

# ***Rensselaer County Sewer District No. 1***

## ***Meeting Minutes***

January 25, 2022

### **I. Call to order**

Chairman Miner called the regular meeting of the Rensselaer County Sewer District No. 1 to order on January 25, 2023 at 6:00 pm in the Rensselaer County Legislature Chambers.

### **II. Roll call**

Chairman Miner conducted a roll call. The following persons were present: Bott, Dambrose, Dolgin, Lourinia, Mainello, Poletto, and Masone. Others present: Chair of the Legislature Kelly Hoffman, Vice Chair Bob Loveridge, Legislator Bill Maloney, Legislator Wayne Gendron, Dan Durfee-CDM Smith, Tom Garrett- Siemens, Shad Treat- Siemens, Derrick Gardner, Jaime Thomas, and Harry Tutunjian.

### **III. Pledge of Allegiance**

The body recited the Pledge of Allegiance

### **IV. Adoption of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the October meeting were approved after a motion from Masone and a second from Poletto.

**Siemens presentation-** Dan Durfee from CDM Smith introduced himself and said that he has been involved in many projects at the plant, and has been evaluating issues at the plant including some of the aging equipment.

Materials were distributed to the commissioners.

Tom Garrett from Siemens stated that the areas of the plant that have been impacted by dust have been cleaned by a firm hired by Siemens. A temporary poly plastic wall has been installed to keep dust isolated to the loading area. Dekra, a dust specialist firm, was at the plant today to assess the situation and it went well with the assistance of plant staff.

Garrett said that Frank Montana from Siemens and Vince Apa from CDM Smith are leading the efforts. Dan Durfee will assist Tom Garrett and Shad treat from Siemens with communications.

Durfee said that they have identified a list of tasks and a time schedule and will be moving forward as quickly as possible.

Commissioner Poletto stated that he has been on the sewer board since 2013, and at that time we were told that we would have a state of the art plant, “What Happened?”

Durfee said that Vince has been to a dozen Komline facilities and some are working fine, and some have issues like ours. Every plant is different. If screenings aren’t done properly, they get into the feed system and the finished product. We are trying to reduce this material and cut down on the friable dusty material. Changes can be made to the paddle mixer.

Poletto said that we were told that our material was the cause of the fire in the last dryer, now we have a new dryer, and you are saying our material is still the cause.

Garrett said that he was originally assigned to this project, but was transferred to Long Island area for some time. He said that he is back now and has volunteered to take on this project because it is personal to him.

Masone said that there was a lot of material presented tonight, and that he would need time to review it and ask questions later.

Garrett said that questions should be directed to Tutunjian and then be forwarded to Siemens.

Poletto said that the plant was supposed to run more efficiently, and asked if it was, and asked if it would be more efficient in the future.

Durfee said that it is what they are working towards and is confident that it will run more efficiently.

Miner said that after everyone was invited to the meeting on site at the plant a while back, Siemens has since stepped up and started addressing the issues at the plant. Bott joined Miner in thanking Siemens for taking action.

Chairwoman Kelly Hoffman thanked Siemens and CDM Smith for attending and taking action. She stated that the biggest concern of the legislature is the safety of the plant and our colleagues that work there. The Legislature has wanted to invest in the plant and we have received grant money to do that. We have been promised a lot and it is time to see some improvement in the conditions at the plant.

Hoffman thanked Vice Chair Loveridge, Commissioners Miner and Bott and those who have been working on the issues at the plant. She expressed her concern that it wasn’t known to us that there could be issues with the paddle dryer and the grit system.

Durfee said that there have been a lot of changes in the last 10 years and equipment has aged and lacked maintenance.

Vice Chair Loveridge stated that he had hoped that we would be farther along by now. He said that 5 tasks have been addressed and next month 3 more will be addressed. We need to stay focused and not get lip service. We are counting on you to get this done. We have a lot of Siemens project happening now in the County, but we can't be forgotten, our sewer system is important and our issues need to be addressed.

Garrett said that Bob Loveridge made a comment about communication a few months back. After that meeting, we met and began to take the steps to address communications and establish a checks and balances system. We went through a lot at the corporate level to get the support we need to do this.

Legislator Maloney said that he toured the plant after the fire and realizes that it needs a lot of work. He asked if the changes that allowed rags to enter the system have been identified.

Durfee said that he will find out the cause is.

Chairman Miner asked if there were any more questions than closed the presentation portion of the meeting.

## **V. District Report**

1). **Staff issues-** Mike Buffaline, a long-time employee retired, but will return part time in the maintenance department. He has a lot of knowledge about plant operations and we are happy that he will still We have interviewed candidates that may be eligible to lead the sewer district. Legislature is working with Civil Service to create appropriate titles and job descriptions.be available to help.

2).**Siemens Project-** This was covered during the presentation from Siemens.

3) **Troy Pump Stations-** We are going back and forth with punch list items. We are hopefully winding down this long mediation process. Jaime Thomas said that he is hopeful that it is wrapping up.

4) **Aeration and Misc. Projects Grant Award**- We have received general approval from EFC after several back and forth communications between Derrick Gardner, our engineering firm Ramboll, and DEC and EFC staff. EFC is looking for a revised engineering report. We hope to go out to bid as soon as we receive the go ahead. We had hoped to have begun construction last year. Our aeration system is critical and our system is old and replacement parts are no longer available for some critical components. Our staff has been cannibalizing motor and gearboxes to keep the system operating.

Derrick said that he is working on the response to the questions from EFC.

5) **Biosolids Disposal**- As of right now we have no contract or agreement to dispose of the product. The firm that had been taking it for free, no longer needs it. We had been waiting for the product to improve before going out to bid, but that hasn't happened. Our storage shed will be nearing capacity in a few weeks.

We are looking to Siemens to help us resolve this issue.

6) **Electrical Upgrades and Maintenance Plan RFP**- - HVES has been working at the plant to complete upgrades. Here is there progress report:

*HVES removed the second bad 115kV Circuit Switcher 6199 on Transformer T1. New conduits were made ready for installation on January 16 through 20, 2023, to take advantage of the mild January weather and enable the new concrete pad to be poured as the new 115kV SF6 circuit breaker will be here mid-February.*

*During the work, R515 was able to be de-energized, and we were able to investigate the intermittent status lights issue. We found the "C" Form auxiliary contact in the Form 6 controller was bad. We consulted with the manufacturer and found that there are three other outputs that could be reprogrammed to replace the bad "C" Form auxiliary contact. On January 13, 2023, HVES attempted to undertake the reprogramming and found that the Form 6 controller was not in "NORMAL" status due to an "INTERNAL CLOCK FAILURE". Thus it was not providing any protection at all. In order to correct the problem, the Form 6 controller must be reprogrammed, however, HVES found that the comport and main processor board are actually bad preventing us from communicating with the unit and preventing further repairs.- per HVES report*

HVES offered us several options including repairs and using used equipment. However the equipment would stil be old and obsolete.

We opted to: *Replace the entire recloser with a new one as it is 15 years old and replacement parts are no longer supported by the manufacturer. Also, the existing one's bushings are too close together due to it being an oil-filled type and not a current*

*model vacuum type like the new one just installed on R525. We made a visual inspection of the top of the recloser and discovered evidence of some flash-over from an animal or bird coming into contact with the energized components. Replacement should definitely be considered. \$140,000.00 to \$150,000.00 with delivery in 25-30 weeks.- per HVES report.*

We received two response to the RFP for our maintenance plan; HVES and DLC Electric. The proposals are being reviewed by the purchasing department and the county attorney. DLC was the lower bidder at \$418,400 versus HVES at \$430,242. HVES objected to DLC's bid, resulting in further review by the county attorney and purchasing department.

## **VI. Old Business**

1) **Troy Sewer Billing and Rental agreements-** Jaime Thomas said that he said a nice package of agreements with new language to the City's Corporation Counsel. As of today, we have been ignored.

Chairman Miner said that we should send them a bill for treatment of their leachate every month and invite them to a meeting.

## **VIII. New Business**

Commissioner Masone asked if employees are wearing safety masks. Tutunjian said that masks and Tyvek suits are available to anyone who wants to use one. Chairman Miner asked if employees have signed a letter acknowledging the availability of masks and safety equipment. Tutunjian said that PESH noted the availability of the safety equipment during their visits last year.

Vice chair of the Legislature Bob Loveridge said that he has experience with PESH when he ran the county jail. He said that he believes that we are in a precarious position because we lack leadership at the plant. Those running the plant are members of the union and that makes management challenging. He believes that maintenance is lacking, but dust is the issue now, and it affects the attitude of the staff. Loveridge say that he believes that we need to hire to stay on top of maintenance issue. He said that if we make employees sign something, it will raise new issues.

Miner said that he believes we need a plant manager who leaves his office and establishes work assignments.

Vice Chair Loveridge said that he has interviewed candidates with those responsibilities in mind. We know that they need to be visible at the plant. Bob said that they hope to address this soon, because we are all on the same team.

**IX. Next Meeting**

February 22 at 6pm location to be determined

**X. Adjournment**

A motion to adjourn was made by Bott, seconded by Poletto, and passed unanimously at 7:11 pm.

Minutes submitted by Harry Tutunjian