

Board Minutes for the Board of Sanitary Commissioners Meeting of August 24, 2022

THE BOARD OF SANITARY COMMISSIONERS conducted a regularly scheduled meeting.

Board members present; Stephen Brand, Board President; Tonya Brothers-Bridge, Vice President; Adam Leach, Secretary; and David Smith, Board Member.

**Department managers and staff present;** John Barlow, District Administrator; Mark McKinney, Legal Counsel; John Anderson, District Engineer; Jason Ingram, WPCF Plant Supervisor; Jason Donati, Stormwater Educator; Thom Noble, Sewer Maintenance Assistant Superintendent; Phil Reagon, Sanitation Superintendent; and Maggie Bales, Executive Office Manager.

**Public present:** Dave Osborn, 5445 W Petty; and Rick Yencer.

**Consideration of Minutes:** Mr. Brand entertained a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge moved to approve the Board Meeting Minutes as submitted for the meeting of August 10, 2022. Mr. Leach seconded the motion. The motion was approved (4-0).

**Consideration of Claims:** Mr. Brand entertained a motion to consider the register of claims totaling \$2,021,258.32. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge stated on page six of fifteen we paid \$208,350 to APGN Inc. for a turbo blower for the Water Pollution Control Facility. She stated on page 12 of 15 we paid \$15,655.61 for work pertaining to the Walnut Street sewer design to Greeley and Hansen. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge stated that there was a claim to Greeley and Hansen for \$9,649.12 for Aultshire work. She stated on page 14 of 15 we paid Bowen Engineering \$1,183,400 for several projects. Mr. Brand entertained a motion to approve the claims as presented totaling \$2,021,258.32. Mr. Leach moved to approve. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge provided second. The motion was approved (4-0).

**District Administrator Update – John Barlow.** John Barlow stated an update on the Jackson Street work. He stated that the work is still ongoing, and progress is being made. Mr. Barlow stated that it should be finished in about two weeks. He stated an update on the Drum Addition, the surveying work has started in anticipation of a drainage project.

**MSD Construction Update – Thom Noble, Sewer Maintenance Assistant Superintendent and Crew Manager.** Mr. Noble stated for everyone's knowledge Sewer Maintenance runs an in-house five-person construction crew, where he is a working member of that crew. He stated that the primary focus is sanitary laterals, rains, storm inlets, manholes rehabs, manhole replaces, sinkholes, assist in rain events, and snow removal as needed. Mr. Noble stated Sewer Maintenance has faced some challenges this year, three of five members took other positions. He stated we had to hire some new people and get them trained. Mr. Noble stated they have completed 107 jobs this year and 130 last year. He stated the ARP paving gave their crew more work this spring and into the summer. Mr. Noble stated the crew is now preparing for the 2022 paving list. He stated some of the highlights are Briar, Maplewood, Pauline, and currently working on Berkley and Locust. Mr. Noble stated we had some sinkholes come up after the July 17 rain event, those have been taken care of. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge stated she has seen and heard some comments of those applauding our work but wondering why the work was not continued down the street. She asked for Mr. Noble to clarify that for the public. Mr. Noble stated that the crew does not have much to do with what job gets paved. He stated the first of the year when the paving list gets produced, we send out sewer trucks and they clean the manholes and lines. Mr. Noble stated then Engineering sends cameras through and inspects the manholes and lines. He stated that Engineering then creates a list based on the evaluation. Mr. Noble stated we then dictate what can be done in-house and what needs to be contracted out. He stated that where we start and where we stop is dictated on what is bad and what is good and is dependent upon what is being paved. Mr. Noble stated the crew is typically in and out of the job within a

day or two, more than that is a long time for us to be on a jobsite. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge stated the message that we would like to convey is that we are fixing a problem and addressing a situation. Mr. Noble stated we are being proactive, so we do to have to dig up a freshly paved road. He stated we want to replace, repair, improve, and/or add what needs to be done prior to paving. Mr. Leach stated that Mr. Noble is the primary beneficiary of our agreement between MSD and Public Works. He stated to let us know if it is still working for you. Mr. Noble stated the agreement is working 100%. He clarified that the MOU is for the concrete and/or asphalt patching that Public Works will do for us. Mr. Noble stated anything that is known to be paved we pour up to surface. He stated that anything that is not on the paving list, Public Works comes into patch with asphalt. Mr. Leach stated for clarification that there is a finite budget for everything. He stated that we have 677 lane miles and 314 rad miles in the City of Muncie, the average cost to pave one road mile is anywhere between \$300,000 to \$500,000 per. Mr. Leach stated that there is just never enough money. He stated there always must be a logical terminus for every project to start and end somewhere. Mr. Leach stated that we have plenty of problems, so it is usually road end to road end. He stated that projects are put together with a logical terminus. Mr. Brand asked if the department was fully staffed right now. Mr. Noble stated that Sewer Maintenance is down a sewer driver, the jo posting is following protocol. He stated we are following the protocol for a Construction Crew Member job posting. Mr. Brand stated the sewer drier is a CDL position. Mr. Noble stated that is correct. He stated that the construction job it is preferred CDL or construction knowledge if the applicant does not have a CDL. Mr. Noble stated that the jo description was modified in a way that would appropriately fit the needs of Sewer Maintenance. Mr. Brand stated that there were 130 jobs completed in calendar year 2021. Mr. Noble stated that is correct according to his memory and currently we are at 107. Mr. Brand stated aside from the manpower that the department is short, are the other resources that are needed from this Board. Mr. Noble stated not at this time. He stated that Mr. Barlow and he discussed potentially expanding the construction side. Mr. Noble stated that is something he would like to discuss in the future. Mr. Brand stated good job and keep up the good work to Mr. Noble and his crew.

## **New Business**

### **Additional Board Topics:**

1. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge stated it is important to notice that we are celebrating John Barlow's 40<sup>th</sup> year with MSD. She stated that MSD and the citizens of Muncie are all very lucky that Mr. Barlow said yes to serving the citizen for 40 years. Mr. Leach stated that 4 years ago Mr. Barlow started with a mop in the basement of the Water Pollution Control Facility and look how far he has come. Mr. Smith stated he and Mr. Barlow go back to Muncie Northside High School and congratulations to Mr. Barlow.
2. Mr. Brand stated in the last meeting we had some folks approach with public comment that we appreciated and valued the comments. He stated the first public comment was about some drainage issues that they were having. Mr. Brand stated there were some beliefs about the infrastructure in that area, that after investigation by Engineering and team ended up being not accurate. He stated the investigation is ongoing. Mr. Brand stated MSD is considering improving the infrastructure that goes under Meeker that would tie into Burlington. He stated that this would maybe help in a significant rain event like we had on July 17, but likely not completely cure due to the sheeting effect that happens in that low-lying area. Mr. Brand stated we appreciate people bringing those things up to us and we are continuing to investigate. He stated that the second person that approached and made a comment about billing and payments. Mr. Brand stated we appreciate those comments, also took them seriously and did some investigation. He stated that after investigation Muncie Sanitary District is paying our customers in a timely manner. Mr. Brand stated that if there is latency or a lack of responsiveness somewhere else in that chain as you move from tier one to tier two to tier three, that is outside of our purview. He stated that if someone believes there is something we can do about it, we would for sure like to know about it so we can ask questions.

Mr. Barlow stated all the investigation that we did prove that Muncie Sanitary District is paying in a timely manner. He stated an update on the ongoing negotiations with the Delaware Regional Wastewater District, they are our largest customer and our largest wholesale customer. Mr. Brand stated our contract is up with them in 2023 and we are working on a long-term agreement with them. He stated that he believes it is moving along very well and that he is learning along the process. Mr. Brand stated he appreciates the input from Delaware Regional Wastewater District and everyone supporting it and hopefully by the next meeting he can report that we are making better progress and close to a tentative agreement.

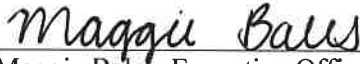
**Public Comments:**

1. Dave Osborn, 5445 W Petty, stated he retired from the Muncie Sanitary District some years ago after 34 years of service. He stated he was the Director of Engineering prior to John Anderson. Mr. Osborn stated that when he retired, his wife and he were both insured by the Sanitary District by Blue Cross at the time. He stated when he became eligible for Medicare, his wife was taken off the Muncie Sanitary District's insurance and he had to go out and get her a supplement. Mr. Osborn stated he recently received notice that the supplement is going up again. He stated that before he goes out to look for a new service that he would check with the Board. Mr. Osborn stated that a couple of years ago he became aware that other employees who retired after him had been allowed to maintain insurance for their spouses. He stated at that time he reached out to Melanie to ask if he could do that with his wife and bring her back on. Mr. Osborn stated that Melanie said it was not possible. He stated he did not pursue it beyond that. He stated that he thought he would give it one more shot to see if the Board would consider reinstating her on the Muncie Sanitary District's insurance. Mr. Osborn stated that as he understands it, retirees are still allowed now for their spouses to be covered. Mr. Brand clarified that Mr. Osborn is asking the Sanitary District to reinstate his wife on the Sanitary District's insurance. Mr. Osborn stated that is correct. Mr. Brand stated for clarification that to Mr. Osborn's understanding those who retired after him were allowed to do that. Mr. Osborn stated there was a mandatory meeting on insurance and at that time is when he was told she could not be put back on. He stated that she was on it for five years prior to us being forced to remove her. Mr. Brand thanked Mr. Osborn for his comments and stated that it will be investigated.

2. Rick Yencer, former newsman author, stated he has business in Muncie. He stated a group has been looking into how the city is spending their American Relief money. Mr. Yencer stated that the group came across a claim that the city approved to the Sanitary District for some \$7 million last week. He stated that people want to know why one government is trying to bail out another government with money that was supposed to go for the people. Mr. Yencer stated that he thinks the city took another \$6 million and bailed itself out when again this money should have gone to the people. He stated it was earmarked for infrastructure and he heard talk he today about the district paving streets over utility work, but a government that has a tax base, a utility, and even a gas pump he wonders why you need more money. Mr. Yencer stated related to that with taxes coming up, he has people wonder why their taxes went up this year in the Muncie area. He stated that the increase was anywhere between five and ten percent. Mr. Yencer stated that it is easy to count because some schools and governments have spent money, they do not have like borrowing money. He stated for example the sanitation garage and the stadium that is coming online that the school are doing and a variety of other things where you are imposing debt over the next 20 years for property owners. Mr. Yencer stated a colleague of his pointed out that the district is not doing enough to recycle cardboard anymore. He stated that it has slowed down in this community since Rock Ten was sold. Mr. Yencer stated he is not sure how they are going to solve keeping cardboard in the stream to produce more cardboard. He stated these are just a few things he has heard and that he knows. Mr. Yencer stated that with the tax rates for the next year coming up, he would hope that the district not raise property taxes anymore in this community. Mr. Brand thanked Mr. Yencer for his comments.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Brand stated our next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 7, 2022, at 11:30 a.m. in the City Hall Auditorium. Mr. Brand stated he would accept a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Brothers-Bridge made a motion to adjourn the meeting for August 24, 2022. Mr. Leach seconded the motion. The motion was approved (4-0).


Respectfully Submitted,



Maggie Bales, Executive Office Manager

*Approved by the Board of Sanitary Commissioners  
Muncie Sanitary District*

  
Stephen Brand, President

  
Adam Leach, Secretary

  
Tonya Brothers-Bridge, Vice President

  
David Smith, Board Member