

Cleona Borough Authority Minutes

January 8, 2025

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The regular meeting of the Cleona Borough Authority was held via Zoom on the above date. Members attending were Sue Bowman, Matt Ditzler, Ashlea Good, Bryan Hoffman and Les Powell. Also attending were Scott Rights, Steckbeck Engineering; Amy Leonard, Solicitor; Jonathan Johnson, Borough Manager; and Melody Vanderveer, Borough Clerk.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Solicitor Amy Leonard.

REORGANIZATION OF AUTHORITY MEMBERS:

Motion by Ms. Good, seconded by Ms. Bowman, to retain the existing slate of officers for 2024. Motion carried.

The meeting was turned over to Chairman Bryan Hoffman at 7:37 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES, TREASURER'S REPORT AND BILLS:

Ms. Bowman corrected the December 4, 2024, meeting minutes by noting that the owner of 420 E Walnut Street is Millpond Properties. With this change, Mr. Ditzler made a motion for approval, Ms. Good second, and the motion carried.

For the Treasurer's report, Mr. Johnson said that the \$6,700.65 street sweeping reimbursement was incorrectly recorded in the Revenue and Operation Account; it should have been recorded in the Stormwater Account. Noting that change, Ms. Bowman made a motion to approve the December 2024 Treasurer's report. Mr. Ditzler seconded, and the motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Ditzler, seconded by Ms. Good, to pay the bills for the months of December 2024. Motion carried.

CITIZENS COMMENTS: No citizens logged into the meeting.

ENGINEERING REPORT: Scott Rights

Dairy Road Stormwater Project: Mr. Rights discussed the easement along Dairy Road and Millpond Properties. Due to uncertainty regarding ownership of these easements, Mr. Rights suggested obtaining a permanent 20-foot easement to install the riprap, thus allowing access for construction and future maintenance; the easement is beyond the building setback. After Mr. Rights updates the drawings, he and Attorney Leonard will initiate discussions with Millpond Properties about the easement on their property. Since part of the easement will extend into Walnut Street's unopened right-of-way, an easement agreement is needed between the Authority and the Borough.

Ms. Leonard provided a historical overview of the East Walnut Street property owners' easement status with the Borough. A 1984 agreement required the Borough to pay the property owners for the rights-of-way, in exchange for the affected areas being deeded to the Borough. Unfortunately, the documents describing the areas to be deeded are missing, resulting in uncertainty about who owns a driveway used to access the house at 145 Dairy Road. Ms. Leonard, therefore, recommended against extending the right-of-way to Dairy Road.

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Mr. Johnson inquired about the easements' cost. Since the easements benefit the property owners and do not have a significant impact on their properties, Attorney Leonard said they will be asked to donate their easements.

South Christian Street Project: Mr. Rights discussed the four property easements on South Christian Street. Because the existing stormwater easements on South Christian Street are insufficient in size, Mr. Rights suggested extinguishing them and obtaining larger easements on the same four properties on South Christian Street (212, 220, 240, and 250). Since the new piping along South Christian Street is within six feet of those properties' driveways, some amount of repaving at them will likely be needed; Mr. Rights suggested making the overlay a separate item in the bid. That way, if a driveway is significantly damaged, the Authority could pay to repave the entire driveway. Members agreed.

The tree on the Schulz property will be removed and replaced and the contractors will be cautioned not to expose tree roots on the Bower property. If trees in the right-of-way die within a year after the project, the Authority will replace those trees; if trees outside the right-of-way die, the contractor is responsible for replacing them. Members agreed.

Assuming timely receipt of permits from DEP and bidding, the project should run from mid-spring until early summer.

Mr. Rights also showed a data comparison of flows per EDU between 2020 and 2024 documenting flows went from 229 gpd to 196 gpd, a 14 percent decrease. A graph showing rainfall and average monthly flows demonstrated that rainfall and monthly flows correlated for the first part of the year, but not the second. This is likely because groundwater was very low and people weren't using their sump pumps.

PUMP STATION REPORT: Les Powell

Mr. Powell said that the pumping stations is working fine. He reported that, during the recent frigid weather, it was necessary to leave the hose drip to avoid frozen pipes.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: Jonathan Johnson

Balance due as of December 31, 2024: -\$2,065.45; Wastewater = \$999.86; Stormwater = -\$3,065.31.
Total billed September, 2024 = \$143,960.15.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT - Amy Leonard

Attorney Leonard discussed filing liens on properties where the owners have not paid their stormwater fees. Regarding earlier discussions, she noted the legal process of abolishing and creating easements is complicated and can be time consuming, especially if there is pushback from some property owners and/or payment is requested. Mr. Hoffman offered to contact any property owners who request payment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

2025 Budget Revision: Because of COLA's recent rate change, Mr. Hoffman proposed revising our Authority's 2025 budget that was adopted in December 2024 to reflect our resulting rate update. Ms. Bowman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Powell, approving this budget revision. Motion carried.

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NEW BUSINESS

City of Lebanon Authority Rate Increase: Mr. Hoffman said COLA belatedly notified us of their latest rate change. He then reviewed a spreadsheet reflecting the rate increase. The typical customer using 8,000 gallons would see an increase of \$27.56 per quarter, while the minimum usage rate would increase from \$63 to \$66. Mr. Hoffman noted our customers' water conservation efforts have reduced our revenues accordingly. Mr. Ditzler indicated that COLA's fixed costs have apparently been increased to balance out lower usage customers. Attorney Leonard will prepare a resolution for the February meeting adopting our rate increase. A letter about the rate increase will be sent to customers along with their January billing.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Ms. Good made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bowman to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm.

Respectfully submitted.

Jonathan Johnson