

**BERKS COUNTY SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
May 21, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Board of the Berks County Solid Waste Authority (the “Authority”) was called to order at 3:00 p.m. on May 21, 2024, in the First Floor Meeting Room at the Berks County Agricultural Center, 1238 County Welfare Road, Leesport, Pa. 19533. The following members were present:

Mr. Charles Mowbray
Mr. Brian Clements
Mr. Ron Rutkowski
Mr. Don Moll
Ms. Jane Witheridge
Charles Jones, PE
Michael Gombar, Jr., Esquire – Attended by phone

Absent were Mr. Tony Sacco and Mr. Tony Rymar,

Also present:

Ms. Jane Meeks, Executive Director of the Berks County Solid Waste Authority
Soc Georgeadis, Esquire, Georgeadis Law
Mr. Adrian Jadak, Citizen.

The Chairman declared a quorum was present and called the meeting to order.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public chose to speak.

Presentation of 2023 Audit:

The Chairman introduced Mr. Michael Martinsky and Mr. Timothy Kraft of Reinsel Kuntz Leshner (“RKL”), the Authority’s independent auditors. Mr. Mowbray indicated that the Finance Committee met with Mr. Martinsky and Mr. Kraft of RKL to review our 2023 Audit prior to today’s meeting. The Board had previously received an electronic copy of the audit report (the “Report”) for their review. Mr. Martinsky and Mr. Kraft reviewed the highlights with the Board of the financial statements presented in the Report. Mr. Martinsky indicated that there were no problems encountered during the Audit and the only control deficiencies reported were the same as prior years, which are related to the size of our staff and the lack of segregation of duties.

Mr. Martinsky reported his firm issued a clean unqualified opinion with respect to the Report and reported that in 2023 all funds of the Authority were covered under FDIC insurance. He reviewed the balance sheet, the income statement and the statement of cash flow sections of the Report. Mr. Kraft then explained the Management Discussion and Analysis section of the Report.

Upon a motion by Mr. Moll, seconded by Mr. Jones, the Board unanimously accepted the audit report, as presented.

MINUTES

Upon a motion by Mr. Jones, seconded by Ms. Witheridge, the minutes of the regular meeting of March 19, 2024, were unanimously approved.

FINANCE

Treasurer's Report:

Ms. Meeks distributed the Treasurer's Report and invoices for payment dated May 21, 2024 and reviewed them with the Board. No members of the Board had any questions or comments on the Report. Ms. Meeks indicated that it is her intention to withdraw our \$50,000 Certificate of Deposit on its maturity date, May 23, 2024, to be used for operating costs, as previously discussed.

Upon a motion by Mr. Clements, seconded by Mr. Rutkowski, the Board approved the Treasurer's Report, as submitted.

SOLICITOR'S REPORT

No report

Executive Session – Personnel:

At 3:20 PM, the Chairman recommended that the Board enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

At 3:40 PM, the meeting reconvened.

Upon a motion by Mr. Clements, seconded by Mr. Rutkowski, the Board unanimously agreed to increase the salary of their Executive Director, by 5%, retroactive to April 2, 2024 and provide a \$10,000 Bonus. Mr. Mowbray stated that the Board is very pleased with the performance of their Executive Director and the many projects that have been undertaken, this past year, including the completion of the ten-year Solid Waste Management Plan Revision.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Update on spring collection events:

Ms. Meeks indicated that pre-registration for our spring collection events, held at Governor Mifflin Intermediate School allowed for a nice flow of traffic, while allowing plenty of room to ensure a smooth and safe collection event. Ms. Meeks indicated that 1,100 residents attended our household hazardous waste collection disposing of 68,547 pounds of hazardous waste. Ms. Meeks indicated that

the hazardous waste collection costs came in under budget, largely due to a continuous decrease in the amount of latex paint received.

In addition, 1,300 residents attended our shredding event disposing of 67,739 pounds of confidential documents, an increase of 7,000 pounds from the spring of 2023. Ms. Meeks indicated that the Conrad Weiser Football team once again participated in the event, which is crucial and allowed for a smooth and successful event.

b. Act 190 – Reimbursement for HHW and Electronic Recycling

Ms. Meeks indicated that the Act 190 grant, which covers the hazardous waste collection events has a maximum funding of \$100,000 per fiscal year, per County and can also be used to reimburse costs of registered electronic recycling programs, such as ours. Ms. Meeks reported that she will draw down the balance of \$57,736.23 on our spring hazardous waste and electronic recycling expenses. Ms. Meeks indicated that \$30,723 of this grant will reimburse hazardous waste expenses and \$27,013.23 for prior electronic recycling expenses, included salaries.

c. 901 Planning Grant – Education and Solid Waste Planning

Ms. Meeks reviewed the DEP 901 Planning Grant disbursement requests which covers 80% of our educational costs for our hazardous waste and electronic collection programs and the development of our Solid Waste Plan revision. She indicated that the disbursement request in the amount of \$865 for our education costs, will close out our 2022-2023 grant. She indicated that a new grant application will be submitted in the amount of \$40,839 covering our 2024-2025 education costs. These grants are only available to Counties, so she will request approval of this grant application by the County Commissioners and file on their behalf, as has been done in the past. She also indicated that she will submit the disbursement grant for eligible expenses, related to the development of our Solid Waste Plan Revision in the amount of \$ 26,556.96, leaving a balance of \$ 4,162.04, to be spent on final expenses, related to the Plan revision.

d. Update on new hire – Waving probation period for health insurance

Ms. Meeks indicated that Brian Piekarski was hired full-time on May 1, 2024, as agreed to by the Board by e-mail communications. Ms. Meeks was interested in waving his 90-day probationary period as it relates to his health care, however, our insurance carrier also required the 90-day waiting period. Ms. Meeks suggested that the Authority pay 75% of his current health care expenses, which would be \$167.29 per month, which is considerably less than the Authority's insurance, for the months of June and July, at which point he would be eligible for the Authority's health insurance.

Upon a motion by Mr. Moll, seconded by Ms. Witheridge, the Board unanimously approved reimbursing Mr. Piekarski \$167.29 per month, for the months of June and July and then adding him to the Authority's healthcare and continuing to cover 75% of those costs, as outlined in the Authority's Personnel Code.

e. 2025 County Budget

Ms. Meeks briefly reviewed a draft of the Authority's 2025 proposed Budget, to determine the amount of the allocation the Authority will request from the County for 2025. Ms. Meeks indicated that the Finance Committee met prior to today's meeting to review this information and the Committee recommended that the 2025 County Budget request include a \$290,000 allocation to the Authority, for operating the County recycling programs, which is the same as 2024. Ms. Meeks indicated that the County budget will also list the alarm system at the recycling center, all electric and indirect costs and that she will work with the County Budget office to enter those numbers into the County system. Ms. Meeks indicated that the County budget will also include revenues for host fees, recycling performance grants and \$100,000 from litigation.

Upon a motion by Mr. Rutkowski, seconded by Mr. Clements the Board unanimously approve the 2025 County Budget request.

f. Annual Report – 2023 Berks County Solid Waste Authority

A copy of the draft 2023 Annual Report of the Authority was previously sent to all Board members in electronic format. Ms. Meeks reported that she had previously reviewed this document with our Chairman and Solicitor and welcomes and feedback from the Board. Ms. Meeks indicated that she has received a few comments prior to today's meeting and those changes are reflected in the new document. The Board approved the document and requested that their Executive Director post this document on our website and to distribute it to the County Commissioners and our municipalities.

Old Business

a. Solid Waste Management Plan revision

Ms. Meeks indicated that the Authority only received one municipal comment on the Solid Waste Plan revision, during the 30-day municipal comment period, which included a contact name change. She indicated that the draft Plan was also sent to PADEP during the municipal comment period and that on May 15, 2024, additional comments were received from PADEP, which delayed action by the County Commissioners, which was originally scheduled for May 16, 2024. She indicated that those comments have been addressed and that the Plan will be submitted to the Commissioners this Thursday, May 23rd, for consideration of their approval, at which point the Plan will be sent to PADEP for final approval.

b. Battery recycling program with Berks County Department of Emergency Services (DES)

Ms. Meeks indicated, as previously discussed at our March Board meeting, she has met with Berks County DES to further define their program and the responsibilities of the Authority. Ms. Meeks indicated that she and our Solicitor have review the draft directive of the Berks County DES, as it relates to the small Lithium-Ion batteries, only. She indicated that this scope of work has changed significantly since our March meeting and that the directive only includes small size/capacity batteries, which we are already handling as part of our electronic recycling program. The directive lays out the responsibility of

fire company and/or emergency management personnel in collecting, packaging, transportation and appointments for disposal.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ms. Meeks reported that she has signed up to participate in this years National Night Out that will be held at the Berks County Fairgrounds on August 6, 2024. She indicated that she believes that the new location, in close proximity to our recycling center and the site of our fall hazardous waste and paper shredding events, will benefit the Authority's programs. She indicated that she plans to distribute magnets and coloring books at the event.

Ms. Meeks also reported that she assisted with submission of twelve (12) 902 grant application from Berks County municipalities on or before the May 10th deadline, totaling \$1.87 million dollars, which also included pre-application meetings with the PADEP.

Ms. Meeks indicated that the other items outlined in her report have been discussed throughout today's meeting and offered to answer any questions that members may have, regarding her report.

Next Meeting Date

Mr. Mowbray indicated that the next Authority meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 16, 2024 at 3:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4:40 pm., upon a motion by Mr. Jones, seconded by Mr. Rutkowski, the Board unanimously resolved to adjourn.