



CITY OF CORTLAND WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY



Meeting Minutes

Date: 03/28/11

Time: 5:30 pm

**Conference Room,
Cortland Wastewater**

■ Members:

- Chairman John Troy – Present
- Vice Chair William Starr – Present
- Commissioner Sally Horak – Present
- Commissioner Todd Morris – Present
- Commissioner Paul Lorenzo – Present
- Village of McGraw Trustee – Absent
- Village of Homer Trustee – Absent
- Harvey Davis, Plant Manager – Absent
- Tom McCall, Maintenance Supervisor – Present
- Mayor Feiszli – Present
- Civil Service Representatives – Present
 - See Attached Sign In Sheet



**CITY OF CORTLAND
WASTEWATER TREATMENT
FACILITY**



Wastewater Advisory Board
251 Port Watson Street
Cortland, New York 13045
Phone: 607.756.7227
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John Troy, Chairman
William Starr, Vice Chairman
Sally Horak, Commissioner
Paul Lorenzo, Commissioner
Todd Morris, Commissioner

Wastewater Advisory Board Meeting

28 March 2011

Sign In Sheet

Name	Company/Here for whom?
Tammy McCall	Tom McCall
Jeremy Houghtaling	Cortland Standard
Nat Lambright	Blitman & King
Phil Open	Employee
Ashley Prosser	Phil Open
Bruce Adams	Cortland WW
Susan Luff	City
Carrick A. Bertolotti	City
Idell J. Meers	BOARD
Tom Michales	City Council
Ken Dyc	City Council
Ed & Laurie Poolo	City of Cortland WWTF
Louis Dwyer	Cort. Co.
Shirley Barber	Cortland Co PICS
Bill Starr	Board Member
Paul Long	Cortland Wastewater
Brian McCall	City of Cortland WWTF

Meeting called to order at 5:35 pm.

Minutes from February 28, 2011 meeting for approval.

Motion to approve the minutes from February 28, 2011 meeting by Paul Lorenzo. Seconded by Sally Horak. **UNANIMOUS**

New Business:

Civil Service – Chief Operator’s Vacancy

INFORMATION REGARDING POSITION - This position is an open competitive class position. This person must take the Civil Service Exam and score in the top 3 in order to keep the position. There are certain qualifications one must meet and be approved by Civil Service. The test is given in September of every even year.

Bill Starr asked what the process is for filling the vacancy and what the lead time is. Annette Barber stated the exam will not be given until September 2012. Due to this date the position will be filled provisionally until the test results are obtained and a decision has been made. The operator holding the provisional appointment for the Chief Operator’s position must take the Civil Service exam and place in the top three in order to continue employment. Paul Lorenzo asked what part the WWAB plays in that process. Annette stated that it is a decision of the Mayor and Common Counsel. John Troy stated he has a copy of the charter dated from 1989, but Mr. Perfetti believes it has been updated since that time (he stated he would look into it and get back to the board). The charter John Troy had stated that the board submits a list to the Mayor of three candidates for review. Mayor Feiszli stated she believed this position would be filled in the same type of matter as the Fire Chief position was. Candidates must hold certain qualifications to be able to complete the Chief Operator’s Civil Service exam. Paul Lorenzo asked as a board member if their direction will come from the Corporation Counsel; Mr. Perfetti stated it will. A meeting will be held on April 11, 2011 to discuss the situation further. Paul then asked who is in charge while Chief Davis is on vacation and if someone has been or will be placed provisionally until Mr. Davis retires on April 29th. Tom McCall replied by stating that even though Chief Davis is on vacation he is still acting Chief and is the signature holder for all state related matters. As far as day-to-day operations Tom McCall has been working with the operators. John Troy asked if a committee consisting of WWAB Members and also some Aldermen from the City go through the applications and possibly interview so a recommendation could be made to the Mayor. Mr. Perfetti stated the way it needs to be addressed depends on how it is written in the charter. John Troy wanted it to be known that he wants to make sure the board is not “cut-out” of the process. John went on to state that these board members have been together for many years so

he feels they are more aware of the situations over the years than others may. Mayor Feiszli stated that she hopes it is apparent that the Advisory Board will not be "cut-out" of the process due to Personnel, Mr. Perfetti and herself being present at tonight's meeting. John stated that he was not implying that was happening; he just wanted everyone to know that the Advisory Board is very much interested in being part of the overall process. Mayor Feiszli recognized that since she has been Mayor she has received some emails and hopes to be able to address some of the issues in the future. It was left that the board would hear back from Mr. Perfetti on this subject. There was the question of being able to hire off of the Civil Service list for Chief Operator and then no provisional appointment would have to be made. Annette Barber responded by stating that would be the case if there was a list for the position. At this time there is no list to choose from; hence the reason for the provisional appointment. It was then asked of Civil Service if they knew of when the last list of qualified applicants was available. Civil Service believes that it was back prior to 1990 when the facility was privately operated. Due to a section of the Civil Service Law when the facility became part of the city's district the current employees came with status but do not have to take the test; all subsequent hires or promotions do have to take the test from that point forward. Even though there is no list at this time Civil Service does have a list of qualifications one must have before person(s) can complete the test. Those qualifications are also a concern for DEC due to the complexity of the job; DEC does not want someone obtaining a position without the correct qualifications for set position. For someone to be appointed to the position provisionally they must meet the qualifications to complete the test at that time. If they are not qualified at that time they may not be appointed, but if they do qualify between now and September 2012 they may take the Civil Service Exam for that position. Mayor Feiszli asked if anyone had a list of those qualifications. Annette Barber stated that they have a list and provided it to the Mayor and the board for review. A question was asked to whether the test is a State or County test. Annette Barber stated that it is a local exam which means that it is a Cortland County exam, and it is announced by the County but it is developed by the State. Personnel provides the state a job description and the test is derived from that. Can these tests be used in other counties? Annette responded that there maybe the same type of questions on various counties tests but the one that is given by that particular county is created for that county only. Paul Lorenzo then asked who pays for the test. Annette stated that it is paid by Personnel Department which has jurisdiction over the Civil Service jobs etc. schools, towns, village, and cities. The Mayor requested that a special meeting be held to answer questions that anyone may have regarding the position and that will also give Corporation Counsel time to research the current charter. John Troy asked if April 11th would be a good time at 5:30 pm. Mayor Feiszli stated that would be fine and it should also be held at the facility as well.

John asked Mr. Perfetti to provide the information to him or to the Mayor before the meeting so the board has time to review before the meeting.

Plant Manager's Report:

Administration:

Tom McCall completed the report for this meeting. He started by introducing the operators and their wives that observed tonight's meeting. Mrs. Tammy McCall is first; Tom stated that she has been very supportive over the years. Next is Lorrie and Ed Poole; Ed is a 3A Operator here at the plant; he also works side by side with Tom in the Maintenance Office and with day-to-day operations. Next to Ed is Brian McCall, he is an Operator 2 soon to be Operator 2A. Phillip Opera follows; currently a laborer but has completed all his class work at SUNY Morrisville and qualifies to take the Operator 1 exam. Matt Field is next, he is a new hire this past summer; he is taking his classes currently but will be finished with them within the next 2 months. Then there is Jim McCracken and his wife Jennifer; he is also a new hire from last summer. Sitting next to Tom is Deputy Bruce Adams who is a 4A Operator.

There were many things that have been going on within the last month. Due to that many stepped up and helped when needed. Gary Conklin was not able to make it to the meeting but he is retiring on March 30th after 33 years of service. Paul Lorenzo asked what the status was on filling his position. Tom replied by stating he has put in a request for the position to be filled but has not received a response yet. Paul then asked what is going to happen after Gary's last day in regards to the work that Gary performed. Tom stated that the work will be spread out to the remaining Laborer's and Operators. Everyone will just do what needs to be done to keep the facility running. Paul Lorenzo then asked the Mayor what the status was on hiring additional employees. Mayor Feiszli replied by stating that she feels that subject is something that needs to be addressed at another time, not including the fact that it is not on the Agenda. Mr. Perfetti also stated that nothing can be said about that subject due to the fact that negotiations are in process. Paul questioned as to whether or not that due to the negotiations no new employees can be hired. Mr. Perfetti stated that at this juncture nothing can be changed due to it looking like it was done to influence the outcome of the negotiations. Tom McCall stated that 3 new employees have been hired since the facility went unionized. Mr. Perfetti stated he believed it was done before the negotiations started. Tom responded stating that negotiations had started with Mr. Gazda. Mr. Perfetti informed everyone that he was not going to get into what Mr. Gazda did or didn't do. There was not going to be any talk about new hires at this time and that was the decision. Tom McCall informed Mr. Perfetti that he was just letting him know that employees were hired after the negotiation talks had started. Paul Lorenzo stated that he understood where Mr. Perfetti was

coming from but wanted it to be known that as a board member they (the board) have recognized for the last 6 months to a year that there is a serious shortage of employees. This is something that needs to be addressed and the board wants to put the City and Corporation Counsel on notice that due to this situation there could be a serious problem in the future. Mr. Perfetti stated that this is not the only department that has an employee shortage. Even with that no department can hire additional employees due to going into contract negotiations.

Tom McCall continued with the Plant Managers Report. March was a busy month. The facility was able to complete January's (late) and February's DMR's to the DEC on schedule. The only violation was in the rolling average parameter for nitrogen. Our nitrogen levels are currently leaving the treatment at 15-16 mg/l. According to our SPDES Permit by April 1st the WWTP is required to have implemented strategies to achieve greater levels of treatment. Barton & Loguidice (B & L) engineers are here tonight to explain the plan that the City needs to adopt and implement to become compliant in a more timely fashion.

On Thursday (March 3rd) Harvey Davis, Ed Poole and Tom McCall attended a DEC Conference regarding the Chesapeake Bay update. DEC greatly expressed that the POTW's that are proactive to reduce their nutrient discharge will likely have moderate final permit requirements compared to the lethargic POTW's.

We have been investigating funding that is available to help offset some of the capital improvement costs. NYSERDA has a VFD replacement program that allows us to replace our outdated and unserviceable units. For example, our 100 hp Effluent water pumps need the programmable keypads replaced. The keypad is \$1,700 plus installation, a new VFD installed is \$6,300 minus the rebate of \$5,000. We can have the whole VFD replaced for \$1,300. This is a program that we need to take advantage of. National Grid has an energy savings program where we can update some of the motors and lighting to more energy efficient equipment. We are the largest energy consumer of the City Departments. B & L has mentioned some Green Renovation Grants that may be applied to our facility as well.

On March 22nd, Harvey Davis and Tom McCall attended the Greater Buffalo Environmental Conference. At this seminar they were involved with discussions regarding wastewater operation, management, energy, along with regulatory and industrial pretreatment. The USEPA and NYSDEC were participating in the event.

On March 9th the City of Cortland Officials met with Marietta Corporation Officials to discuss compliance. Their engineering firm, Tim Seeler, gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding their plans to come into compliance. March 15th, Ed Poole and Tom McCall toured Marietta's monthly drain inspection at both facilities. On March 24th Ed Poole and Tom McCall responded to a Tanker Overflow spill that occurred at Marietta's Central Ave Facility into the storm sewer. Marietta responded and communicated diligently and efficiently. Their environmental safety manager sent us a copy of the Spill Report.

Operations:

The facility is in "Wet Weather" operations. This month we have treated 332,063,000 gallons of raw wastewater as of yesterday (3/27). February we treated 117,188,000 gallons. This extreme high flow is above design flow which puts great strain on our equipment and staff. We had to staff the facility for 24 hrs a day until the flow subsided to a safe manageable level of 14 mgd. Both new and experienced operators stepped up to maximize treatment and return to a high quality effluent. Tom communicated with NYSDEC during our flow event. Our DEC regional inspector called him and appreciated the work we are performing to date.

Maintenance:

The damage from the electrical fire has been completed by Ridley Electric. Ridley Electricians also performed some PM. We are pricing the Wemco Impeller that was damaged along with rebuilding the spare pump that was removed from service. The last Effluent water pump motor is being rebuilt at AAI for \$2,500.

Our Belt Dewatering Press Project punch list items are being addressed. Blue Heron Construction tied up some of their loose ends. BDP has ordered the rolling platform ladder and will have their electrician on site soon. The only item that is left is the lime feed system which should be completed this spring.

On the month ahead:

The facility will be having our annual SUNY Cortland tours the week of April 11th. There will be approximately 400 students touring our facility that week, weather permitting. The staff will be assisting along the tours to answer any questions that the professors or students may have.

When the weather starts to warm and dry out, we will be working on our landscaping and cleanup. The tanks will be drained down and cleaned. The maintenance work is going to be greatly increasing as the weather allows. The operators are working great together, completing an exceptional amount of work.

Motion to approve the Plant Manager's Report by Bill Starr. Seconded by Todd Morris.
UNANIMOUS

Barton & Loguidice, P.C. (B & L)

Dustin Clark and Ken Knutsen, P.E. were the Representatives from the firm. The board was provided with a paper copy of the PowerPoint Presentation given by Eric Pond, P.E. on February 12, 2011 to the Common Counsel. Along with an updated Cost Estimate for the Phase 1 project and TimeLine as well.

Dustin Clark opened up by asking if anyone had any questions. Paul Lorenzo stated that he believed the Chesapeake Bay Watershed was put on hold; does the Federal Government fund most of the project? Ken stated that the government does not. The project has been broken down to various stages that will be passed on to the states; the EPA is reviewing the allocations that are being passed to the states. The states are dividing up allocations into point source and non-point source. This facility being a Wastewater Treatment Plant is a point source for the project. Now the project has been broken down into phases; Phase 1 which was required of the City to meet by last Friday (March 25th) and the Phase 2 that will be coming about in the future (no date has been set as of yet). The Phase 1 is goals towards reducing the nitrogen; not solid limit yet. DEC will take the report that was prepared by B & L and decide what the City of Cortland has identified what they can do to lower to their nutrient level at the lowest cost. That is what B & L showed in their report is what the City can do to lower that limit with the current resources we have within our facility. There is no reason to go and spend \$20 Million on a tank when \$3.7 Million can be spent to upgrade what the process currently does and that also includes upgrading some of the equipment needed to produce the lower limits as required by law. Paul Lorenzo then stated again that he heard that the Phase 1 was not going to be enforced. The EPA said to the DEC that they want the NYS DEC to identify to them (EPA) how you can optimize your plants to bring down your Effluent first. Then once that has been done, what has to be done to take it to the next step? This is a work-in-progress; the DEC and EPA still have not agreed on what the first step effort on what that allocations are but what is known is that DEC is requiring the point sources to optimize what the facilities currently have. Then after that there will be a limit in place, the DEC will ask what will need to be done to get to the next step and how much it is going to cost. The DEC and EPA will work back and forth looking at different technologies to obtain that goal. If it is going to cost one point source \$100 Million to decrease your load by "x" number of pounds and another source half as much the DEC may look at the higher one and possibly help fund one. What we do know is that we need to optimize, take what we have and make the best of it; get the best nutrient removal out of that; get the lowest nitrogen

and phosphorus levels out of that. The process that has lead us to this point was a draft report completed last September by B & L, since that time the Common Counsel and the DEC have reviewed it. There has been some progress between the DEC and EPA in regards to moving towards what those limits are going to be, but for the Phase 1 nothing has changed to this point. B & L has learned more about the plant from the operators and due to that another piece of equipment had to be added to accommodate and the cost from September went from \$3 Million to approximately \$3.7 Million. It is not a function of waiting too long and the pricing on supplies went up; it is the fact that another piece of equipment had to be added to accommodate the process to obtain the proper limits in regards to what the facility already has set in place. So that is where things are at – Phase 1 is going to take approximately \$3.7 Million to complete and then the next step is to take the project to the design level and move it forward even further. The Common Counsel has as meeting next week (April 5th) B & L will have a design proposal so things can get under way. The big question is where the money is going to come from. It is something that is probably going to have to have a bond and possibly a bond anticipation note to get things started in the mean time. This schedule is behind 6 months from what was in the September 2010 report. The September report was sent to DEC and they are aware that the city is not going to make the deadline. The current report has been sent to DEC and B & L is hopeful that they (DEC) will not fine the city for not meeting the deadline, and also approve the updates that have been made. Dustin (B & L) does not feel the DEC will fine the city since steps are being made by the city to come into compliance. Things that will have to be completed after DEC approval are some pilot studies and modeling which will take us through to the end of the year. Then the DEC will take time to review; January – May is allotted to give time for the DEC, the city and any other boards involved to review the information and provide feedback. After such time in mid 2012 construction will start. This timeframe is based on the DEC approving the updated report and funding is found as well.

Dustin asked if anyone had any questions on the timeline to this point. Todd Morris asked if additional operators are going to be needed once the upgrades have been implemented. Dustin feels it is not going to change, it will add a little complexity from what the facility has now. What is being done is an addition to what the facility is currently completing and taking that to the 10th degree. It will take more monitoring, but once the facility is fully staffed there will be enough operators. Todd then asked if additional training will be needed. Dustin stated that there will not be much in the way of additional training. Ken Knutsen then spoke of the process by which these changes affect the process for the plant. The aeration tanks are the heart of the facility. Wastewater goes into the plant at one end, gets aerated and treated, going through eight different tanks and four trains and what the updates are going to do is to divide the eight tanks and four trains into different

zones. One zone will have very little Oxygen, ones that have more Oxygen. By doing that there are more gates, more pumps, and more steps means more probes to monitor, process control, tracking oxygen levels and concentration of bugs within that process. Due to that there will be a heightened level of sampling, monitoring and knowledge of knowing how to maintain the levels needed. Todd Morris then asked where is the additional training going to be coming from. Ken Knutsen responded by stating it used to come from DEC; they (B & L) read the same nitrogen training course information that was provided to various plant managers and technicians discovering that the training was 'picked-up' by NY Water Environmental Association. An arm of that association has assumed the training due to DEC cutbacks. Todd Morris then asked that when the staff is at training they are not working at the facility. Ken stated that was true. Training is a necessary "evil" if you want your business to succeed. Todd asked Ken who takes his place at work when he is at training. Ken stated that he has a great group of guys underneath him that are also learning things so one day he (Ken) can retire. The operators and technicians need to work in the same manner for things to get done when one or more of them is at training.

Dustin then talked about the funding aspect of the project. He informed the board and the Mayor that B & L can help them identify some funding possibilities if needed. Ken spoke of the timeline when this project started back in August or September of 2010 and needing to get the report done in a timely manner so the City could be placed on a list to help for funding. Being on that list is the first step in acquiring funding for this type of project. Dustin spoke of the Environmental Facilities Corporation short-term financing. In order for this funding to be used the facility must turn in an Engineering Report; then a full application in early 2012. When/if it is approved then funding can be used starting in June or July of 2012. That would prepare the facility to start the construction phase which is the biggest part of the funding.

Dustin then spoke of Phase 2 of the project. Even though the limits are still not known there are things that can be started. DEC and EPA will be discussing the limits back and fourth; the facilities will have to turn in reports stating what they can do to lower their limits to the DEC and they will compile all the reports and present them to the EPA. The EPA can either say they are good or need improvements and things we go back-n-forth until a decision has been made. The General Wastewater Improvements project; it is the larger of the projects. It consists of updating the equipment and also addresses the impacts of the solids removal on the anaerobic digesters that the facility has which are under stress currently. They will be under a lot more once the enhanced nitrogen process is underway. Dustin provided the board with a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation that was given to the Common Counsel earlier this month (March).

John Troy spoke up and stated that he is looking for "some sort of guarantee" if the city comes up with the funding and B & L does what they need to do and the city is fined, will B & L stand behind their work making good if something goes wrong. The basic answer by Dustin is that with all of the reports and calculations that have been done that should not be an issue. Mayor Feiszli asked when it would be known what the limits are going to be that must be met. Dustin stated that it is not known. DEC & EPA will be discussing this for years. If an agreement is an agreement there is a potential to know by June of 2012. Mayor Feiszli asked if there is a possibility that we could meet the limits without any construction to the facility. The answer to that would be No. The EPA has already identified a target average and the facility is not at that point.

Bill Star asked what makes the facility so unique from others. Dustin informed us that due to upgrades having already been completed on the facility. Being able to use components for something other than what they are made to do. Various other questions were asked regarding the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and were answered.

Finance: Bills: Abstracts dated February 16th, and March 4th were provided.

Motion to approve the Bills by Sally Horak. Seconded by Paul Lorenzo. **UNANIMOUS**

Financial

Statements: Operating Fund dated March 9, 2011; Revenue Accounting and the Monthly Expense Summary for the month of February 2011 were provided.

Motion to approve the Financial Statements by Paul Lorenzo. Seconded by Bill Star. **UNANIMOUS**

Sewer

Grievance:

There were no Grievances for this month.

New

Business:

There will be a special meeting to be held on April 11th @ 5:30 pm to discuss the Chief Operator's vacancy to be held here at the facility.

Old

Business:

Tom McCall spoke of the Work Order Aging Report. He stated that there are more work orders starting to be completed due to the weather but when it becomes warmer the work orders will begin to increase again. Some man hours will be lost due to the SUNY Cortland Tours the week of April 11th and also with the lack of manpower. The operators have an obligation to do the best that they can. There are things that are started but when equipment breaks down things need to be put on hold to complete the emergency work.

Bill Starr asked why the staff was at the meeting and if Tom was speaking on behalf of them. Tom informed us that he was speaking for them but also informed them that they need to come to the meetings themselves to see what is going on and being done. Tom also noted that the special meeting scheduled would be a good time for the staff to ask questions. Every operator's personal life is affected by what happens and/or does not happen at the facility. Paul Lorenzo commented on Mr. Perfetti's comment that there will not be any new hires during the contract negotiation talks. Tom responded by stating that he tried to inform Mr. Perfetti that hiring has been done during those talks in the past. That was also one of the reasons why a Union Representative was present during the meeting. Matt (Union Rep. & city resident) was not present during the comment. It has become a safety concern for the operators being understaffed, but no one can be hired without the cities approval. Todd Morris asked if someone was hired wouldn't the city be able to work off of the current contract. Tom stated that the problem is the City of Cortland can not produce a written copy of the current contract. Paul Lorenzo stated he can see that the city is aware of the situation. Tom stated that he informs the operators that they need to work safe. There are many hazards that are not seen or thought of day-to-day. If anyone of the operators have questions time is taken to go through the Operation Manuals for the equipment or the operators call Tom to get his input. Ed Poole took the time to thank the board for everything they do for the facility. Also, Tom McCall took the time to thank the operators for their hard work and dedication.

Motion to Adjourn at 7:20 pm by Bill Starr. Seconded by Sally Horak. **UNANIMOUS**

Respectfully submitted by:



Sherry O'Brien
City of Cortland WWTF