

GLOVERSVILLE-JOHNSTOWN JOINT SEWER BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
May 8, 2024

The Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Sewer Board held a meeting in the Boardroom of the Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Wastewater Treatment Facility on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Christopher Vose	Chairman
Donald Schwartz	Vice Chairman
Eric Parker	Secretary
Michael W. Stover	Member
John Rizzo	Member
Harry Brand	Manager-Wastewater Programs
Mark Levendusky	Laboratory Director
Ian Colvin Marincic	WWTP Engineer Technician
Darleen Gaugler	Principal Account Clerk
Hilary Ruzycky	Administrative Aide
Rennie Sanges	Gloversville Resident

ABSENT

Bobbi Trudel	Member
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SPEAKER – Rennie Sanges

Gloversville resident and environmental activist Rennie Sanges addressed the Board regarding a recent presentation given by Northeastern Biochar Solutions to the Fulton County public works committee. The company proposes to set up a manufacturing plant within Fulton County designed to turn waste into carbon-based fertilizer. Northeast Biochar suggests a partnership with Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Wastewater Treatment Facility to allow close access to wastewater materials. Mr. Sanges believes the technology to produce the fertilizer is unproven with only 5 pilot tests on 80 tons of sludge accomplished to date. Mr. Sanges voiced concerns regarding the location of the facility, odor problems for surrounding areas, adverse effects from hazardous chemical use, air pollution and soil contamination, unknown financing, and inherited liabilities. The Board thanked Mr. Sanges for his comments. Mr. Sanges excused himself from the meeting at 6:20 P.M. No action was taken as the Board has not received a formal proposal from Northeastern Biochar Solutions.

APRIL 11, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

The Board approved the April 11, 2024, regular meeting minutes on a motion made by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Parker, carried five (5) in favor, one (1) absent, and none (0) opposed.

APRIL 24, 2024, MEETING MINUTES

The Board approved the April 24, 2024, special meeting minutes for the proposed 2024-2025 sewer rates on a motion made by Mr. Stover, seconded by Mr. Parker, carried five (5) in favor, one (1) absent, and none (0) opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence was discussed: No. 12

PLANT OPERATIONS

High Yard Recovery Update

Plant Manager Brand reported contractors from High Voltage Electric Service (HVES), Stephen Miller General Contractors and Amaha Electric continue working to restore the facility's main high voltage substation. The foundation is laid for the new Control Station. Trenches are dug and covered for electrical conduits to

transformers. Received and executed a new Fiber Circuit installation and service agreement from Frontier Communications to meet National Grid standards for the fiber optic line between the High Yard and 3 Elizabeth Street in Johnstown. National Grid will provide new meters for the project to be reimbursed by NYMIR under this insurable event.

Manager Brand submitted requested information to NYMIR, including an itemized list of new control equipment to be housed within the Control Station and a business interruption spreadsheet. No major changes to the project's scope of work are currently anticipated. Manager Brand noted he expects a reevaluation of risk from NYMIR.

Slope Failure Update

Plant Manager Brand reported he made notice to NYMIR regarding the slope failure on the north side of the Cayadutta Creek. GPI submitted a project scope and fee for environmental coordination with regulatory agencies. Temporary and permanent remedial options were discussed with NYSDEC and the Army Core of Engineers such as an anchored soldier wall or stream realignment with heavy stone fill. These options may not be feasible. Additional discussion and site visit from GPI and ACOE are planned for the upcoming week. Engineering Technician Colvin Marincic monitors the site daily for any additional slope movement.

GPI recommended purchase of a standby generator in the event the slope continues to shift and damages the facility's bus duct bank. Manager Brand and HVES developed a contingency plan in case of such an emergency. HVES submitted a quote to supply 650 feet of 4" PVC pipe and one (1) reel of 15kV #2 high voltage cable to be staged on site for emergency use. HVES will stock all splicing materials at their shop to be charged as needed. If materials are not used, HVES will act as a broker to resell the PVC pipe and wire at the best value by June 1, 2025. HVES will install necessary materials within 24 hours if an emergency duct bank failure does occur.

On a motion made by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mr. Stover, carried five (5) in favor, one (1) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board authorized the purchase of 650 feet of 4" PVC pipe and one (1) reel of 15kV #2 high voltage cable from HVES at the cost of \$21,000.00, to be staged on site for emergency use in the event of a bus duct bank failure, and to allow HVES to resell the PVC pipe and wire at the best value if the materials are not used by June 1, 2025.

Plant Operational Issues

Plant Manager Brand provided an evaluation of the current state of the facility. Plant equipment readiness is at an unacceptable level. Spare equipment and parts are outdated and unreliable with no critical inventory in stock. Operations and maintenance schedules are not up to date. Routine and preventative maintenance have been neglected. Many tanks need cleaning and inspecting. Nash compressor seals are severely leaking. SCADA alarm system needs a backup modem. Maintenance and Operations staff have been tasked with providing a full assessment of the plant to determine a single point failure mode and develop contingency plans. The facility is at critical failure level and will require large associated costs and time to achieve an acceptable level of operational readiness. Proposals and quotes are being gathered by the manager to sustain equipment. Manager Brand noted that despite the current conditions the SPDES permit is not in violation, which is a testament to a diligent staff.

Current Staffing Levels

Plant Manager Brand reported staffing levels in the Operations Department do not meet NYSDEC certification requirements, as the facility does not currently employ a Grade 4A Wastewater Operator. Per DEC notice, by July 3, 2024, a Grade 4A Wastewater Operator must provide adequate coverage for the facility. One employee will be eligible to test for Grade 4A Operator licensing on June 9th, one employee is scheduled to test for Grade 3A Operator licensing on May 16th, and four employees are current provisional and are scheduled to take the Civil Service test for Operator Trainee positions on May 18th. Currently, the 3A and 4A certification tests have a successful passing rate of less than 30%. Manager Brand is researching study guides and training modules to assist employees with this difficult testing. The earliest the first operator trainee will be eligible to take the 3A certification exam will be October 2026.

Manager Brand posted open job positions and reached out to past employees to obtain necessary operator coverage. Wastewater consulting firm Cedarwood Environmental Services toured the plant and submitted pricing to provide a licensed Grade 4A Wastewater Operator. Camden Group was also contacted.

Plant Manager Brand posted in-house for the non-competitive position of Maintenance Mechanic. A vacant Account Clerk/Typist position will soon be filled.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion made by Mr. Stover, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, carried five (5) in favor, one (1) absent, and none (0) opposed, Manager Brand and all Board members present went into executive session at 7:36 P.M. under NY Public Officers Law §105:1 – (e) collective negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law. Vice Chairman Schwartz was called away from the meeting at 8:10 P.M. On a motion made by Mr. Stover, seconded by Mr. Rizzo, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board came out of executive session at 8:34 P.M.

BUDGET/PURCHASE/AUDIT

Authorize Bidding: Forklift

Plant Manager Brand requested Board approval to seek bids for the purchase of a forklift. On a motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Stover, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board authorized to seek bids for the purchase of a forklift, as part of the 2024 Capital Plan.

INDUSTRIAL COMPLIANCE

Sewer Bill Protest: 13 ½ 4th Avenue, Gloversville

Engineer Technician Ian Colvin Marincic reviewed a request for sewer bill adjustment for excess water usage for property located at 13 ½ 4th Avenue in Gloversville. On a motion made by Mr. Stover, seconded by Mr. Parker, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board denied a credit since permission to inspect the premises was not granted.

ATTACHMENTS

Resolution No. 2024-12

On a motion made by Mr. Stover, seconded by Mr. Parker, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board approved Resolution No. 2024-12. *Transfer from Capital & Equipment Reserve Account to General Fund.*

Resolution No. 2024-13

On a motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Stover, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board approved Resolution No. 2024-13. *Execute consulting agreement with City of Johnstown Human Resources Office to provide HR services.*

Resolution No. 2024-14

On a motion made by Mr. Stover, seconded by Mr. Rizzo, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed, the Board approved Resolution No. 2024-14. *Extend consulting service agreement between Donna Renda and Joint Sewer Board to provide financial consulting.*

Wastewater Programs Report, Annual Trends/Comparison Report, and 2024 O&M Expenditure Reports were reviewed per Attachments No. 2, 3, & 4.

O&M purchase orders and disbursement sheets totaling \$351,557.61 were approved for payment on a motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Stover, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed.

OLD BUSINESS

HRP Thermal Imaging

Plant Manager Brand reported he met with HRP Associates on May 6, 2024, to further discuss odor issues within the Administration Building. Recommendations include improving filtration filters, caulking, additional controls

on lab hoods, and rental of a personal air sampling pump. Plant Manager Brand noted that the HRP review did not include any ambient air quality testing within the Administration Building.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 P.M. on a motion made by Mr. Parker, seconded by Mr. Stover, carried four (4) in favor, two (2) absent, and none (0) opposed.

The next regular meeting will be held on **Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 6:00 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Parker, Secretary
Gloversville-Johnstown Joint Sewer Board