

**REGULAR MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR THE
METRO EAST SANITARY DISTRICT
ST. CLAIR AND MADISON COUNTIES, ILLINOIS
HELD ON TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2024, AT 9:00 A.M.
LOCATED AT: 1800 EDISON AVENUE, GRANITE CITY, IL 62040**

9:00 A.M.- President Oney called the meeting to order, and the Clerk recorded the attendance.

The following were in attendance:

Present: Commissioners, Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and President Oney

Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Others attending the meeting were:

Executive Director Mike Nordstrom, Director of Operations Justin Roehr, Attorney Tom Schooley, Treasurer Kim King, Engineer Joe Juneau, Jeremy Dressel, and Engineer Tony Vercellino

PUBLIC COMMENT None.

PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE None.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Nordstrom reported the following:

Over the last month crews have transitioned into winter maintenance. This includes cleaning and painting all the pump stations. All the gate structures have been painted, and tubing has been replaced. Roads and levees are being graded throughout both counties. Some of the larger projects include continuing to desilt Lake Drive in East St Louis and replacing a large pipe near Nichols Net & Twine off Highway 111. Additionally, a large pipe was replaced at Westerheide off Route 15 in St. Clair County. All the equipment that was approved has been ordered, and some of the pieces have already been received.

REPORT OF ENGINEER

Joe Juneau reported the following:

In addition to Charlie's report that is in the packet, Mr. Juneau advised that the City of Granite City has completed the Twin 48 & Twin 60 Project. Juneau will continue to work with the board on the ongoing maintenance of that system.

- President Oney asked what the change order amount was.
 - o Mr. Juneau responded the change order was \$242,128.37 leaving the total project cost at \$1,753,250.00. The original awarded amount was \$2 million, so the project came in under budget.
 - President Oney thanked the City of Granite City for using their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to address this issue, which has been ongoing for many years. He requested that Mr. Nordstrom send a letter to the City of Granite City. Mr. Oney also requested Mr. Juneau update the capital improvement project list to ensure the new board members are fully informed.
 - Lastly, Mr. Juneau added that the bids for the electrical improvements at North Pump Station are due January 16, 2025.

Additional Engineer Report

Mr. Jeremy Dressel stated that he and Mr. Tony Vercellino have completed a Phase 1 report of the Harding Ditch hydraulic model. Mr. Dressell deferred the discussion to Mr. Vercellino.

Mr. Vercellino reported they worked with the USACE using a computer program called HEC-RAS to do a full hydraulic analysis of the water shed feeding Harding Ditch. The study focused primarily on the areas of St. Clair where Schoenberger Creek meets with Harding Ditch and flows southward. Based on the findings, it was determined that raising levee elevation at the notch could be safely accomplished. However, further analysis is required to ensure that elevating the levee notch would not lead to flooding of State Street. Additional contributing factors restricting water flow were also examined. One factor being the abandoned bridge over Lake Drive. The cross section of the channel appears to be filled in, which restricts water flow. While the computer model suggests that the cross section would allow water to pass between bridge piers and the outside of the bridge piers, an onsite inspection revealed that the cross section is largely filled in. The model indicates that the channel should have a 60-foot-wide cross section for water to pass through, but realistically there is only about 20 feet between those bridge piers. The hydraulic analysis demonstrated that removing these obstructions would not create significant water surface differences, however enough of those restrictions along the length of the channel will cause a backwater effect, leading water levels to rise.

One of the things to keep in mind going through this study is that they are not trying to solve the entire Harding Ditch, they are focusing primarily on the section impacting this neighborhood. At this point, they are proposing raising the notch elevation and removing some channel restrictions. A downstream analysis is also necessary, as there is a good stretch of non-residential land until reaching the State Park. Aerial imagery suggests a natural overflow channel from Harding Ditch into the lake at State Park. Further investigation is planned to determine if this channel could serve as a relief point if the notch is raised. Determining if the water would naturally flow into the lake without creating additional problems somewhere else. Phase 2 will explore how to effectively raise the notch and address channel restrictions.

- Commissioner Brinza asked if the lake at State Park would be able to take on the water.
 - o Mr. Vercellino responded this remains uncertain and would depend on further assessments, including working with IDNR or entering into a drainage agreement. If that spot is chosen for an overflow, they need to ensure it doesn't cause any issues elsewhere. For the water to reach any residence, it would have to be high enough to cross Lake Drive. If a path can be dredged to create a better channel, or utilizing the natural path of the stream, that could work, especially where we are going to raise the elevation of the notch to.
 - Mr. Nordstrom asked if they identified any flow restrictions at the State Street bridge by the pump station.

Mr. Vercellino answered they did not look at it, but if State Street has a similar profile in terms of being low lying underpass that hasn't been maintained, he assumes it will have the same issue. This will be addressed in Phase 2. Identifying any definite channel restrictions and locating any other channel sections where the stream has meandered instead of providing a straight path, which slows the flow.

- President Oney asked whether the abandoned bridge could be demolished and removed.
 - o Mr. Vercellino responded while this option had been considered, its cost feasibility made it uncertain whether it is necessary. Using the model, between cleaning and removing the bridge, the difference was almost negligible. It might be just as simple as doing some earth work to move the dirt from around the bridge piers.
 - Mr. Nordstrom inquired whether any land acquisitions would be required.
 - Mr. Vercellino replied he didn't believe land acquisition would be necessary. He explained that the IDOT parcel across from the site is unlikely to be effective due to its size and amount of volume needed to divert. Instead, he thinks the easier route would be to use the lake and State Park, which provides a much larger area. Diverting into the lake could raise the water surface and the lake a few inches verses, whereas creating a holding pond on the IDOT parcel might raise the water level by over a foot.
 - o President Oney asked if they had investigated the cost of upgrading the pump station, noting the station is not in good shape. He inquired whether putting money into upgrading the station, if East St Louis doesn't do it, and raising the notch could relieve pressure.
 - Mr. Nordstrom answered the City of East St Louis has acquired a grant to repair that pump station.

MINUTES

The Regular Minutes for November 19th, 2024 were presented for approval:

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Brinza to dispense with the reading of the minutes, approve them as submitted and place them on file.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

CLAIMS AND SPECIFIC CLAIMS

The General Fund and Specific Claims were submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Darwin to approve the General Fund and Specific Claims as submitted and order them paid.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

The Lansdowne Claims and Specific Claims were submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Dixon: seconded by Commissioner Darwin to approve the Lansdowne and Specific Claims as submitted and order them paid.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The General Fund Financial Reports for the month of November 2024 were submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Brinza to approve the General Fund Financial Report as submitted and place on file for audit.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

The Special Funds Financial Reports for the month of November 2024 were submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Dixon to approve the Special Funds Financial Report as submitted and place on file for audit.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

The Lansdowne Financial Reports for the month of November 2024 were submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Brinza to approve the Lansdowne Financial Report as submitted and place on file for audit.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

PAYROLL

The Payroll for the period of November 10th, 2024, through November 23rd, 2024, was submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Darwin to approve the Payroll as submitted.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

The Payroll for the period of November 24th, 2024, through December 7th, 2024, was submitted for approval:

Motion Commissioner Dixon: seconded by Commissioner Darwin to approve the Payroll as submitted.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

LANSDOWNE ADJUSTMENT REPORT

The Lansdowne Adjustment Reports were presented for approval:

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Brinza to approve the Lansdowne Adjustment Reports as submitted.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

REPORT OF ATTORNEY

Attorney Schooley provided an update on the ongoing litigations:

The Jake Properties lawsuit against Washington Park and MESD claims that two properties were flooded because of clogged lines in Washington Park and the inadequacy of MESD. Attorney Schooley stated the plaintiff's attorney acknowledged that no recovery would likely come from Washington Park, prompting the filed suit against MESD as well. The Lansdowne infrastructure, which was part of the sale to Illinois American Water, is no longer owned by MESD. As a result, the plaintiffs have agreed to dismiss MESD from the case.

The 111 Salvage vs. MESD case stems from a fire in August 2023. The plaintiffs allege burning conducted by MESD caused fire to spread onto their property. Our attorney has made strong arguments in defense. A motion to dismiss is scheduled for Thursday.

In the Randy Presswood vs. MESD case, a trial date is scheduled for December 2025. The case is in its early stages of discovery, with attorneys from MESD, Mr. Presswood, and county individuals preparing to dispute every detail. This case is expected to be prolonged.

The Dunham vs. MESD case remains pending, with minimal activity to date. A trial date has been scheduled for the fall of 2025.

The Adler vs. MESD case claims that the previous board breached Mr. Adler's employment contract by terminating him without cause on December 31, 2019. Depositions have been completed, and both parties have filed motions for summary judgement. Judge Smith ruled in favor of Mr. Adler, stating that on December 31, 2019 the board terminated without cause and as such there is a breach of contract. In doing this, the Judge has taken away the right to have the issue of liability heard before a jury, leaving only the matter of damages. As a result, Mr. Adler's attorney has submitted a settlement calculating his damages at \$287,000 and made a demand of \$275,000 to settle the case. Attorney Ysursa, representing MESD through the insurance company, plans to file a motion to reconsider. This trial is scheduled for the first week of January 2025.

- President Oney stated for the record that the board responsible for this action was the previous board, prior to his tenure. Mr. Oney stated, "This was actions, in my opinion, that were just unbelievable. It could cost the District over \$275,000 by that action that was done on December 31, 2019."

OLD BUSINESS None.

NEW BUSINESS

Board discussion and/or approval to adopt Ordinance 2024-0-022 consistent with Ordinance 2021-0-011 establishing uniform rates for pipelines to Ameren Illinois relating to Project 11 and granting rights to use land, levees, and easements of the Metro East Sanitary District.

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Darwin adopting Ordinance 2024-0-022 consistent with Ordinance 2021-0-011 establishing uniform rates for pipelines to Ameren Illinois relating to Project 11 and granting rights to use land, levees, and easements of the Metro East Sanitary District

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion and/or approval to adopt Ordinance 2024-0-023 establishing the salary of the Director of Operations for the Metro East Sanitary District.

- President Oney stated the purpose of this is rearranging the current staffing structure. As part of this restructuring, the position of Pump Operator Superintendent, currently held by Mr. Roehr, is being eliminated. Moving forward, all working foremen and Superintendent Smith will report directly to Mr. Roehr as the Director of Operations, who will in turn, report to the Executive Director. The intention is to eliminate supervisors because it's not necessary. It is his opinion that when Mr. Smith retires, his position as Madison County Superintendent will not be replaced.
 - o Commissioner Brinza commented, "With the sale of Lansdowne, I think it's good that we are taking a look and trimming, especially management where we can, so compliments to that being done."
 - President Oney also added with the sale of Lansdowne staff was reduced by three people.

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Dixon adopting Ordinance 2024-0-023 establishing the salary of the Director of Operations for the Metro East Sanitary District.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion and/or approval to adopt Ordinance 2024-0-024 establishing the salary of the Executive Director of the Metro East Sanitary District.

- President Oney expressed his philosophy is the supervisors should make more than their staff. With the added responsibility Mr. Roehr is taking on as the Director of Operations, he will be receiving a salary increase, as will the Executive Director.

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Brinza adopting Ordinance 2024-0-024 establishing the salary of the Executive Director of the Metro East Sanitary District.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion and/or approval to adopt Ordinance 2024-0-025 granting Bunge permission, and authority to construct, operate and maintain a grain loading system across the levee of the Metro East Sanitary District including a 125-foot exit ramp on levee property.

- Attorney Schooley stated Bunge has one existing conveyor belt there and is asking for a second conveyor system adjacent to the first one.

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Darwin adopting Ordinance 2024-0-025 granting Bunge permission, and authority to construct, operate and maintain a grain loading system across the levee of the Metro East Sanitary District including a 125-foot exit ramp on levee property

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion and/or approval to purchase (2) two chute sandbaggers.

- Mr. Roehr reported the chute sandbagger can do anywhere between 200-600 sandbags an hour, whereas the current process is done by hand. The district is required to maintain a certain number of sandbags on hand per USACE.

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Dixon approving the purchase of (2) chute sandbaggers

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion and/or renewal of health insurance coverage for specific non-union employees.

- President Oney stated this is extending the current BlueCross BlueShield coverage. It is a 10% increase in premium.
 - o Commissioner Brinza stated he did see other bids in the packet.
 - President Oney stated United Healthcare did submit a bid; however, once realizing MESD was a government entity, they informed us that they no longer cover government entities in the state of Illinois. The other bid, Aetna was unrated, meaning they submitted a bid without underwriting.

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Dixon approving the renewal of health insurance coverage for specific non-union employees.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Abstain: Commissioner Brinza
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion and/or approval of HSA contributions for specific non-union employees.

- Commissioner Darwin asked what HSA is.
 - o President Oney explained that when the board members were removed from Teamsters insurance plan, the non-union employees were also removed. As part of this change, the District transitioned to a high deductible plan and makes contributions to a Health Savings Account for the non-union employees to help cover the deductible.

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Darwin approving HSA contributions for specific non-union employees.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board review and/or approval of board meeting dates for the year 2025.

Motion Commissioner Brinza: seconded by Commissioner Darwin approving board meeting dates for the year 2025.

Upon roll call, the motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Board discussion/acceptance of Metro East Sanitary District board resignation letter.

- President Oney informed the board January 2025 he will be stepping down from the MESD Board.

Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Dixon accepting the resignation letter.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

Commissioner Brinza announced this is his last meeting. He stated, "It has been an honor for the last 7 years working on the Metro East Sanitary District Board. The Madison County Board has appointed Mr. Eric Foster. I believe Mr. Foster will work well with MESD."

There being no further business placed before the Board, Motion Commissioner Darwin: seconded by Commissioner Brinza to adjourn.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners Darwin, Brinza, Dixon, and Oney
Nays: None
Absent: Commissioner Jackson

So, adjourned at 9:24 A.M.


Clerk