

# **BENNER TOWNSHIP WATER AUTHORITY**

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**February 20, 2024**

### **ATTENDANCE:**

**AUTHORITY MEMBERS PRESENT:** Thomas Eby  
Timothy Edkin  
James Lanning  
Jerrold May

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Warren Miller – SBWJA  
Kelly Gill – SBWJA  
Will Barton – SBWJA  
Brian Shura, P.E. – Stiffler McGraw  
See Attached Guest List

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

The February 20, 2024, Regular Meeting of the Benner Township Water Authority was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Thomas Eby, Chairman.

### **ROLL CALL:**

Timothy Edkin, Secretary, took Roll Call, recording four members present. Mr. Swales was excused from the meeting. Mr. Eby, Chairman, noted that with a quorum present, the Benner Township Water Authority was permitted to conduct business under the laws of Pennsylvania.

### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

The Minutes of the January 16, 2024 regular meeting were presented for review. **Mr. May moved, seconded by Mr. Lanning to approve the Minutes of the January 16, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. The motion carried.**

## **TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Mr. May reviewed the Treasurer's Report as presented and asked the Board if there were any questions regarding the Paid Checks or Bills by Vendor submitted for approval. **Mr. Lanning moved, seconded by Mr. Edkin to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented, the Paid Checks in the amount of \$3,139.06 and Bills by Vendor in the amount of \$7,009.40. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. The motion carried.**

## **SBWJA REPORT:**

**January 2024 System Overview** – Mr. Barton provided an overview of the work completed for the Benner Township Water Authority for the month of January.

**System Maintenance** –The water mainline to the Benner Elementary School was flushed to maintain water quality in the mainline due to low usage over the holidays. The annual chlorine system rebuilds and annual inventory (materials) was completed. Mr. Barton indicated that we experienced some off-gassing of the chlorine system at the Grove Park well house after it was rebuilt; therefore, some repairs were made. Mr. Edkin asked what is involved with the annual inventory. Mr. Barton indicated the annual inventory consists of spare parts (materials) on hand at year end and is mostly used for insurance purposes. Mrs. Gill stated the maintenance inventory is also made part of the annual audit. Mr. Miller indicated the Authority has very few parts and there is not a loss issue.

**Nitrate Removal System (Grove Park)** – Mr. Barton reported that a Teams meeting (via telephone) was held with representatives of the PA DEP, Mr. Miller, Mr. Shura and himself to discuss the permit requirements for the proposed nitrate removal system.

**Lead & Copper Service Line Inventory** – A re-inspection was completed of the repairs to the water meter setting at 264 Meadow Flower Circle that was noted during the completion of the service line inventory inspection.

**Analytical Testing** – In January samples were obtained from the Grove Park water system and Hampton/Opequon water system to complete bacteria testing. The quarterly nitrate/nitrite sampling was completed of the Grove Park water system. We collected the sample for the required PFAS testing of the Hampton/Opequon system. Mr. Barton indicated all of the results were below the reporting limit.

**PA One Calls** – There was one (1) PA One Call located in the month of January.

**Grant Work** – Mr. Barton provided the Board with an update on the status of the work associated with the Local Share Grant monies for each of the Authority's water systems.

The high service pumps for the Grove Park water system were picked up today from Orchard Pump. Mr. Barton has also been reviewing submittals from Keystone Engineering Group for the installation of the SCADA systems at both Hampton/Opequon and Grove Park water systems.

**Grove Park Well House/Storage Tank Property** – Mr. Barton informed the Board that the owners of the property adjoining the Grove Park well house and water storage tank is encroaching on the Authority's property by approximately 40'-60' for their own personal use. Mr. Barton indicated the neighbor is currently storing their firewood and other items near the back portion of the Authority's property and wanted to know how the Board wanted to proceed. Mr. Lanning asked if contact has been made with the property owner about the issue and Mr. Miller stated no. The Board suggested contacting the property owner to discuss the issue.

**Edward Drive Fire Hydrant** – Mr. Barton stated there is a section of water mainline at the intersection of Edward Drive/Reichenbaugh Lane (lower level) that currently has a tee and valve; however, a fire hydrant was supposed to be installed at this location originally, but was never installed. Mr. Barton stated that he and Mr. Miller have recently discussed the situation and wanted to ask the Board whether or not they wanted to install a fire hydrant at this location. Mr. Barton indicated that he believes the fire hydrant can be purchased and installed at an estimated cost of \$5,660.00 with most of the cost being the fire hydrant itself which is currently \$4,200.00.

Mr. Miller took a moment to explain the history surrounding the water lines in the Edward Drive area. In the early to mid-1990s a developer, George Wellar, proceeded with the construction of Crestview Development Phase III (Edward Drive). At the time there was no public water in the area, but discussions were being held with Bellefonte Borough for a possible water main extension. Bellefonte Borough decided not to extend water to the area, but Mr. Wellar had enough foresight to realize that public water would likely occur in the area with proposed development nearby. During the construction of the sewer facilities for his development, Mr. Wellar also installed an 8" ductile iron water main and a tap for each lot. When the homes were being constructed, many of the property owners decided to have their contractor install a ¾" copper water service line from the curb stop into the home planning for the future even though they drilled a well.

When a neighboring property was developed (Opequon Hill Subdivision), which included the construction of a public water supply that was eventually dedicated to the Benner Township Water Authority (BTWA), this provided an opportunity for a public water extension to Crestview Phase III (Edward Drive). Mr. Miller indicated there was a section of approximately 30 feet between Opequon Hill and Edward Drive along Reichenbaugh Lane where an 8" water main was not installed. A homeowner along Reichenbaugh Lane that was having issues with their private well and obtaining water from a neighbor decided to install the missing portion of 8" water main at their expense so that they could obtain public water. A reimbursement agreement between the homeowners (Doug & Donna Smith) and the BTWA was completed which entitled the Smiths to a reimbursement tap fee any time someone from Crestview Phase III (Edward Drive) connects to this Authority's water system. Mr. Miller explained that several of the homes along Edward Drive have connected to the BTWA's public water system.

There are several homes within the area of the missing fire hydrant that are customers of the BTWA and could benefit from the installation of the fire hydrant for fire protection. Mr. Edkin asked how far the closest fire hydrant is to this location and Mr. Miller stated approximately 400'-500' away.

Mr. Lanning asked Mrs. Gill for an opinion on whether or not the Authority could afford to install the fire hydrant since it wasn't part of the 2024 budget and she stated yes, she believes the Authority has the necessary funds to purchase and install the fire hydrant. Mrs. Gill stated that the Board doesn't need to make a decision tonight and could revisit the matter at another time. Mr. Edkin indicated he would prefer to wait until 2025 when it's a planned budget item. Mr. May stated he knows the importance of having a fire hydrant near your house due to several fires that occurred near his home prior to having fire protection. Mr. May stated he believes it's a safety concern. **Mr. May moved, seconded by Mr. Lanning to authorize the installation of a fire hydrant at the intersection of Edward Drive/Reichenbaugh Lane (lower level) with a budgetary amount of up to \$6,000.** 3 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 abstention. **The motion carried.** Mr. Edkin stated he abstained due to wanting to wait until 2025 to complete the work when it can be included within the 2025 budget.

Mr. Eby stated this brings up another question about the homeowners who benefit from a fire hydrant, but don't pay for the upkeep of it. Mr. Miller stated that we have discussed this in the past and reminded the Board that the Township Supervisors have the ability to pass an ordinance to collect a fire hydrant tax for those properties that aren't customers of the Water Authority, but benefit from the fire hydrant. The Township would collect the tax and then distribute the monies to the Authority that owns the fire hydrant. Mr. Lanning asked Mrs. Evey, Benner Township Supervisor, who was in attendance at the meeting of her opinion regarding the fire hydrant tax. Mrs. Evey stated as a Benner Township Supervisor, she wouldn't vote for a fire hydrant tax. She suggested possibly working with the homeowner's association for the development if one exists for the costs associated with the installation of a fire hydrant.

Mr. Miller stated he has a comment about the motion that was made earlier in the meeting for the installation of the fire hydrant. Mr. Miller stated that a budgetary limit of \$6,000 was placed on the installation of the fire hydrant and he believes we can achieve that cost, but what happens if something occurs when excavating that requires additional monies to make a repair? Mr. Miller stated he would rather wait to complete the work instead of having an arbitrary limit placed on the work. **Mr. May moved to rescind his earlier motion for the installation of a fire hydrant at the intersection of Edward Drive/Reichenbaugh Lane (lower level) in its entirety and Mr. Lanning seconded Mr. May's motion to rescind.** 3 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent, 1 abstention. **The motion to rescind carried.** Mr. Edkin asked Mrs. Gill to add the installation of the fire hydrant to the BTWA's 2025 budget.

**The Cascade (Airport Park)** – Mr. Miller informed the Board that he and Mr. Barton recently attended a meeting with the owner and engineer of the Cascade, which is a development proposed with approximately 170 condominium units in the Airport Park Subdivision. During the meeting, the owner/engineer informed us that the State College Borough Water Authority (SCBWA) will be requiring the developer to obtain a letter from the BTWA stating that the BTWA does not have the ability and/or desire to serve the development and concur with the SCBWA providing public water service. Mr. Lanning indicated the developer will need to place their request in writing to the BTWA Board.

**Attendance at BTWA Meetings** – Mr. Miller made the BTWA Board aware that Mr. Barton has been attending the BTWA board meetings for several years and has not been compensated for his time due to it being considered a learning process to gain experience/knowledge. Mr. Barton is very instrumental in running the BTWA's water systems and Mr. Miller took a moment to inform the Board that starting this evening he will be compensated for his attendance at the public meetings.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:** Attorney Mix was absent from the meeting.

**ENGINEER'S REPORT:**

**Public Water Supply Permit Amendments for Grant Work** – Mr. Shura informed the Board that he and his staff continue to work on the public water supply permit amendments associated with the grant monies for equipment upgrades. Once complete, the permits will need signed by the BTWA's Chairman and submitted to the PA DEP. Mr. Shura indicated this work should be finalized within the week.

**Nitrate Removal System (Grove Park)** – As mentioned earlier in the meeting, Mr. Shura, Mr. Miller and Mr. Barton attended a Teams meeting with the PA DEP to discuss the permitting requirements and special conditions for the implementation of the proposed system. Nitrate monitoring requirements include daily field samples for raw and finished water and quarterly lab sampling for reporting purposes.

Mr. Shura indicated the sanitary sewer lateral and drain, as well as the installation of the nitrate removal system can be completed by Spring Benner Walker Joint Authority (SBWJA) staff. If the system itself can be purchased through a PA COSTARS approved vendor, the project can be implemented immediately following permit approval without public bidding. This would allow the BTWA to obtain their preferred system while meeting state bidding requirements. Mr. Shura indicated overall the total cost to complete the project, including the sanitary sewer connection, is expected to be less than \$135,000. Mr. Shura stated some construction can begin without permit approval, which would include the installation of the sanitary sewer tap and lateral by SBWJA personnel.

The recommendations to move forward are as follows:

- Authorize Stiffler McGraw and SBWJA to proceed with preparing a detailed scope for the proposed treatment equipment and request an updated proposal from each vendor.
- Authorize the preparation of a public water supply permit application.
- Following receipt of revised proposals, Stiffler McGraw and SBWJA will provide a recommendation for the proposed treatment equipment for approval and purchase by the BTWA.
- Following permit approval, proceed with construction.

**Mr. Edkin moved, seconded by Mr. May to authorize Stiffler McGraw and SBWJA to prepare a scope, release the scope and start the permit process for the installation of a nitrate removal system for the Grove Park well. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. The motion carried.**

Mr. Eby asked what the cost would be to operate the nitrate removal system. Mr. Miller stated the largest expense will be for the salt and the sewer bill. Mr. Barton estimates that it will cost about \$17,000 per year to operate the system, which includes the quarterly sewer bill based on 5 EDUs (equivalent dwelling unit). Mr. Miller stated the 5 EDUs are based on flows provided by the manufacturer.

#### **GUESTS:**

**John Kostas** – Mr. Kostas thanked the Board for the memo that was distributed to the customers of the Grove Park water system regarding the installation of the proposed nitrate removal system.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

**PA DEP** – We received a letter from Nathan White, PA DEP Water Sanitarian, regarding the additional lead and copper sampling that the BTWA was required to complete for the Hampton/Opequon water system in 2023. The letter indicates the Authority has demonstrated optimal corrosion control treatment following an action level exceedance and will return to the reduced monitoring for lead and copper, which will be completed on a 3-year frequency.

**SCBWA** – We received a letter from Brian Heiser, SCBWA, confirming receipt of the BTWA's letter dated January 9, 2024 as it pertains to a water extension to Walnut Grove Estates. Mr. Heiser indicated a decision regarding a water main extension to Walnut Grove will be made in the coming months.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Local Share Account Grant Payment Request** – Mrs. Gill informed the Board that the Authority is now able to request reimbursement for its expenses associated with the Local Share Account grants that were awarded to the Authority for the installation of a VFD (variable frequency drive) and SCADA system at the Opequon well house and the high service pumps and SCADA system at the Grove Park well house. A payment request form was completed for each water system and was included within the board packet. The payment request form will need signed by the Chairman and Secretary. **Mr. May moved, seconded by Mr. Edkin to approve LSA Payment Request Form No. 01 for the Hampton/Opequon water system in the amount of \$15,076.93 and LSA Payment Request Form No. 01 for the Grove Park water system in the amount of \$3,155.00.** 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. **The motion carried.**

**SCBWA Payment of 2023 Water Sales** – In January of each year the Authority typically receives payment from the SCBWA for the water sales collected for the customers it serves in Benner Township for the previous year. Mrs. Gill indicated that the Authority receives \$.35 per 1000 gallons sold. For 2023 the Authority received a payment in the amount of \$11,567.15 for the 33,049,000 gallons sold.

Mrs. Gill informed the Board that after reviewing the service locations on the spreadsheet provided by the SCBWA that she realized there are some properties that have recently become customers of the SCBWA that were not included on the list. This would include the Harvest Meadows development that surrounds the Alexander well field and some commercial properties along High Tech Road that connected to the water system due to PFAS contamination of their private well. Mrs. Gill contacted the SCBWA to discuss the matter surrounding the billing and spoke with Katie McCaulley. Ms. McCaulley stated a memo that was attached to the original agreement between the SCBWA and the BTWA provides a list of specific properties that reimbursement would be calculated for. Mrs. Gill informed Ms. McCaulley that this list has grown over the years when new businesses were added within the Airport Park Subdivision; therefore, she would believe that any new customers in Benner Township would be added to the list. Ms. McCaulley suggested the Authority deposit the check and she would discuss this further with Executive Director Brian Heiser and the SCBWA's solicitor.

Mr. Eby stated he would like to start discussions with Brian Heiser about this and their requirement for a letter for new development in Benner Township if the Board is receptive to his request. Several board members indicated they would be fine with Mr. Eby holding discussions with Mr. Heiser about these matters.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**PA Rural Water Association (PRWA)** – Mr. Eby stated that within the last week he met with the Executive Director of the PA Rural Water Association, Joseph Falcone. Mr. Eby is recommending that the BTWA consider becoming a member of the PRWA and provided the Board with a brochure about the membership. The annual membership fee is based on customer taps/connections and would be \$485.00 for the BTWA to join. Mr. Eby stated the membership would provide a knowledge base of all of the private organizations within the Commonwealth and includes trainings.

Mr. Edkin stated he doesn't see any value in what the PRWA has to offer to the BTWA Board because the certification courses are more geared towards licensed operators and would be more of social membership for the BTWA. Mr. Edkin asked how this association would benefit us as a Board? Mr. Lanning stated we would receive more information in a timely way and would receive guidance and suggestions. Mr. Lanning stated the Authority Board has standing and responsibility for the water.

Mr. Miller stated that SBWJA is currently a member of the PRWA and the licensed operators are able to maintain their licensure with continuing education credits for both water/wastewater that are offered through the trainings provided by the PRWA. Mr. Edkin stated that makes perfect sense for the SBWJA to be a member of the PRWA. Mr. May indicated that after looking over the brochure, he agrees with Mr. Edkin and sees no benefit to the BTWA Board since SBWJA is already a member and using the services. Mr. Miller stated there are a lot of small water systems, similar to the size of the BTWA, that do not have the opportunity to have someone to complete work for them; therefore, they utilize the PRWA for leak detection, GIS mapping, etc. The PRWA helps smaller, rural systems that don't have the help. Mr. Lanning states he believes the membership has high value. Mr. Eby asked if there were any other comments.

**Jim Lanning** – Mr. Lanning stated he would like to make a comment for the meeting minutes. Mr. Lanning indicated that as a citizen of Benner Township he is here for the purpose of protecting the water in Benner Township and doing things lawfully even when an emergency occurs. Mr. Lanning indicated that he and Mr. Eby continue to work with Federal, State and Local officials with the hope of securing grant funding for the critical infrastructure in Benner Township. Mr. Lanning stated that even though this topic is very important to him, everyone has to listen and vote for what they believe in. Mr. Lanning continued by stating that there is no reason to be here doing the work if you don't vote and you don't have the knowledge to do what's right at the right time for the right reason. Mr. Lanning stated he has given two+ years of his life, but he is done now. He then commended Mr. Eby on doing a good job.



**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Mr. Barton/Mr. Miller to contact the owner of the property adjoining the Grove Park well house to discuss their encroachment onto BTWA property for their personal use.
2. Mr. Shura to prepare a scope, release the scope and start the permit process for the installation of a nitrate removal system at the Grove Park well.
3. Mr. Eby to start discussions with Brian Heiser about the water sales paid to the BTWA and their new requirement for a letter regarding proposed development wishing to connect to the SCBWA water system.
4. Key Points of BTWA 02/20/2024 meeting to be submitted to the Benner Township Supervisors.
  - a. The BTWA authorized Stiffler McGraw and SBWJA to prepare a scope, release the scope and start the permit process for the installation of a nitrate removal system for the Grove Park well. Mr. Shura indicated overall the total cost to complete the project, including the sanitary sewer connection, is expected to be less than \$135,000.
  - b. The BTWA approved Local Share Account payment requests for partial funding of the grant monies awarded for the Hampton/Opequon and Grove Park water systems.

**Next regular scheduled meeting is March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Mr. Edkin moved, seconded by Mr. May to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. 4 ayes, 0 nays, 1 absent. The motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,



Kelly J. Gill, Recording Secretary

CC: Benner Township 03/20/2024

**BENNER TOWNSHIP WATER AUTHORITY**  
**1224 BUFFALO RUN ROAD**  
**BELLEFONTE, PA 16823**  
**(814) 355-4778**

**REGULAR MEETING**  
**February 20, 2024**

**GUEST LIST**

**\*Please be sure to print your name on the lines below.**

1. Cady Barakat (documenter)
2. Rivka Wolin (Documenter)
3. Kathy Evey
4. John FOSTER
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