

DRAFT

NORTH YORK BOROUGH HEARING/SPECIAL MEETING FOR YARSA (York Area Regional Sewer Authority)

September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **CALL TO ORDER**

President Richard Shank called to order the Hearing/Special Meeting for YARSA (York Area Regional Sewer Authority) of the North York Borough Council at 7:00 pm on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

Council attendees- Richard Shank, Deb Smith, Jamie Moore, Vivian Amspacher, Gary Braham, Seth Hightman

Not Present – Bill Jackson

Steve Hovis, Attorney with Stock and Leader and Solicitor for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Group involving Manchester Township, North York Borough, Spring Garden Township, West Manchester Township, and York Township.

Discussion on Ordinance that needs passed to send Articles of Incorporation to the state for formation of the York Area Regional Sewer Authority. (YARSA) The authority formation came about due to York City selling their Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Collections department.

Currently the Wastewater Treatment Plant is utilized by 7 municipalities Manchester Township, North York Borough, Spring Garden Township, West Manchester Township, York Township, West York Borough who was bought out by York Water, and Springettsbury Township (Springettsbury Township only uses during high flow)

An RFP was put out by the City of York, there are three qualified bidders regulated by the PUC that have submitted bids for the purchase of the treatment plant and the collections department.

Manchester Township, North York Borough, Spring Garden Township, West Manchester Township, and York Township would like to form YARSA and purchase, own, and operate the treatment plant to keep the rates down for the residents of the municipalities. If the PUC approved companies win the bid this could mean larger rate increases over the years. If the Authority is formed and purchases it will oversee rates and will keep them at a lower rate for residents. There may be a slight increase but would not be as large as if the PUC approved companies purchase.

The WWTP Group was formed to decide if this purchase as an authority was even possible. Each municipality will have a board member on the YARSA (must be a resident of the municipality that its representing)

Steps to form the authority: 1<sup>st</sup> hold the public meeting (the other municipalities have also scheduled their public meetings). 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft Articles of Incorporation and submit to the state for approval. Board members need to be assigned. Ordinance needs to be passed with the municipalities. (Ordinance to be passed at tonight's meeting once approved by council).

Another reason formation of the Authority is needed is to show the City of York that this is a serious inquiry to purchase the treatment plant.

Seth Hightman inquired why specifically the City of York wants to sell their treatment plant and collections department. Steve Hovis explained that the city is in major debt and selling this asset will remove them out of debt for the upcoming budget.

Vivian Amspacher questioned if there are any other types of Regional Authorities who did a purchase as the Group would like to. Steve Hovis stated there are none.

Vivian Amspacher with the Authorities purchase is this the cheapest way to go. Steve Hovis stated that yes, the municipalities will be more frugal with raising rates than a PUC approved company due to the PUC deciding the rates.

Vivian Amspacher questions if the ultimate decision making will be done by the Authority? Steve Hovis responded with yes, if there are issues or questions from council members or residents it would be taken by the board member and presented to the Authority.

Gary Braham asked that if purchased does that mean that the municipalities are locked into the purchase. Concern of if another municipality would back out the remaining municipalities would be responsible for covering the cost of debt for the municipality that backed out. Steve Hovis stated that each rate will be established regardless based on rates for own municipality. Service agreements will be created for each municipality involved.

Vivian Amspacher questioned about if the City does not want to be apart of the Authority once plant is sold and they do not want to pay the rates established for them. Steve Hovis said they are obligated. Sewer must be used so there is an obligation just as all the other municipalities have done over the years.

The working group originally asked for \$50,000.00 of the transportation fund money be used to help with fees incurred during the working groups formation of the authority. It was then determined that they only needed \$30,000.00 to start, those funds are almost all exhausted. Steve Hovis explained that if the entire project/formation is shut down and decided to not go along any further with the purchase, all funds involved will be given back to the municipality. All money that is used to the currently for WWTP funds comes out of the Transportation Fund already paid to the City of York. So, there is no cost incurred out of the general sewer fund for municipalities.

Sandra Hinkle inquired about bill rates; her bill is lower than Spring Garden residents. Will the Borough have to match the other participating municipality rates? Steve Hovis stated no it is based off usage and development. There may be some increases to each sewer rates but not as high as if the PUC establishes them. Richard Shank also stated that the other municipalities have more growth than North York will land that is available to be developed so that should keep our rates down.

Sandy Hinkle inquired about the liaisons for the municipalities. It must be a resident of the specified municipality that they are representing, does not have to be a council member but should be someone who is going to be able to make meetings, and have a understanding of what is going on. They should be able to make decisions easily as they will be responsible along with other board members to approve items needing address with the treatment plant purchase and operations.

Pump station and pipes through the borrow will remain the responsibility of the municipalities.

Spring Garden, Manchester and West Manchester Townships have already approved the ordinance at their public meetings Monday 9/14. York Township has their meeting on 9/16.

Public hearing adjourned motioned by Vivian Amspacher and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jamie Moore, all approved.

SPECIAL MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 7:40PM FOR APPROVAL OF ORDINANCE AND ADDITIONAL FUNDS REQUESTED TO CONTINUE THE WWTP GROUP

Ordinance 2020-05 – An ordinance expressing the Borough of North York’s desire to participate in the formation of a joint authority pursuant to the Pennsylvania Municipality Authorities Act and to authorize the preparation and filing of

Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of Commonwealth. Jamie Moore motioned to approve, Gary Braham 2<sup>nd</sup> motion, all approved.

Additional costs from the Transportation fund to the WWTP Group Fund in the amount of \$3,420.59. Seth Hightman motioned to approve transfer of funds, Gary Braham 2<sup>nd</sup> motion, all approved.

Jamie Moore motioned to adjourn meeting, Gary Braham 2<sup>nd</sup>, all approved.