

**THREE RIVERS REGIONAL
WASTEWATER AUTHORITY**
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Serving & Operated By:
Beacon Hill Water & Sewer District
City of Kelso
City of Longview
Cowlitz County

**THREE RIVERS REGIONAL WASTEWATER AUTHORITY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
June 21, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS

Chairman Wallin called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors to order at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, in the Three Rivers Regional Wastewater Plant Meeting Room. Roll Call was made. Those in attendance were:

Board of Directors:

Mike Wallin, City of Longview (Director)
Arne Mortensen, Cowlitz County (Alternate Director)
Monte Roden, Beacon Hill Water & Sewer District (Director)

Operating Board:

Dell Hillger, Longview (Chairman)

Staff:

Duane Leaf, General Manager
Debbie Stanley, Clerk of the Board
Scott Bowman, Assistant General Manager
Joe Jordan, Lab Manager
Allen C. Unzelman, TRRWA Attorney (arrived at 8:17 a.m.)

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Regular Meeting – December 28, 2022

Mr. Roden moved to approve the minutes of the Three Rivers Regional Wastewater Authority regular meeting held on December 28, 2022. The motion was seconded by Mr. Mortensen, and carried unanimously.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Wallin asked if there was any member of the public present and wanted to make a comment to the Board. Having none, that portion of the meeting was closed.

4. PROJECTS – UPDATE

A. KPS Force Main Pipeline Project

Mr. Leaf reported that the TRRWA received the drawings for this project late in 2021 and did not have any issues with them. He noted that we currently have a 30-foot easement for our lines on the property. Mr. Kardas from City of Kelso notified Mr. Leaf that no easement will be required from us; therefore, no further action is required from the TRRWA.

B. Solids Handling Improvement Project

Mr. Leaf reported that staff has been working with Engineer Kennedy Jenks on this project. We are approaching the 90% design. The project timeline features bidding early 2024 with award expected in March/April. We anticipate acquiring an interim bank loan for \$6 million this fall to reimburse engineering costs and to place the \$1,700,000 order for the sludge dryer, which is due in October.

Staff is also pursuing a Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF) Construction Loan for \$10,000,000 and we should know if we are successful in acquiring that sometime this fall. Bonding in the amount of \$55 million is anticipated shortly after bidding is completed to fund the remainder of the project costs. He noted that the bank loan will be paid back with the bond proceeds. If we are successful with the PWTF loan, this will reduce the amount of bonds we will need to issue.

Mr. Leaf reported that we have hired bond counsel and a financial advisor for assistance in issuing the bonds. In addition, we will be interviewing underwriters next week, which will complete the bond team. Mr. Mortensen asked for an overview of the project and what we are trying to accomplish. Mr. Leaf briefly went over the project and goal. He indicated that this project also includes replacing two primary clarifiers. We anticipate the biosolids part of this project will pay for itself with the additional revenue from haulers; however, the primary clarifier costs will probably create a 3% or so rate increase to rate payers. He noted that our 2015 bonds will defease about the same time this new bonds start so this will help alleviate additional rate increases.

C. Generator Study

Mr. Leaf reported that the TRRWA Operating Board awarded a bid for procuring generators for the Kelso Pump Station and the Treatment Plant on December 22, 2021 to Peterson Caterpillar (Cat). The generators were scheduled to be installed this summer during the low flow season. We received the plant generator delivery this spring; however, the automated transfer switch (ATS) was damaged in transit. We had been working with Cat to get that replaced. FedEx just took responsibility this week on the shipping damages. We hope to ship it back to the supplier this week. We will have an answer if there is any internal damage in 5-6 weeks. If we do get it back during that time, we might be able to get it installed this summer. The Kelso Pump Station (KPS) generator was shipped but the wrong sized fuel tank was provided, which meant that the generator would not fit in the building, so it is being retrofitted by Cat. At this time, it is unknown whether either generator can be installed this summer. We cannot take the plant nor the KPS off line in the winter. At this point, we are no more at risk than previously; we just want better coverage as soon as possible.

D. Back Flow Prevention

Mr. Leaf reported that the newer regulations are requiring extensive backflow prevention control devices for many of the individual buildings on the plant site. TRRWA hired Windsor Engineers in early 2022 and we received their report in November. TRRWA staff, City of Longview, and Department of Health (DOH) reviewed the report. After that review, some of the recommendations did not make sense; and subsequently have been addressed. Windsor Engineers has provided a draft drawing they are proposing that staff is currently reviewing. Mr. Leaf briefly explained DOH's requirement for air gaps in each building. Once approved by all parties, construction will be phased in over the next three years.

E. South Plant Blower Energy Project

Mr. Leaf reported that TRRWA worked with the State Department of Energy Services and one of their approved consultants, Ameresco, to develop a project, which will save electricity for the South Plant. This project was approved by the TRRWA Operating Board and agreements with the State Department of Energy Services and Cowlitz PUD have been executed. A new energy efficient blower and automated controls are scheduled to be installed summer of 2023. We are having a construction coordination meeting with Ameresco on 6/26/23.

F. Chlorinator System

Mr. Leaf reported that TRRWA had internally been trying to automate the hypochlorite feed to provide for more effective compliance, while reducing chemical costs. We need a system that is on a set feed rate. After not being successful, we entered into an engineering contract in 2022 to research and acquire a meter to accomplish that. The consultant recommended two different

metering systems, which upon trialing, neither would hold calibration. Both of these systems work successfully at other plants, but not here. The meter sensor will not hold calibration and were giving false readings. One theory is that the problem may be from an odd interference with the influent. In any event, the consultant is continuing to investigate other units, and once we find a meter that will work with our system, we will purchase it and tie it into SCADA so we can automatically control hypochlorite feed rates.

G. Kelso Pump Station Drives

Mr. Leaf reported that we have been replacing these drives, as this is our oldest pump station. The last Kelso Pump Station drive is slated for replacement in 2023. That drive has been ordered and we are waiting for it to arrive.

H. Stratus Server Replacement

Mr. Leaf reported that this system is a critical component of our SCADA system, as it runs the workstations throughout the facility, as well as collecting and storing information. He indicated that we have been informed that Stratus will not be supported starting in fall of 2023, so we need to replace it before then. The new Stratus is currently on-site and we are working with several consultants to get it installed and programmed. We anticipate having this work completed in the next couple of months.

I. PFAs Evaluation

Mr. Leaf reported that PFAS in biosolids is an emerging concern and so he recommended to the Board that we conduct a study so we are aware of potential PFAS issues. The TRRWA Operating Board awarded an Engineering Services Agreement to Windward Environmental to study PFAS for \$135,000. The study points are the plant influent, dewatered biosolids, and discharges from both landfills. The study began in 2022 and will conclude this year, so we would have some reassurance before bidding the Solids Handling Improvements Project in 2024. Currently, we have two more sampling events left to conduct. The study thus far shows relatively low levels of PFAS in our biosolids, with many non-detects and no individual data points in the suite of PFAS chemicals as high as 15 parts per billion. A point to note is if EPA or the Washington Department of Ecology (ECY) ever requires us to completely eliminate PFAs, we can add a thermal process to the dryer system to accomplish that. After all the sampling has been completed, we will get a report from our consultant on the overall findings. He noted that the two landfills are the highest sources of PFAs. He anticipates that once ECY puts rules in place, we should still be in good shape.

J. Headworks Loading & Pretreatment Limit Study

Mr. Leaf reported that Foster Farms (FF) asked TRRWA to recommend to the Department of Ecology (ECY) that FF be assigned a BOD value in excess of their current 350 ppm limit. They would like a 450 ppm benchmark versus a limit. We met with FF on 4/26/22 to hear their reasoning behind this request. He expressed his concern that this would affect the plant, particularly in the summer months, when influent flows are low and FF is as high as 20% of that flow. Since FF has a discharge permit with the ECY, the decision to raise limits for FF rests with ECY, not TRRWA. When we met with FF and the ECY in a joint meeting, ECY said they would not allow TRRWA to raise our BOD limits unless we performed a headworks study and pretreatment limit evaluation. The TRRWA Operating Board agreed to fund that study and Gibbs and Olson was selected to do that study. FF was involved in developing the scope for the study. A Special Operating Board meeting was held yesterday with FF to discuss the study. Mr. Leaf will be following up with ECY about the concerns raised by FF in that meeting. The project kick-off meeting for the headworks loading pretreatment limits study will be set in the next couple of weeks. He noted that the study will take about a year. TRRWA will then send the results to ECY to approve, so we can update our Pretreatment Policy.

5. **BUDGET**

A. **FINANCIAL REPORT**

Included in the packets is the financial report through May for the Board's review. Mr. Leaf reported that we are on track to meet budget for 2023. He indicated that we are at 43% of budget, but expenses will likely decrease over summer months.

B. **Discuss 2024 Budget Parameters**

Mr. Leaf reported that his goal has always been to produce a budget that provides adequate resources to protect public health and preserve the environment, while keeping TRRWA rates as low as prudently possible. He would like to bring the 2023 budget in under what was budgeted, if possible, taking into account inflation being relatively stable and counting on managers and staff to continue their exemplary work in figuring out more cost effective ways to operate. He also commended staff on maximizing outside revenue through the hauled waste system and still achieving high performance.

Mr. Leaf stated that we are on-track to meet budget; regardless of an unexpected power outage in the end of 2022 that cost \$97,000 and ended up getting paid in January 2023; and awarding the \$190,000 headworks study. He indicated that we have averaged 1% increase each year; except last year it was 3% increase. At this time, he expects 2024 will have a 3% increase depending on the ultimate costs for bonding on the solids improvement project. Mr. Leaf noted that we had a 20% rate decrease several years ago because of one of the bonds were defeased. He stated that he feels that our Public Works Trust Fund application is pretty strong; if we get it then we will lower our bond sale by that amount. In addition, we will be seeking other grants. General discussion was held on the budget process and it was the consensus of the Board that the budget should reflect higher rate increases rather than lower rate increases to ensure the maintenance and operation of the of the facility is covered.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS – NONE**

7. **ADJOURNMENT/CONTINUATION**


Being no further business to come before the Board of Directors of the Three Rivers Regional Wastewater Authority, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 a.m.

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL WASTEWATER AUTHORITY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Approved: December 20, 2023



Monte Roden, Vice Chairman



Debbie Stanley, Clerk of the Board