

Minutes Approved

7-26-10

Wastewater Advisory Board

Meeting: June 28, 2010

Location: Wastewater Plant Conference Room

Members:	Chairman John Troy	Present
	Vice Chair William Starr	Absent
	Commissioner Sally Horak	Present
	Commissioner Todd Morris	Present
	Commissioner Paul Lorenzo	Present
	Village of McGraw Trustee	Absent
	Village of Homer Trustee	Absent
	Town of Cortlandville Trustee	Absent
	Harvey Davis, Plant Manager	Present
	Tom McCall, Operator II	Present
	Wayne Swindon, Maintenance Mech.	Present

Call the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Minutes for May 24, 2010 for approval. **Motion** to approve the minutes for May 24, 2010 by Paul Lorenzo. Seconded by Todd Morris. **UNANIMOUS**

Plant Managers Report: Harvey Davis presents the Plant Managers Report: We had the opportunity to hire two employees. One of those new hires, Jeff Stone, started but decided shortly after that this was not the place for him and he resigned so we filled that position with Philip Opera. Mr. Stone has subsequently asked for his position back and I explained to him that we are asking for two more hires but those positions have already been promised to other people. Philip Opera's grandmother was on the City Council in the 70's when the original plant was upgraded.

Operations crew has been working to get to the summer mode. We are dewatering a lot of sludge. One of the problems in the summer is that we must get rid of winter solids inventory, which takes a lot of dewatering. We have the tanks offline. The primary clarifiers have been cleaned once but we need to clean them again. The belt dewatering press will be installed in November. We are currently trying to reduce our solids inventory so that we can use that time to build and we need to keep it down because we will be using a portable belt press outside daily for three weeks. They are coming early to install a garage door because they have to remove a wall to install the belt press. When we installed the current press, we took a wall down, this time we are going to

install a door. We lost blower #3, the only one to not have been rebuilt. Cost to repair will be \$4,188 by North East Millwrights, they took it out and transported it for us. Not sure what the freight will be yet but the blower should be returned to us next week.

One of the problems we have this time of year, due to the I & I abatement study, is that we have to feed the activated sludge raw sewage to keep the bugs active. We have to rebuild the bugs back up and that takes about 30 days. We should be ready for fall soon.

Motion to accept the Plant Managers Report by Sally Horak. Seconded by Todd Morris.
UNANIMOUS

Approval of Bills: Discussion regarding the changes on the submitted abstract by the Finance Department. We have submitted explanations to the Finance Department for each rejected invoice and to date they have all been paid. Bills have been accepted.

Motion to accept bills by Paul Lorenzo. Seconded by Sally Horak. **UNANIMOUS**

Financial Statements: Financial statements have been accepted.

Motion to accept financial statements by Sally Horak. Seconded by Todd Morris.
UNANIMOUS

New Business:

Wayne Swindon to address the Board:

I am coming down to the end, I have eight days to go. I wanted to give you a chuckle right off the bat. This is a picture of me that a college professor took on one of my first tours. I didn't know didly squat about this plant and this meant a lot to me. This is the original job posting that I saw in the court house, it is a strange turn of events, the civil service system looks at the job the same way after 40 years, and it's not true. There was a lot more to the job. I took it on. Some of the treasures that I have are letters from kids that you take on tours, hundreds of them like, fan mail. You don't get a lot of applause in this job and you have to find something to keep you going and that is what helped me make it. The first shift I worked here was a rotation shift, an absolute family killer. A swing shift-two weeks, two weeks, two weeks, 7-3, 3-11 and 11-7. Staff of 7, same size staff we have now after 40 years, very demanding, but I figured whatever they could dish out I could take it because I knew this was a benefits job at the time and I am about to pick the apple from the tree right now, I worked for it. I owe my mom and dad a tremendous amount of thanks for my work ethic. I am the oldest of 11 kids. So I know about hard work, I tried to give this job my all, 100%. I gave the City a lot and they have given me a lot. Tell you how I got hired here, 756-6822. I would call every Monday morning at 8:30 and bug the heck out of Chief Operator Roy Summerson. I didn't realize this but at 8:30 the guys were just sitting down for their coffee break. It was irritating but he never told me that. I called 6 or 7 months straight on Monday's. I finally got a letter

telling me to report for an interview. He told me he hired me because he got sick of me calling every Monday morning at 8:30. We hit it off. He taught me a lot and I kinda worked my way up the ranks and the staff expanded from 7 to 11 to 16 to 23 at the peak and then fell back down. I met this fellow to my left (Harvey Davis) and my life immediately changed for the better. I have learned a lot from this man and here I am today. We had an 8 week training situation when I first came here, believe me you can't do that anymore in 8 weeks, it takes years for someone to bring people up to a level that someone can be trusted at this facility by themselves. A lot of people don't understand that. They figure we are here reading the gauges and looking meters but there is a lot more to this job than that. I was scared to death the first time I worked here alone, my first 11 to 7 in the old...what we call the pump house. Here I am 11 by myself in this strange old plant. Its still there its just been reworked a couple of times. I remember getting through that shift and it was good to see my relief man coming at 7 in the morning. I have worked with people that couldn't do things and that wouldn't do things and I always figured I could get around that. And the politics of this job can be disastrous or wonderful. I think we are in the mode right now where people have something personal against this department, not everybody but a few. And that bothers me, it really does. I hope that the staff that remains here can undo that. I think we are probably making progress in that regard but I will stand up for every single man that has ever worked here and woman. I have worked with 125 different people here in 40 years, I have seen some last 10 minutes and I have seed some last 20, 25, 30 years. And everyone has a different level of commitment and dedication and I have seen the best here, I really have. And it's good to be around people like that. Maybe you are wondering what I am going to do with my life? I'm hoping that's a question you had. I would like to assist the operation here if I could. You are facing some big hurdles here in the next couple of years. We will be looking at a new Chief Operator, new upgrade, new staff, all kinds of challenges-a tighter permit. And I have been careful along the way to be a good observer around here, I know where the bodies are buried. That is what I was talking about today to Don Davis, that could benefit the City and also benefit me at the same time. My mother in law has been a patient of the Cortland Care Center for about a year and three months and there is something calling me there. I am going to do more volunteer work because I really get a lot out of it. There is no money but it's a good feeling when you leave. My son Matthew owns a couple of houses in Cortland, he is a City tax payer. He owns six apartments that need everything done to them, plumbing, heating, electrical, sheetrock and I am going to be the guy. I have an old Chevelle I want to restore, its in a barn here in town. I want to spend more time with my wife and boy she has a list for me. I want to take some two or three day trips, there is a lot of this state that I haven't seen, a lot of PA I haven't seen, that works for me and my wife and we are looking forward to that. I am very proud to have achieved my 4A certification. I sat with a guy today here from Barton and Loguidice and he said that is one tough exam. He said there were PE's that take it and don't make it. He looked at me and I looked at him and we just had an understanding, the same that I have with this guy (Harvey Davis). They don't just give those certifications away. I will stay certified. Good for another 5 years and then 5 years beyond that. So if you want my help I am out there. A couple 3 hours a week would be fine with me, I put it in writing and into the Chiefs office and he submitted it to the Mayors office. I would look forward to doing that but if it

doesn't work out that's fine. There was an article that was written many years ago by Andy Damiano and it sums up everything that I can tell you. It talks about this profession and maybe you read it and maybe you didn't. But he is writing in response to one of the Alderman, Mr. Quail who insulted us in 93 and I think he is working that way right now. It's an ongoing issue and I would like to make that better, to be part of the solution, part of the healing, part of the fence fixing if that is what it takes. Because I will tell you what, the man has us pegged wrong, he really does. When somebody insults me, you are insulting my family, you are insulting every person in this room, my Chief Operator, my assistant over here and I don't believe in that. It bothers me a little bit tonight but I am going to be an optimist and hope that things get a little bit better. The political office holders come and go but the wastewater operators stick it out. They will be with you and they won't abandon ship on you. I saw something almost super human last year. During this power outage and I prayed every single night I went home that someone didn't get killed here or on this site, I felt that afraid about this situation. We kept this plant running for the City. We had basically 0 interest from the elected officials and that is not right. I a talking about the applause that you don't get but we did it, we kept this show rolling, we protected the environment, we protected each other and we really pulled off something that we shouldn't have been able to do but we did it. Quick thinking and working together as a team. Our team is small, we are small in numbers but we are a small strong team. I look back over the years and you know it went by quick, it took me five minutes to decide to work here. I have been struggling with this date for two years. It's a hard thing, the people out there that love me and respect me, said Wayne, go away for a week or two weeks, get away from the plant, break it off, go out and do something different and then go back and take a another look, refresh yourself, sharpen your saw blade up. Do you remember that story? Resharpener your saw blade? I think I have been getting a little dull lately.

This has been very very dependable work, very secure work, but there are a lot of improvements that could happen here. Our people stay here for a reason, and this job affects your family. You are on call here 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And I have to get away from that and I haven't figured out how I am going to do that. That phone is ringing and you are expected to go to your job. Christmas Eve, Thanksgiving Day, that is when things can happen around here. So for me to undo that it's going to take me some time. I haven't figured out yet how to do that but I will. I appreciate and I know every individual in this plant appreciates the support that you folks gave us. I read your letters, I have stayed informed and I know who we can trust around here. It goes a long way. That is something you can't really measure. This is the good old girl, this plant, and she will take care of you. It's not automated, it's not labor free, its not plug it in, set it in and forget it. It takes talent, it takes skill, dedication-day in and day out. It really does. I made it. I am almost across the line. I am taking my vacation time up. Harvey has offered me some vacation time in lieu of payout and that's ok, I can use it. I have never had-in 42 years, two weeks off together. Can you imagine how I am going to be? I am looking forward to that.

John Troy: On behalf of the Advisory Board, I would like to thank Wayne for his years of dedication and service to the Board. I'm hoping the Council will do something.

Harvey Davis: Wayne has given me information I could not have gotten from anywhere else, historical perspectives of things. This includes the 1977 staffing study, when they built the plant upgrade. After looking at the staffing study and then looking at the article I gave you last month. I realized that the reason that the fishkill took place in 91 is that they never implemented to the staffing study to the fullest. The staffing study said 28 people and they only had 24. The never hired an electrician. If you reconnect the dots- the equipment was not maintained to the level it was supposed to be. Wasn't the plants fault it was the City not giving the plant the resources they needed. We are seeing this again. We are on the same road, heading right back down the road the City was on when they hired me to take them off of it. Wayne is like the plant historian. He keeps everything. That is going to be a tougher job to fulfill, all of the knowledge. Like our frequency drives. We bought a special vacuum and I have been working with Tom and Wayne and now-who is going to be qualified to clean them? They are 480 volts. We can't just stick our fingers in there. Hopefully the staffing study will show the City what they need here. Our guys are Operator 1 and 2s but they are cc job titles not what needs to be done. CC still thinks it's a grade 2B plant and it hasn't been a grade 2b plant since 9-5-95; I have talked to cc she said that cc can't do anything the common council has to establish the positions before they can evaluate them. Everything needs to be reevaluated.

Wayne: I have always had the idea that I would get the appointment for Chief Operator; I never got it officially but I have acted like I was the Chief Operator for the last 3 or 4 years. We have had some internal problems here and Harvey asked me "Wayne, what can we do to make this work better" because he knew I could do it. I started bringing the guys together in the morning to talk about their day and I can talk to operators because I know what is on their minds. I was able to knit this group together, as hard as it was. And we are family. Everyone can stay focused. I felt and was treated like I was the Chief Operator. It made me feel good as an operator and as a man. It's a gift I have been given and I don't take that lightly. Operators are a unique breed.

Minutes: Its is noted that all minutes to any City Board must now be submitted to the City Clerk's office for posting on the City webpage.

Old Business:

Copy of Harvey Davis' Contract

Plant Tour scheduled for July 26, 2010. We will receive everything by email so that our meeting will be brief and then follow to the tour. Invite extended to the Mayor and the Common Council.

The next Advisory Board meeting will be on July 26, 2010 at 5:30 pm.

Motion to Adjourn at 6:05 pm by Todd Morris. Seconded by Paul Lorenzo.

UNANIMOUS

Minutes respectfully submitted by Shelley Knickerbocker
