Township planning commission.

11275

The bills were presented and read. It was moved by Trustee Funkey that the bills that have been presented and paid during the month of January 2024 be approved in the amount of \$1,406,175.21. Motion was seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and unanimously carried that the bills be paid as presented.

11276

It was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Gryder, put to vote and unanimously carried that the Financial Report for January, 2024 be approved as submitted.



Controller Linnea Scherer addressed the Board with the Controller's Report. She stated that on page 2 of the Financial Report the gain/loss on Disposal of Assets totaled \$2,379,778.00. This was due to the sale of the Waterford Property for \$2,362,777.00 and the sale of a 2014 white Chevy Express van for \$17,000.00.

The budget is moving along at a good pace. Staff has had preliminary budget meetings for almost all departments. Staff is well on track to present final budgets in April to the Board for approval at the May Board Meeting.

Ms. Scherer had a virtual meeting with the Illinois Metropolitan Investment Fund (IMET). IMET is a local government investment pool which provides Illinois government agencies with safe, liquid alternatives for surplus cash balances. Fox Metro's financial advisor at Meeder recommended IMET as a partner to improve returns and balances around 5% and funds would be available as liquid cash which can be transferred to or from the District's bank accounts the same day. IMET will have a representative make a presentation at the March Board Meeting for consideration of the Board. After the presentation, there would be a Resolution the District would need to adopt in order to authorize investment in IMET. This Resolution is simply a Trust Agreement and would not require the transfer of any funds and there are no minimums or maximums in place.

It was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote, and the Motion was unanimously carried that the minutes of the January 17, 2024 Regular 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 January.

The Board congratulated Senior Administrative Assistant Norma Rodriguez for her 20 years of service at the District.

Engineering and Field Supervisor, Keith Zollers introduced Engineering and Field Operations Secretary, Connie Perez who has been chosen to be



February's Fox Pride Award Recipient. Connie was an integral part of the incident response for the sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) event on January 26<sup>th</sup> in Aurora. She has been helping diffuse neighbor tensions and a great help with bilingual support throughout this process. Manager Clementi said Connie has been with the District since September 2023 and has been doing a great job. Connie has also helped manage possibly the worst crisis in District's history.

Plant Manager Joel Ilseman introduced the Union Representative at today's Board Meeting, Tyler Carlson who has been at the District since September 2023. Tyler is currently an Operations Apprentice working in the Maintenance Department and is doing a great job.

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

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned at 9:40 A.M.

In the Committee of Local Improvements, Manager Clementi addressed the Board to discuss the events that happened on January 26, 2024 with the SSO in Aurora. The legal matters regarding this incident will be discussed in Executive Session.

Manager Clementi stated one of the first things that should be discussed is what has been Fox Metro's past practice because there have been sewer back-ups in the past although very rare. The last sewer back-up was back in 2019. The sewer lines to the homes are the homeowner's responsibility, the mains are owned by the towns and Fox Metro owns the large interceptor. Boulder Hill is the community that has shown some small sewer back-ups into resident's homes and those can be caused by many things such as a wipes ball from all the neighbors for example. Usually it is just one home that is affected and how staff handles these situations is that the District pays for repairs up to the former insurance's deductible which is \$10,000.00 per home. Mostly the damages are under that amount and Fox Metro pays for it and the resident signs a waiver. Some residents deal with their own insurance companies directly. Discussion ensued.



When the sewer back up incident that happened on January 26, 2024 that affected 30 homes, staff followed past practice. Manager Clementi displayed a map showing the area and the homes that were directly affected by the sewer back up. The map also showed Fox Metro's the locations of sewer lines, City of Aurora sanitary sewers and also where Fox Metro's interceptor is located. The map also showed where Factor's location is and where the facility's grease traps connects to Fox Metro's lines.

Mr. Keith Zollers addressed the Board and explained where the blockage was discovered that caused the SSO. He said that on January 26<sup>th</sup>, he was notified at approximately 5:45 a.m. by the City of Aurora that they received some calls from some residents on Almond and Alameda Streets. They had suffered sewer back-ups and the City of Aurora also received calls from some residents on Shady Lane. When the City of Aurora began their investigation to see what the problem was, they determined that the interceptor was backed up and Mr. Zollers was surprised that occurred. He drove to the interceptor to investigate because that does not usually happen in that area. Upon arrival he discovered that the manhole was completely filled with grease and even the bench of the manhole was not visible. What happened is that over the course of time the grease started building up in that manhole. Typically, how grease is seen is on the walls of the manhole itself, keep in mind that this is a 6 ft diameter manhole. As the grease comes in, it builds up on the sides of the manhole and continues to collect on it until it reaches a point it is fully blocked. Staff's best guess is that so much grease was accumulated and got so heavy that it fell away from the wall of the manhole, completely filled the pipe and as a result, most of the lines east of that manhole were impacted by this and the basements were filled with sewage.

With the help of the City of Aurora and their vacator truck, they set up their equipment west and ran a nozzle through the affected manhole and were able to break up the grease from the manhole. As a result of that it drained down and when that happened is that all of the water that was in the resident's basements drained out. It was at this point that Fox Metro began receiving all the phone calls from the residents.



Trustee Funkey wanted clarification that the City of Aurora put their hose in Fox Metro's pipe from a west point to break up the grease. Manager Clementi confirmed that was correct.

Trustee Brown inquired if something was learned from that, should things have been done a different way that wouldn't have caused such a rush of water. Manager Clementi said at that point staff was just trying to get the situation resolved as fast as possible. Mr. Zollers said there was so much pressure on the east side of that manhole that when the blockage was broken, it was just a tremendous rush of water. He said if you take a 30 inch pipe and take one foot section of that pipe, it will take 53 gallons per foot. Once you vacator all of that out on the 30 inch pipe, down to the 24 inch pipe and another 18 inch pipe, all that water rushed instantly.

Trustee Sotir inquired how long that grease had been building up. Mr. Zollers said in talking with some of the City of Aurora personnel that are in the same field of work, they estimate approximately six months to one year but no one knows for sure.

Manager Clementi stated another important piece of this is that the piece of 30 inch pvc pipe was installed in 2001 so it is really new compared to a lot of other areas in the District. This is a very large pipe that was installed to serve this newer part of Aurora.

Trustee Gryder inquired if the issue was with the back up or with vactoring? Mr. Zollers said in this instance, the issue was caused by the back-up. The issue that was experienced at Fox Metro's sewer plant was probably caused by the head pressure and the pipe releasing all of the water and rushing through.

Manager Clementi displayed a map of all of the homes that were affected by the SSO and had sewer back-ups. This included Shady Lane, Almond Drive, Alameda Drive, Laurel Ave and Richard Street. She said staff is currently aware of 30 homes that have been affected.

Trustee Brown inquired how did the SSO affect some houses and not all of them. Manager Clementi said it is due to the depth of the home's individual basements. All sewers work by gravity and how deep everybody's basements are, the sewage is going to go to the lowest



point. Also, homes on slabs would not be affected. One of the things staff wants to create is graphic map showing the elevation of the land in that area. Discussion ensued regarding the elevation of the homes that were affected. Pictures were shown to the Board of the manholes that contained large amounts of grease. Pictures were also shown of the homes that were affected showing the damage they incurred when raw sewage got into their basements. Some pictures of basements on Shady Lane show pieces of carrots, tomatoes, corn, mushrooms and green beans mixed in with the sewer water.

Trustee Brown inquired how high the water got in the basements. Manager Clementi and Mr. Zollers said it varied between two inches to the two worst cases that had 10 inches and 12 inches of sewer water.

Manager Clementi played a video for the Board of the influent channel to the plant on the day of the event. In the video you can see the flow coming from the North and noted big chunks of grease floating and going into the plant. The importance of this video is that you can see normal flow coming from the south and then you see the high volume of water and grease that are coming into the plant from the north. The plant was already treating 100 mgd that day due to heavy rainfall and snow melt. Discussion ensued regarding the volume and speed in which the water solids and grease was coming into the plant.

The next images shown were of inside of the plant when all the grease hit the bar screens. Plant Manager Joel Ilseman said the grease came in so fast the bar screens could not keep up with all of the grease. The chute that came down to the washer compactor was filled to the top and spilled over the top to the floor and a 20 yard dumpster was filled with grease. Multiple layers of grease were visible as it accumulated over time in the sewer pipe. Manager Clementi showed pictures of the clean-up at the plant, she gave kudos to the plant staff for doing a great job cleaning the grease.

Manager Clementi said when there is an event like this (SSO), Fox Metro staff is required to notify the IEPA. A form is filled out explaining what happened and how is it going to be resolved, then it is sent out to a point of contact at the IEPA. The plant also suffered a CSO due to all of the grease that came into the plant and that also has to be reported to the IEPA. The IEPA is required to notify the USEPA



for an incident of this magnitude and unprecedented because they have direct jurisdiction. Fox Metro has an approved Pretreatment Ordinance through the USEPA that happened in 1997 and it has been updated several times. Fox Metro reports directly to USEPA and have local authority. In 2017 Manager Clementi and other members of staff reviewed Fox Metro's Pretreatment Ordinance line by line with two of the USEPA's attorneys and this process took approximately one year to complete.

Trustee Nelson said it is important to mention how important the prompt response was from Fox Metro staff. He has heard from several residents that were affected and with Mr. Zollers was out there in the field, Connie handling the phones at the office and getting the information out to the residents, and they are very pleased with the response. This is a credit to the leadership and to the Field Operations team. There is nothing worse than having sewage in your basement and there was collateral damage at the plant but nothing compares to the damage at the resident's homes. Discussion ensued.

11279

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

The regular Board Meeting reconvened at 10:10 A.M.

11280

Attorney Gregg Ingemunson addressed the Board with the Attorney's Report and presented Ordinance No. 928 and Resolution 1016 Annexing Sandi and James Janik 0.34 acres of property located in Kane County, Illinois. it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried to approve Ordinance No. 928 and Resolution 1016 Annexing Sandi and James Janik 0.34 acres of property located in Kane County, Illinois.

Senior Project Engineer James Kerrigan addressed the Board with the Construction Project Report. Mr. Kerrigan reported that the Digester Complex Improvement Project with Williams Brothers Construction is 99% complete and there is no pay application submitted this month. The



project is being finalized for closeout and record documents are currently being completed.

Mr. Kerrigan requested approval of Partial Payment No. 27 to Whittaker Construction and Excavating in the amount of \$27,032.69 for the North Aurora Pump Station Project. The project is 99% complete. Pay request was reviewed by Strand Associates. The project record documents are currently being completed.

Mr. Kerrigan reported that the 111<sup>th</sup> St. Pump Station project with Whittaker Construction & Excavating is 95% complete and there is no pay application submitted for this project this month. Staff has obtained partial utilization of the facility, and is operating the facility as normal. Work on the installation of the 480V power infrastructure to the facility has been completed and ComEd is currently scheduling the connection of the facility to utility power.

Mr. Kerrigan reported that the H3, H4, H5 Valve Improvements Projects with Williams Brothers is 99% complete and there is no pay application submitted this month. The contractor is working on punch list items.

Mr. Kerrigan reported that the Orchard Road Pumping Station Generator Replacement Project is 44% complete and there is no pay request this month. Work on site is now on hold pending the delivery of the generator.

Mr. Kerrigan requested Partial Payment No. 3 to Complete Mechanical Services, Inc., in the amount of \$19,195.03 for the Oswego Pump Station HVAC Replacement Project. The project is 17% complete. Payment was reviewed by CDM Smith. Installation of the new equipment has commenced and is currently underway. Interior ductwork and exhaust fans are the last remaining items to be installed.

Mr. Kerrigan requested Final Payment to Anchor Mechanical, Inc., in the amount of \$5,174.00 for the DCM 3- Heat Exchanger Replacement project. Project is 100% complete and payment was reviewed by staff. The project is complete.

Mr. Kerrigan reported that the Solar Farm #2 with SimpleRay/Round Trip Energy, is 20% complete. Design of the support foundation has

been completed and fabrication of the supports is now underway. Electrical components for the installation are also being manufactured.

Mr. Kerrigan requested Final Payment to LeCuyer Painting and Decorating, Inc., in the amount of \$150,000.00 for the Building P1 basement Remodel Phase 1 project. The project is 100% and payment was reviewed by staff. Project is complete.

Trustee Nelson said he, Trustee Brown and Trustee Sotir attended a Legislative breakfast at the Village of Oswego and it was mentioned that Oswego is proposing a Metra stop downtown Oswego which could impact the Illinois rail net line. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration as the District moves forward on the project because it could add more train traffic through the facility. Discussion ensued.

11281

After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried that the Construction Project Report be approved as published and payments be made as requested.

In the Manager's Report, Manager Clementi addressed the Board and requested authorization to purchase a 2024 Ford Transit 350 Cargo Van in the amount of \$55,280.00. This was discussed at last month's Board Meeting and it has been in the budget for the last several years. There has been a lack of inventory for this type of vehicle since the pandemic at the various vendors the District deals with to purchase the van. Normally, the District trades its used vehicles but staff was not offered a very good trade price for a van they planned to replace with this new one so it was sold to another vendor. Even though the purchase price of the new van is above the \$40,000.00 threshold, due to the sale of a used District vehicle for \$17,000.00 and those proceeds going towards the purchase of the new van, it brings the net purchase price of the new vehicle under \$40,000.00.

11282

After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Nelson, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried to authorize the purchase of a 2024 Ford Transit 350 Cargo Van for \$55,280.00.



The next item discussed was the Building K Plug Valve Replacement Project. Manager Clementi said it was discussed at a previous Board Meeting that staff would complete the next phase of this project. The first phase was completed in April 2020. The Board authorized the Construction Management at Risk Services due to the sensitive nature of the project. Building K is the heart of the plant and it is vital project. Manager Clementi is requesting approval to execute a contract with Dahme Mechanical in the amount of \$2,900,325.33 for a maximum guaranteed price. Mr. Kerrigan said that similar to the first phase of the project an RFQ was sent out to all the mechanical contractors in the area and it was advertised in the paper and was also posted on the District's website. Four contractors picked up plans and three contractors provided bids. Those contractors are Dahme Mechanical, Independent Mechanical and Hayes Mechanical. Mr. Kerrigan and staff reviewed all the qualifications submitted by the contractors and Dahme Mechanical is the only contractor that has completed similar work on big valves this size. He had the engineering firm of Trotter and Associates review references and qualifications of all of the contractors that submitted bids and Dahme Mechanical was the only contractor to perform the work as Construction Management and had the most experience with these types of projects. Mr. Kerrigan said this project is going to take a long time because they have to work on one valve at a time.

Trustee Funkey clarified that this is not one valve but multiple valves. This project did go out to bid because of equipment and sensitive nature of this work and it was publicly advertised.

Trustee Sotir inquired the timeframe this project was going to take to complete. Mr. Kerrigan said the project will be completed by November 2025 this is due because some of these valves are huge pieces of equipment and it will take approximately one year for them to be built and delivered. This project also has to be performed in dry weather.

After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried to approve the Building Plug Valve Replacement Project with Dahme Mechanical, Inc in the amount of \$2,900,325.33.



11284

Manager Clementi requested Authorization to seek bids on the Boulder Hill Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project to be opened on March 20, 2024 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of trustees Meeting. After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Gryder, put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried authorizing to seek bids on the Boulder Hill Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project to be opened on March 20, 2024 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of trustees Meeting.

11285

Manager Clementi requested Authorization to seek bids on the Wastewater Digester Complex Building (DCM-2) Masonry Repairs Project to be opened on March 20, 2024 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of Trustees Meeting. After discussion, it was moved by Trustee Funkey, seconded by Trustee Brown put to vote and the Motion was unanimously carried authorizing to seek bids on the Wastewater Digester Complex Building (DCM-2) Masonry Repairs Project to be opened on March 20, 2024 at 10:00 A.M., at the Board of Trustees Meeting.

At this time Trustee Sotir requested an Executive Session to discuss personnel and related matters.

11286

It was moved by Trustee Brown, seconded by Trustee Funkey, put to vote and unanimously carried to temporarily adjourn for an Executive Session to discuss personnel, and related matters.

The Regular Board Meeting temporarily adjourned for Executive Session at 10:32 A.M.

11287

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

Regular Board Meeting reconvened at 11:57 A.M.

No decisions were made in Executive Session.

11288

With no other business to come before the Board, it was moved by Trustee Funkey seconded by Trustee Brown, put to vote and the



Motion unanimously carried that this meeting be adjourned and reconvene to Wednesday February 28, 2024 at 9:30 AM.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.

R-594