

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING
THE SOMERSET RARITAN VALLEY SEWERAGE AUTHORITY
DECEMBER 18, 2023**

Minute 1 - Opening of Meeting

The Board Meeting of the Somerset Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by Chairman Joseph Lifrieri.

Minute 2 - Open Public Meetings Announcement

The Open Public Meeting Announcement was read by the Executive Director, Ronald S. Anastasio.

Minute 3 - Roll Call

Robert Albano	Present	Edward Machala	Present
Pamela Borek	Present (Teams)	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Present	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Present	Reinhard Pratt	Present (Teams)
Louis Esposito, Jr	Present	Frank Scarantino	Absent (Teams)
		Joseph Lifrieri	Present

Authority Staff

Ronald Anastasio, P.E., Executive Director	Present
Anthony Tambasco, Plant Superintendent	Present (Teams)
Michael Ingenito, Chief Plant Operator	Present (Teams)
Sherwin Ulep, P.E., Manager of Engineering	Present
Ellie Hoffman, P.E., Regulatory Compliance Engineer	Present (Teams)
Linda Hering, Human Resources Manager	Present
Peter Wozniak, Chief Financial Officer	Present
Christian Santiago, Staff Engineer	Present (Teams)
Joseph Loughlin, A/P Clerk	Absent
Gerry Zielonka, Maintenance Supervisor	Present (Teams)

Professional Staff

Thomas Schoettle, P.E., CDM Smith	Present
Brad Carney, Esq., Maraziti Falcon, LLP	Present

Minute 4 – Pledge of Allegiance

All in attendance saluted the flag.

Minute 5 – Approval of Minutes:

1. Board Meeting Open Session Minutes – November 27, 2023

With the Motion of Mr. Esposito, Second of Mr. Albano, the Minutes of the November 27, 2023 Meeting (Open Session), as amended, were approved, by the following Roll Call Vote:

Roll Call Vote:

Robert Albano	Yes	Edward Machala	Yes
Pamela Borek	Yes	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Yes	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Yes	Reinhard Pratt	Yes
Louis Esposito, Jr	Yes	Frank Scarantino	Abstain
		Joseph Lifrieri	Yes

Mr. Albano asked Mr. Carney what Roberts Rules say about the approval of minutes? Mr. Carney indicated he does not know what Roberts Rules say but knows what the Land Use Laws say, which is a good example of what could be done which is that if members are absent, if they watch a video or hear an audio of the meeting, even though they were absent, then they could vote on the Minutes. If they read a transcription of the minutes, they cannot vote on them. They would have to watch or hear the meeting.

Minute 6 – Public Hearings - None

Minute 7 – Public Participation - None

Minute 8 – Consent Agenda: Resolutions for Consideration and Possible Formal Action

Mr. Lifrieri asked if anyone had any issues with or comments about any of the Resolution on the Consent Agenda. Mr. Machala asked a question regarding the rejection of all the bids on the Liquid Sludge Hauling for a second time. How many times are we allowed to reject something and rebid it? Mr. Carney indicated we could do it as many times as we wanted to. But the Local Public Contracts Law allows you to negotiate if you have bid it twice and there are either, on one of the two occasions, no bidders, or, you rejected all bids because they exceeded the pre-bid cost estimate. In either order, if that happens on two occasions, then the Authority has the right, instead of bidding for a third time, to “negotiate” because there are restrictions on that. You cannot deviate from the contract that you sent out. Any minor deviations have to be put into a Resolution and the price has to be equal to or lower than your cost estimate. There are a lot of restrictions with that word “negotiation.” Mr. Albano asked that in the second round, one of the bidders submitted a defective bid for the exact same reason. Mr. Anastasio indicated that he spoke to them. It is a relatively small vendor that got absorbed by a large company. They used to

be more fast moving in the past. I told them they don't have to provide the Bid Bonding Consent of Surety; they can provide a check for 10%, up to \$20,000 but they weren't able to get that in time either. It was the same result both times. A question arose asking if we could negotiate with them since they submitted a defective bid. Mr. Anastasio indicated he didn't know if that was a prohibition. Mr. Carney stated that he doesn't know the facts of the rejection, but we can talk. Mr. Anastasio stated that we are looking to move forward with negotiating. We need to find a vendor, so we plan to shop around. Mr. Borek stated that it went up in the second round. In the first round he was \$3.2M and in the second round he went up to \$3.3M, which was interesting.

Ms. Borek stated that she noticed that we do \$250 bonus for 25 years of service. Do you do other service year bonuses as well? Mr. Anastasio stated that it is just the 25-years. It was suggested a few years back that it be increased to \$250 from the prior amount of \$100, which we decided was fair considering inflation.

Mr. Albano stated that he had a question on Resolution #4 and 5. They look like they are the same thing. What is the difference? Mr. Anastasio explained that it is one set of plans with one party paying for it but the portion in the right-of-way will be owned and operated by the Township of Branchburg. They want to bifurcate it so that they are the owner of the pipe in the street, and they don't own the pipe that goes around the building. We had to take a second look at that and check on it. It makes sense. Mr. Lifrieri asked that the last one, which is the Fox Chase sewer main request. Mr. Anastasio stated that that is different than the Fox Hollow in Branchburg. This one is an existing development in Hillsborough, and they are just replacing the main.

Mr. Pratt asked that, looking at Mr. Ulep's cover memo, there are no additional flows, which is a like-for-like replacement based on what was read. Why would the Authority need to approve that? Mr. Anastasio stated that he and Sherwin discussed that as well, whether it could just be replaced in maintenance, but it is a safer way to do it. They are installing it alongside the existing one, so they are in a sense, going to have two (2) until they abandon the first. It is the proper way to do it. Do we have someone to go down and do an inspection of it as they are doing the installation? Mr. Ulep stated that we do not. So, they just propose a plan that shows what the actual project is going in and the reason being is making sure they are putting in whatever is required and mandated by the sewer authority, to make sure they are using the right piping and fittings. Mr. Anastasio stated that because we don't own the system, Hillsborough MUA owns it, so they will inspect it. Mr. Ulep added that it is also required under the NJDEP regulations that any modifications to an existing line have to have a TWA permit application.

- (1) **Res. No. 23-1218-1** – Resolution Authorizing a \$250.00 Bonus to Mark Roll for 25 Years of Continuous Service to the Somerset Raritan Valley Sewerage Authority
- (2) **Res. No. 23-1218-2** - Resolution Rejecting All Bids for Liquid Sludge Hauling Service - Contract B-24-4 (RE-BID)
- (3) **Res. No. 23-1218-3**– Resolution Opposing New Jersey Assembly Bill No. 5659

- (4) **Res. No. 23-1218-4** – Treatment Works Approval Application Resolution - AAVLBR Property, LLC; Proposed Factory Buildings; Branchburg Township; Block 17.01 Lots 2, Block 17, Lot 2
- (5) **Res. No. 23-1218-5** – Sewer Extension Resolution - Industrial Parkway; Sanitary Sewer Main Extension; Township of Branchburg
- (6) **Res. No. 23-1218-6** – Treatment Works Approval Application - Fox Chase Run Sewer Main Replacement; Hillsborough Township

Upon a Motion by Mr. Machala and a Second by Mr. Albano, the above Resolutions were approved by the following Roll Call Vote:

Roll Call Vote:

Robert Albano	Yes	Edward Machala	Yes
Pamela Borek	Yes	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Yes	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Yes	Reinhard Pratt	Yes
Louis Esposito, Jr	Yes	Frank Scarantino	Yes
		Joseph Lifrieri	Yes

Minute 9 – Board Committees –

A. Planning & Finance Committees:

Planning: (MACHALA, Lifrieri, Pratt, Dominach, Scarantino)

Finance: (ALBANO, Machala, Mathews, Carra, Scarantino)

1. Report on the Procurement of the New Emergency Generator for the Storm Control Pumping Station Relocation Project

Mr. Machala stated that he would have Mr. Anastasio sum this up as the Planning and Finance Committees did this via email. Mr. Anastasio explained that we had a situation where we sent it out to both Committees concurrently, and for the purpose of purchasing an emergency generator for our pump station project, to expedite the delivery of it. We are told it takes 18 months to receive delivery of it and that’s after the shop drawing review is completed. We are able to purchase it under a purchasing co-op. We priced it out 3 different ways and we are going to go with the lowest cost one. It is all the same generator, and this generator matches the existing one that is out at the site, so we are able to be co-located. It helped speed up that project. If we waited until we did the award, we would lose at least 6 months or so.

It simplifies that contract as well. The contractor will be responsible to receive and handle it. We'll never have our hands on it. We are just going to encumber the money, issue a purchase order and a resolution and get it ordered. We are looking at possibly purchasing the pumps in a similar way. We are not ready to come to the Board yet on that. There are long lead-times on this. We want to get moving with the project as soon as we can and this is in our best interests to do it this way, especially since a lot of the money is grant money. We don't want to let the clock run longer than it needs to. It is better to be proactive on it.

A question was raised that we don't pay for the generator until we accept it? We will issue a purchase order, and the money is encumbered but they don't get a check until the vendor provides it. Mr. Carney explained that if we had that in the contract under our Local Public Contracts Law and the Rules & Regulations that the DCA promulgated, the contractor has to front that money. You don't pay the contractor the money until it is received so you are asking the contractor to put out a lot of money and then wait 18 months until they get paid. In that case, we may not get bidders as a result of that. Also, we don't incur the markup that a contractor might put on that in a bid.

Mr. Anastasio stated that this is an added benefit but the main one is the long lead-times were really an eye opener. We'll keep everyone posted on the other parts of this project.

2. **Res. No. 23-1218-7** - Resolution Awarding a Contract for the Furnishing and Delivery of One New Caterpillar Emergency Generator Set to Foley Power Systems for the Authority's Proposed Storm Control Pumping Station Relocation Project

Upon a Motion by Mr. Machala and a Second by Mr. Albano, the above Resolutions were approved by the following Roll Call Vote:

Roll Call Vote:

Robert Albano	Yes	Edward Machala	Yes
Pamela Borek	Yes	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Yes	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Yes	Reinhard Pratt	Yes
Louis Esposito, Jr	Yes	Frank Scarantino	Yes
		Joseph Lifrieri	Yes

Minute 10 – Chairman – Chairman Lifrieri stated that the Authority has a Holiday Party on Thursday, December 21st at noon in this Administration Building. If anyone would like to attend, please feel free to come.

Also, tonight is Commissioner Esposito's last meeting with us. Mr. Esposito said that it has been a great experience over the last five or six years. It was a wonderful time and I've learned a lot and enjoyed everyone's company. It is probably the best group of people I've ever worked with in all the situations I've been in. Everyone wished him the best and he will be missed.

Minute 11 - Reports

A. Executive Director's Report

1. Reschedule January 22, 2024 Regular Board Meeting to February 5, 2024 (to be held just prior to the Reorganization Meeting)

As is typical practice, we normally reschedule the January Board Meeting to coincide with the first Monday of February which is our Reorganization Meeting. We just wanted to make sure the Board would prefer to do that. It saves everyone a trip because those meetings are two weeks apart. We've been doing it for the past 9 or 10 years and just wanted to get an affirmation from the Board. The regular meeting is scheduled for January 22nd and then we would come back two weeks later for Reorganization. Our Board meetings are typically on the fourth Monday of the month and the reorganization is the first Monday of February. Again, everyone can just call in to the meeting if necessary.

2. Update on the Proposed Fox Hollow Residential Development Project in Readington Township

This was a couple years ago, maybe almost three years ago. There was a project that we heard about which is on the Fox Hollow Golf Course in Branchburg, that also lies in Readington Township, on both sides of the creek. They are proposing an affordable housing project on the site that is in Readington. Our staff evaluated their proposal, and we wrote a couple of letters to the applicant and then everything went quiet. We received a letter last week indicating that the project has new contract purchasers, and they are starting back up and want to resolve all the issues. We are not here tonight to report on any details, just to let you know that this came back up again. This is why we run agendas at the last minute in case things like this come up.

A question was raised asking is Bridgewater hanging us up for some reason? It was stated that he had received a couple of phone calls lately asking what was holding everything up. Mr. Anastasio stated that there are a lot of facets to it, and we are still in fact gathering mode. We don't know if the proposal has changed. The flow does travel through Bridgewater to get here, in the North Branch trunk which is owned by Bridgewater but co-funded by Branchburg and Bridgewater. The agreement indicated that connections outside of Branchburg Township are subject to the approval by Bridgewater and SRVSA. There is a lot to look at and facts may have

changed, but we don't know. We just received the letter and really haven't talked about it, but we just wanted to let everyone know and we'll report back on February 5th.

Mr. Albano stated that it might make sense to restate what Joe Maraziti said and that we should be careful in our discussions. Mr. Carney agreed. Minutes of these meetings can be OPRA'd and just keep that in mind when discussing anything in open session.

3. Update on the Proposed Administration Building Project

We are going out to get a couple more prices for architectural services. Mr. DiNardo stated that he reviewed the RFP and whoever wrote it, it was so detailed. Now I see why the architects are giving you quotes that are through the ceiling. In my opinion, it is way too detailed and because of that, the architect would have to put so much "fluff" in it to cover what we are asking for. For example, furniture. Warren redid our buildings six years ago and needed furniture for 25,000 sf., and this is 6,000 sf. Whatever furniture we decided to get, we got a furniture company to look at the space. You need to sit down with them because you know what you need and where you want to put everything. They do the layout and overlay it with the architect. It is a simple process. Once you engage him, you want him to go get the vendor. This goes for the phone company as well. You get the phone vendor to come in, you show them the layout. This is not a big deal, and the phone company lays it out. It all comes down to the Authority's needs. Once you get an architect involved, you are going to spend thousands of dollars for an architect to sit in on something that he doesn't need to sit in on. But since it is in the RFP, you are locking his hands to bidding a lot of stuff that he doesn't need to be involved in.

Is there a way that we can modify some of that? The architect can bid on what the real nuts and bolts of the project are, and the other internal things can be discussed with the vendors and find out what we really need for furniture and phone systems. They'll get the best price; do the layout and it all will meet ADA standards. The architectural bill will be a lot less expensive. You are leaving it too open ended, letting him do everything. He just needs to know the building layout and where you want things to be, that's it.

Mr. Ulep stated that the first three proposals that we received, under the list of exemptions, are the phone lines, the internet, the computers, etc. They eliminated that from the bid. Mr. DiNardo indicated that by sitting with the furniture vendor, they will make recommendations for you and help you along. I think you'll see the numbers will be a lot better. Mr. Ulep stated that we sent out the RFPs to three of the architectural firms so we can do an addendum, and we eliminated the furniture. Mr. Carney stated that this is a professional service contract and is exempt from bidding under the Local Public Contracts Law. When you issue RFP's, you can interview them, and you can talk about pricing during the interviews. You can do a lot of things before you award the contract.

4. Update on the Plantwide Mechanical Rehabilitation Project

5. Update on the Main Interceptor & Forcemain Rehabilitation Project

On these two projects, Sherwin and Tom Schoettle have detailed points in their monthly reports. We are making progress. We just had a technical meeting to discuss the final clarifiers on the plantwide project and we are meeting Thursday morning to talk about the sludge storage basins a little more. We are drilling down the details. Their schedule has been updated and the design shows to be completed in May of 2025.

On the Main Interceptor project, it is moving along. They have to resume the surveying after the area dries out from all the rain.

6. Update on the Storm Control Pumping Station Relocation Project

We talked about the generator earlier. We made our submission to DEP for our land use and environmental permits. Engineer Moorehouse paid the Administrative Review fees on our behalf, and they bill us for that later. This didn't hold things up. They made the submission in mid-December.

7. Update on the Headworks Grit Collectors Equipment Replacement Project

Our contractor is now as far as he can go. Everything is cleaned off. All the concrete rehabilitation work has been done. We are waiting for delivery of the equipment then we move into the next phase. They took the chains and buckets out. They should be back in late January. The electrical work is completed too.

A question arose regarding how we are managing the storms. Mr. Anastasio stated we are managing it very well. We had the Storm Control Treatment Facility in operation in our diversion mode. We were diverting all the flow from Somerville up to the plant and then injecting it back into the interceptor system. That isolated Somerville's system from the effects of the surcharging in our system. Out by the river, there is about 9' of water. The plant is managing just fine. We are moving a lot of water through the plant.

A commissioner asked is there a lot of I&I that gets into the system? Mr. Anastasio answered yes, our flow will more than triple. Our average daily flow has been about 17-18 mgd and today we hit about 70 mgd. It is nothing we haven't dealt with before and the system is handling it very well.

A commissioner asked what are we seeing out in the baseball fields and those areas? Are they still flooding? Mr. Anastasio answered there are no sanitary sewer overflows. There are floodwaters there but there should be no effects. The flow from the Somerville line flows by gravity into the wet well of the pump station. We shouldn't see any problems there. We are not treating and releasing, we are putting it back into the system, but the pump station and clarifiers

are all working well. Commissioner DiNardo asked do you find that I&I is it mostly from our main trunks or do you find that some of the municipalities have a lot of I&I. Warren is trying very hard and spending a lot of money to line a lot of pipes. A lot of municipalities are making a good effort. What the long-standing fact is that all the towns can fix everything in the mains, but whatever the distance of the main pipes are in our service area, which is about 850 miles of pipe, there are that many miles of privately owned pipe going from the street to the house. Think of all the homes in our service area and how many homes have their sump pumps hooked up to the sanitary system. Overall, we are managing quite well.

B. Engineer/Consultants – Mr. Thomas Schoettle, P.E., (CDM Smith)

Mr. Schoettle stated he had one thing to add. The Clemson hydraulic physical model is now complete, so we are going to start testing that in early 2024. A few plumbing things need to be added but we should be doing some hydraulic testing soon.

C. Attorney – Mr. Brad Carney, Esq., Maraziti Falcon, LLP – No report this evening.

Mr. Carney stated he had no report.

D. Department Reports:

1. Operations
2. Regulatory Compliance
3. Laboratory
4. Maintenance
5. Special Projects

E. Facility Engineer Reports:

1. Facility Engineers Monthly Report
2. Capacity Allocation
3. Capacity Assurance
4. Monthly Flow Report

Minute 12 – Communications – Standard monthly communication submittals to the State are in the Board book.

Minute 13 - Res. No. 23-1218-8 – Payroll

Upon Motion of Mr. Machala, Second of Mr. DiNardo, the above Resolution was approved by the following Roll Call Vote:

Roll Call Vote:

Robert Albano	Yes	Edward Machala	Yes
Pamela Borek	Yes	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Yes	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Yes	Reinhard Pratt	Yes
Louis Esposito, Jr	Yes	Frank Scarantino	Yes
		Joseph Lifrieri	Yes

Minute 14- Res. No. 23-1218-9 – Bills

Upon Motion of Mr. Esposito, Second of Mr. DiNardo, the above Resolution was approved by the following Roll Call Vote:

Roll Call Vote:

Robert Albano	Yes	Edward Machala	Yes
Pamela Borek	Yes	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Yes	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Yes	Reinhard Pratt	Yes
Louis Esposito, Jr	Yes	Frank Scarantino	Yes
		Joseph Lifrieri	Yes

Minute 15 – Adjournment

Upon Motion of Mr. DiNardo, Second of Mr. Machala, the meeting was adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Robert Albano	Yes	Edward Machala	Yes
Pamela Borek	Yes	Richard Mathews	Absent
Nicolas Carra	Absent	Michael Pappas	Absent
Gary DiNardo	Yes	Philip Petrone	Absent
Vincent Dominach	Yes	Reinhard Pratt	Yes
Louis Esposito, Jr	Yes	Frank Scarantino	Yes
		Joseph Lifrieri	Yes

**NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING WILL BE HELD ON
FEBRUARY 5, 2024**

(Prior to the Reorganization Meeting)