

Narragansett Bay Commission
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Vincent J. Mesolella
Chairman

Laurie A. Horridge
Executive Director



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF:

Meeting of:	Board of Commissioners
Date:	April 12, 2022
Time:	11:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Vincent Mesolella, NBC Chairman
Ernest Almonte
Lisa Andoscia
Robert Andrade
Michele Caprio
Richard Delfino
John MacQueen
Michael Marcello, Esquire
Anthony Napolitano
Jina Petrarca, Esquire
Angelo Rotella, Esquire
Charles Ruggerio, Esquire

MEMBERS ABSENT:

James Bennett
Mario Carlino
Michelle DeRoche
Christine DiBiase, Esquire
Leonard Lopes, Esquire
Joan Milas
Al Montanari

STAFF AND GUESTS PRESENT:

Laurie Horridge, Executive Director
David Bowen, NBC
Karen Giebink, NBC
Rich Bernier, NBC
Jennifer Harrington, Esq., NBC
Brendon McLean, NBC
Jamie Samons, NBC
James McCaughey, NBC
Walter Palm, NBC

Meg Goulet, NBC
Michelle Asels, NBC
Holly Ialongo, NBC
Talia Cheshier, NBC
Anthony DiIorio, NBC
Jason Galego, NBC
Leah Foster, NBC
Madlin Severino, NBC
Karen Musumeci, NBC

1. Call to Order

NBC Chairman, Vincent Mesolella, recognizing a quorum, called the Narragansett Bay Commission Board of Commissioners April 12, 2022, meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes – March 1, 2022 – Board of Commissioners

Chairman Mesolella asked for a motion to approve the March 1, 2022, Board of Commissioners meeting minutes as written. Commissioner MacQueen moved to approve the minutes for the March 1, 2022, Board of Commissioners meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Petrarca and Commissioner Delfino. The vote taken by the Board of Commissioners was unanimous. The motion carried.

3. Election of Officers

For purposes of election of officers, the Chairman passed the gavel to NBC Executive Director and Board Secretary, Ms. Laurie Horridge to take nominations.

Ms. Horridge opened the floor up to nominations for the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer.

Commissioner John MacQueen presented a motion that the Secretary cast one vote for the position of officers with Mr. Mesolella for Chairman, Mr. Rotella for Vice Chairman and Mr. Andrade for Treasurer. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Almonte and Commissioner Napolitano.

Ms. Horridge asked if there were any other nominations for the positions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Treasurer. There were none. Ms. Horridge asked if there were any discussions? There were none. Ms. Horridge closed the floor to nominations. The vote taken by the Board of Commissioners regarding the nominations was unanimous in favor of reelecting Mr. Vincent Mesolella for Chairman, Mr. Angelo Rotella for Vice Chairman and Mr. Robert Andrade for Treasurer. The motion carried.

Ms. Horridge cast one vote for the existing slate, as directed by the motion.

Chairman, Vincent Mesolella, emphasized his commitment to the Board, to this agency and to the effort of furthering the mission of the NBC. He thanked everyone for the confidence they have bestowed on him.

Due to some commissioners being on a very tight time schedule the Chairman decided to dispense temporarily with the Executive Director's report and move right on to Items for Action.

5. Items for Action

B. Finance

- i. **Review and approval of Resolution 2022:08**, Approval of the Narragansett Bay Commission Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Budget.

The Chairman asked Commissioner Robert Andrade, Chairman of the Finance Committee, to move forward with the report from the Finance Committee. Commissioner Andrade advised that Ms. Karen Giebink, NBC Chief Financial Officer, would explain Resolution 2022:08.

Mr. Andrade ceded the floor to Ms. Giebink to present the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Budget.

Ms. Giebink started her presentation by explaining that she was going to give a brief overview of the proposed annual budget for Fiscal Year 2023 and that a similar presentation was reviewed by the Finance Committee on April 7, 2022.

On page one is the calendar which gives an overview of how things are planned for the upcoming budget, and it is almost a year-round affair. The process starts in July and the Board adopts the budget in April. She noted that the Capital Budget was approved at the Board meeting on March 1, 2022. The capital outputs are included in the long-term financial planning model and, along with other assumptions, are used to develop the Operating Budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

Page two contains an overview of how we foresee finishing the year. We anticipate that the revenue and source of funds will be \$2.1 million higher than what was budgeted. Overall, NBC will finish with a net income of \$5.8 million. NBC is spending more capital funds than we had budgeted.

The projected revenue shown on page four is approximately \$1.0 million dollars higher than what was budgeted. This is mostly attributable to the return to pre-COVID usage patterns and the shift back from residential to non-residential consumption. Since those rates are higher, we are seeing an increase in revenue.

On page five of the report, with respect to operating expenses, NBC is under budget in all categories. NBC has had higher than budgeted turnover, operating supplies and expense are expected to finish approximately \$2.7 million under budget. She noted that the large variances are highlighted in the table towards the bottom of the page including biosolids and utilities. The anticipated transfer to the Project Fund is approximately \$20.3 million, which is \$5.8 million higher than what was budgeted. This will be available for capital projects next year.

Turning to page six, with respect to the Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Budget, the budget is prepared in conformance with the guidelines set forth by the Government Finance Officers Association with the incorporation of comments received from reviewers from the prior years. The budget is developed with the Strategic Plan being the primary driver. The Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives are on page seven, and they are translated into target measures. Page eight explains the S.M.A.R.T. Goal Framework, which is used to determine whether we have achieved our objectives and the target measures for the individual sections. Page nine shows that 34% of the Target Measures are for the Financial Management strategic plan goal, and 29% are associated with the Core Business. In terms

of the priorities, 55% of the priorities identified for the upcoming budget year are associated with Core Business.

On page ten is the Budget Summary, which provides an overview of the Fiscal Year 2023 proposed budget. It combines the Capital and Operating budgets. Overall, it is 15.7% higher than the prior year. The Revenue and Source of Funds are in the chart at the top of page eleven. The largest source of revenue and/or source of funds is WIFIA loans at 58.1% followed by User Fees at 31.6%. The chart at the bottom of the page displays the Expense and Use of Funds, showing that the largest expenses are the Capital Improvement Program at 66.5%, Operating Expense at 15.5% and Debt Service at 12.5%.

Page twelve shows how the Revenue and Source of Funds and the Expense and Use of Funds have changed from 2021 through the budget of 2023. The green portion in the chart at the top shows that the WIFIA loans are expected to increase by \$21.8 million in Fiscal 2023 and User Fees will be \$1.8 million higher. In terms of the Use of Funds the CIP is \$43.5 million higher than last year and Operating Expense is \$2.5 million more. The pie chart on page thirteen shows that the Capital Budget is 68% of the total budget and the Operating Budget is 32%.

The key assumptions for the Operating Budget are on pages 14 and 15. The overall Operating Budget, shown in summary form on page 16, is 2.0% higher. Revenue is \$2.1 million higher or 2%. The majority of that is due to higher user fees, \$1.8 million more than what is budgeted this year. Page 18 shows the number of accounts. Residential accounts are 91.0% of the user base and generate 58.8% of the total user charge revenue. The table at the bottom of the page shows a shift back from residential to nonresidential user fees. Specifically, a decline of 1.6% in residential revenue as opposed to 6.7% and 13.2% increases for commercial and industrial user classes, respectively.

The table at the bottom of page 19 shows the billable consumption. NBC bills a flat fee and a charge based on consumption. The chart at the top of page 20 shows that during COVID the split between residential and nonresidential shifted from 40% nonresidential in 2019 down to 35% in 2021, now that's returning to normal levels. With regard to flat fee revenue, we are projecting modest growth in the number of dwelling units. No significant growth in the number of billable meters for nonresidential customer. The budget includes a .56% rate increase for the recovery of the electronic payment fees and a full year of late fee revenue.

The expense profile begins on page 25. Operating Expenses are \$2.5 million higher than the prior year or 5.1 %. Debt service is slightly lower based upon the amortization schedules. The Transfer to Project Fund is about the same as the prior year. Operating Expenses continue on page 26 showing that Personnel is \$29.0 million or 56.4% of the total operating expenses, which is \$1.0 million or 3.7% higher than the prior year. She noted that the personnel expense reflects the new union contracts, which were approved by the Board in March. The budget includes updated benefit rates and funding of a net increase of eight full time equivalent positions. The table at the bottom of page 27 shows that there are 10 new positions, and two that are unfunded resulting in a net increase of eight FTEs. Page 28 shows the budgeted healthcare benefits with a 6% increase in the healthcare renewal. She added that we recently learned that there will actually be a negative rate increase in healthcare.

The Operating Supplies and Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2023 budget are shown on page 29 at \$20.0 million dollars, which is approximately \$1.0 million higher than last year or 5.2% higher. One of the large accounts is biosolids and there has been a significant decline in the number of dry tons generated

at Field's Point. We are projecting 359 total dry tons less than last year and a 4.4% increase in the CPI contract adjustment.

The expense for natural gas is shown on page 30, which is 54.7% higher than last year. There are additional Therms budgeted for the biogas facility although it is not operating consistently right now. Electricity is budgeted 19.4% higher. As explained on page 31, it reflects a higher composite rate an increase in electrical usage, and slightly lower behind the meter production and some other factors.

The table on page 32 shows that the Net Metering Credits, as well as Power Purchase Agreement payments. The budget includes higher kWh generated from the NBC owned facilities and slightly lower through the PPA. In terms of the Net Metering Credits, we are budgeting a conservative Net Metering Credit rate of \$0.147 cents per kWh.

On page 33, chemical expense is lower because the bid rates were lower than what we had budgeted last year. On page 34 there are some highlights about the Contract and Service Agreements, Repair Accounts and Supplies Accounts. Insurance, on page 35, is budgeted at approximately \$217,000 more than the prior year, primarily driven by higher cybersecurity insurance policy premiums. Professional Services are \$370,000 higher than the prior year due to the absorption of the electronic payment transaction fees, as well as higher PUC regulatory expenses. Lease and Subscription Expense is new this year, and it reflects the leases for the two Coventry turbines. The Transfer to Project Fund is basically the net income and is relatively unchanged from the prior year.

On page 36 the Budgeted Debt Service is \$41.1 million, which is lower than the prior year. The budget includes \$375,000 in interest on revenue anticipation notes. Financing of the Capital Budget is on page 37, the table in the middle shows the Sources of Funds. NBC will be spending over \$200.0 million a year on Capital Improvement Projects in Fiscal Years 2023 through 2025. Last year's budget contemplated issuing revenue bonds. We are now looking at borrowing through the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank since they have modified some of their terms and there may be additional subsidies available through the IJA.

She noted that the next few pages discuss planned capital spending in the current year and projections of available funding next year.

She referred to page 41 that shows the 2022 Series A WIFIA 3 loan. When this document was prepared, the loan amount was \$52.0 million, and since then it has increased to \$55.5 million. The final amount will be determined when the loan is closed.

The Uses of Funds graph on page 43 show expenditures on the Capital Program. The table in the middle of the page shows anticipated spending of \$173.3 million on the CSO Phase III A Facilities; \$28.9 million on the Bucklin Point Resiliency Improvements and \$8.9 million on the Field's Point Resiliency Improvements.

Page 44 shows that total Outstanding Debt is projected to be over \$1.0 billion as of June 30, 2023. The chart at the bottom of the page shows that the WIFIA portion of the total outstanding debt is anticipated to increase from 46% to 52%.

The Existing and Projected Outstanding Debt is shown on page 45 and is currently projected to peak at nearly \$1.4 billion in the year 2026. The Actual and Projected Debt Service Payments through Maturity are shown in the chart at the bottom of the page.

The Long-Term Financial Plan begins on page 46. The outputs are used to make several assumptions which are rolled into a proforma. We make certain assumptions about CPI adjustments as well as maintaining our debt service of 125% of principal and interest.

The outputs show the percentage rate increases in sewer user fees, which are as follows: on May 1 a 0.56% increase, a 6.5% increase in Fiscal Year 2024 followed by 6.0% rate increases in Fiscal Years 2026 and 2028. These increases are needed as the debt service payments ramp up to finance the Capital Improvement Program. Despite the increase in charges and the large Capital Program that has been funded by the Commission over the past 15 years or more, our rates remain competitive. The table on page 51 shows the NBC service area average annual sewage user charge for a single-family home is \$516. Page 52 contains a chart that compares us to similar facilities at a national level. That concluded Ms. Giebink's presentation.

Commissioner Robert Andrade presented a motion to approve Resolution 2022:08. Commissioner Almonte seconded the motion.

Chairman stated that we had a motion to approve Resolution 2022:08 and a seconded, so he moved to the discussion.

Commissioner Delfino asked why we have unfounded positions in the budget proposal.

Ms. Giebink replied that it is for presentation purposes only. When putting together the list of the positions, we need to identify the net increase in founded positions and we do so by identifying two that we are no longer going to be founding in the budget.

Chairman Mesolella asked for further comments, discussions, questions regarding the Budget document. Hearing None. The vote taken by the Commission was unanimous. The motion carried. The 2023 Annual Budget was adopted.

i. Review and Approval of Resolution 2022:09; Authorization to Enter into a Contract for Financial Statement and Pension Auditing Services for Fiscal Years 2022, 2023 and 2024 with an optional two-year extension - Fiscal years 2025 and 2026

Commissioner Andrade made a motion to approve Resolution 2022:09, Commissioners MacQueen and Almonte seconded the motion. Commissioner Andrade requested that Ms. Giebink present Resolution 2022:09 to the Board.

Ms. Giebink explained that in accordance with Rhode Island General Laws the Request For Proposals for final selection of an independent auditor is sent for review and approval by both the Auditor General and the Director of the Department of Administration. We requested their approval to issue the RFPs for Financial Statement Auditing Services as well as Pension Auditing Services. We received the State's approval and issued the RFPs on March 8, 2022. The responses were due on

March 31, 2022, and we received submittals from three firms to both RFPs including Hague, Sahady & Co. P.C., Bacon and Co. LLC, and Marcum LLC. Due to the fact that Hague, Sahady & Co. P.C. has performed the audits for the last eight consecutive years, they are ineligible to perform the services per the Auditor General's guidelines. This was confirmed with the Auditor General and therefore they were eliminated from consideration.

A review committee consisting of six staff members, including Ms. Giebink and the Accounting Manager, reviewed and evaluated the proposals and based upon the evaluations, the committee recommended unanimously to award to Bacon and Co. LLC for both audits. Their proposals were found to be responsive; NBC has prior experience working with them, and they are qualified and capable. Furthermore, their proposal was the lowest cost. We submitted the Auditor's Selection approval forms to the State and received approval on April 8, 2022. Therefore Ms. Giebink requested approval to enter into a three-year term of engagement with an optional two-year extension for independent auditing services for the Financial Statements and the Pension with Bacon & Co. LLC.

Chairman stated that a motion was made and seconded. There being no further discussion the vote taken by the Commissioners was unanimous. The motion carried.

ii. Review and Approval of Resolution 2022:10; Authorization to Use Environmental Enforcement Funds to fund the 2022 NBC Earth Day River Clean Up Events

Ms. Horridge explained that the first request for the Use of Environmental Funds is to sponsor 20 Earth Day clean ups. This is part of a Chairman's initiative from years ago where we used to conduct the clean ups, now we sponsor the clean ups throughout the district. The money that we give them is used to buy bags, gloves, dumpsters and other supplies. We are recognized by the groups in their publications and social media. We promote the clean ups on our own social media and provide flower seed packets with the NBC logo on them, so everybody knows that we are involved with it. All together there were 20 applicants and NBC staff is recommending a total of \$10,550.00 be distributed to the 20 applicants as outlined in the second page of the memorandum, which was attached to the Resolution. There are sufficient funds in the EEF to support these expenditures and Ms. Horridge respectfully requested that the Board authorize the NBC to disburse the funds from the Environmental Enforcement Fund to sponsor the 2022 Earth Day River Clean-up events, as detailed in the memo in an amount not to exceed \$10,550.00.

Commissioner Andrade made a motion to approve Resolution 2022:10. Commissioners Almonte, Napolitano and Andoscia seconded the motion. There being no further discussion the vote taken by the Board of Commissioners was unanimous. The motion carried.

iv. Review and Approval of Resolution 2022:11: Authorization to use monies from the Environmental Enforcement Fund to provide scholarships for three economically challenged students from the NBC service area to attend the Rhode Island Shark Camp.

Commissioner Andrade moved to the approval of Resolution 2022:11. Commissioner Rotella, Commissioner Almonte and Commissioner Petrarca seconded the motion.

Ms. Horridge stated that, as the title indicated, this is to provide three scholarships for economically challenged students in the NBC's service district to attend Rhode Island Shark Camp at URI this summer. The cost of attendance is \$1000 per student.

In Rhode Island, opportunities for students from diverse backgrounds to participate in experiential learning in the natural sciences are limited. To help address this lack of exposure, in 2019 the URI College of the Environment and Life Sciences established Rhode Island Shark Camp, a free program that provides minority students from Rhode Island public schools with the opportunity to conduct fieldwork on sharks. The goal of the program is to expose students to careers in the natural sciences by engaging them in field research on Narragansett Bay and providing them with information on applying to college. Unfortunately, the program was paused in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, but preparations are underway for the 2022 camp.

The program will offer an opportunity for NBC to extend our Watershed Program, which is in the elementary schools, to high school students. There are sufficient funds in the EEF to provide the support and she respectfully requested that the Board authorize the use of Environmental Enforcement Funds in the amount of \$3000.00 to provide scholarships to three students within NBC's service district to attend Rhode Island Shark Camp at the URI.

The Chairman inquired how the recipients are qualified.

Jamie Samons, NBC Public Affairs Manager, explained that NBC will be able choose from the students that apply.

Chairman stated that a motion was made and seconded. The vote taken by the Board was unanimous. The motion carried.

A. Construction /Engineering/Operations

i. Review and approval of Resolution 2022:05; Award of Contract 304.80M - FY22 Interceptor and Siphon CCTV Inspection and Cleaning Services.

Ms. Horridge stated that this project involves the ongoing Inspection and Cleaning Services program that we have related to siphons in our collection system. The work gives us important information regarding the existing conditions in the sewer, and we remove grit and debris while we are doing it. The Bid packages were sent to six firms but only one submitted, National Water Main at a cost of \$526,240.00. Staff recommends a contingency of ten percent for a total cost of \$578,864.00. There will also be ancillary costs associated with this project. It was respectfully requested that the Board authorize staff to enter into a contract with National Water Main Cleaning Company to perform inspection and cleaning services of NBC's siphons for an amount not to exceed \$578,864.00, plus ancillary costs associated with this project.

Commissioner MacQueen made a motion to approve Resolution 2022:05. Seconded by Commissioner Ruggerio.

Commissioner Marcello asked why if six bid packages were sent out, why we did not receive any more bids for this kind of project?

Meg Goulet, NBC Director of Operations and Maintenance, explained that this work is very complicated for a lot of companies. We have worked with National for many years. They have the equipment, and they can handle this type of work.

Chairman Mesolella asked if there were further discussions. Hearing none. The vote taken by the Commission was unanimous. The motion carried.

ii. Review and Approval of Resolution 2022:06; Award of Contract 308.09B NBC Phase III CSO Program – GSI Project – River Street, Samoset Avenue and High Street, Central Falls

Commissioner MacQueen move to approve Resolution 2022:06. Commissioner Delfino and Commissioner Rotella seconded the motion.

Ms. Horridge explained that four bids were received for construction of this GSI Project. The lowest bid was Cardi Corp at \$3,820,760. Unfortunately, Cardi's bid was nonresponsive in that they failed to submit several required forms mostly related to Minority Business Enterprise participation. NBC has no discretion to allow for that not being in the package, as such it was deemed not responsive. Then we moved on to the next low bidder, Manafort Brothers at \$4,698,390. It was noted in the memo that their submittal contained a math error of \$10,000 in our favor making the actual bid \$10,000 less. The math error is something that can be corrected. Under current rules and regulations that is allowed. Therefore, it was recommended that Contract 308.09B be awarded to Manafort Brothers of Cumberland in the amount of \$4,688,390 plus ancillary costs subject to approval of the Contract that's MBE/WBE plan and the Equal Employment Opportunity requirements of the State.

Chairman asked if there were any comments, questions or corrections regarding Resolution 2022:06.

Commissioner Andrade asked if staff knew why the bid came 21% higher than their original estimate.

Richard Bernier, NBC Director of Construction and Engineering, responded that estimates are just estimates. The engineers don't do the estimates. The contractors are putting the price together. Mr. Bernier talked first to Cardi, and they could not understand why Manafort was so high. He then spoke to Manafort, and they could not understand how Cardi was so low. It goes by availability, market conditions, etc.

Commissioner Charles Ruggerio inquired if the scope of work was different in the proposal submitted by Cardi vs. the proposal submitted by the others?

Mr. Bernier answered that it was not.

Commissioner Petrarca commented that it is much harder to estimate actual cost since everything is fluctuating so quickly at this time.

Chairman stated that a motion was presented and seconded. The vote taken by the Board was unanimous. The motion carried.

iii. Review and Approval of Resolution 2022:07; Authorization to Procure Professional Engineering Support Services for Project 205.00D – Field’s Point Maintenance Facility and IM Storage Building Improvements.

Commissioner MacQueen moved to approve Resolution 2022:07; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruggerio.

Ms. Horridge explained that this project involves needed upgrades and improvements to the Field’s Point Maintenance and IM Storage Facilities. The current facilities are on the National Historic Register and, while well maintained, they are over 100 years old. The building was last modified about 35 years ago. It has continued to serve the plant as primary maintenance building since it was built in 1901. The location on the water exacerbates the wear and tear over the years. The IM Storage building is located near the Tunnel Pump Station on Ernest Street, it was supposed to be a temporary structure for use by the contractor during Phase I of the CSO but was kept and we have been using it for storage. Unfortunately, as a temporary building it is inefficient in terms of heating and lighting. It is plagued with leaks and corrosion and does not provide sufficient space for IM storage needs. Both facilities are undersized and inefficient for our current work storage needs. It is anticipated that this project will be partially funded by federal money, which means that we must use a Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) process. It is a competitive process for architectural and engineering services where selection is based on qualifications such as knowledge, skill and experience, as opposed to just lower cost. Fees are negotiated with the top-rated firm.

We received two Statements of Qualifications, one from Black & Veatch Corporation and one from Lerner Ladds Bartels (LLB Architects).

NBC’s internal Review Committee identified LLB Architects as the highest-rated qualified firm. After that evaluation we asked them to submit a cost proposal for the study and report phase. They submitted a cost proposal of \$300,540. Staff is recommending a 20% contingency for the contract.

It was respectfully requested that the Board authorize staff to negotiate a professional services Agreement for Contract 205.00D with LLB Architects to provide Professional Engineering Services for needed improvements to the Field’s Point Wastewater Treatment Facility’s Maintenance and IM Storage Building Improvements for an amount not to exceed \$360,650, plus ancillary costs.

Chairman stated that a motion was made and a seconded. No discussion regarding Resolution 2022:07. The vote taken by the Board was unanimous. The motion carried.

The Chairman confirmed that all the Items for Action on the agenda had been presented to the Board for review and approval. Then he asked the Executive Director to present her report.

4. Executive Director’s/Chairman’s Report

Ms. Horridge initiated the presentation of her April 12, 2022, report.

Environment Science and Compliance

In February our renewable energy projects contributed 69% to our electricity usage. One of our turbines in Coventry is still offline due to a failed part and it may be down for a while until necessary part is received to repair it. We also had to shut down the Field's Point Wind Turbines twice during February due to icy conditions. Walter Palm, NBC Director of Environmental Science & Compliance, launched an ergonomic morning stretch program for all employees in that building. It has been quite a hit and we are thinking about expanding it to our other facilities.

Our PFAS analyzer was successfully installed at the beginning of April. Training will begin in May. Method Development will begin after the training in order to get procedures in place for preparing samples and testing.

The Pretreatment Section prepared and submitted its annual report for 2021. This document is almost 1000 pages with attachments. It is full of information about our programs in terms of monitoring, sampling, analyzing and regulating our industrial and commercial users.

Construction and Engineering

On the Ernest Street Pump Station, planning, studies and reports regarding the work necessary to rehabilitate that facility continue. Planning and design of the Bucklin Point Clarifiers and UV disinfection improvements are ongoing.

Request For Qualifications for the Field's Point and the Bucklin Point Resiliency projects were issued in February, one of them was just approved for engineering services. The foundation and erection of structural steel has been completed at the Bucklin Point maintenance and storage building and the installation of metal decking is ongoing. The old administration building has been demolished and the excavation for the new operations building has begun.

On CSO, while we continue to pursue alternative options for disposal of our tunnel material, we decided to utilize NBCs two existing landfills at Bucklin Point, at least in the short term. We believe that they can take about a quarter of the material we expect to generate. We are working with DEM and CRMC to obtain the necessary approvals and both agencies appear ready to approve this initial home for our tunnel material. This will give us a few more months to secure alternate locations.

At the Tidewater site in Pawtucket where an 11,000-seat professional soccer stadium is planned, we have been coordinating our work with National Grid and the developers to avoid disrupting the site after the stadium construction.

Excavation of the CSO tunnel launch shaft is complete at 180 feet down and excavation of the tunnel pump station is ongoing. Work continues for the 50' by 800' feet prefab metal building that will be utilized to make the precast segments that will line the inside of the tunnel. That site is in Cranston.

Operations and Maintenance

In February we had two permit violations for total suspended solids at Field's Point that were due to two problems; an increase in filaments, which caused poor settleability, and large rain events that occurred and filled up the tunnel. The storm was still raging after the tunnel filled requiring an extended period of high flows at the plant, which disrupted our operations.

Bucklin Point Treatment Plants operated well during February. Operations staff at Bucklin Point worked with outside vendors to remove all rags and wipes from the side streams. 91 tons of rags were transported to the Central landfill in Johnston.

Administration

Jaime Samons, NBC Public Affairs Manager, worked with the City of Pawtucket on video clips for the virtual ceremony that will take place in May, where the Chairman will be accepting the Pawtucket Foundation's Heritage Award for outstanding long-term Commitment to the quality of economic and community life in Pawtucket. As part of CSO, NBC will be constructing a section of the Blackstone River bikeway along Front Street in Pawtucket. We will also relocate one of our big sewers that currently bisects a city owned parcel so they can redevelop it. Lastly, we assisted with the relocation of a community garden in support of the Tidewater Soccer Stadium. Those are the reasons we are getting the Heritage Award and the Chairman will accept that in May.

Human Resources

We have had 11 more COVID positive cases in the last week. We are encouraging staff to get boosters and we are constantly reminding them about social distancing and to wear masks when appropriate.

We have been struggling with vacancies in our operations for a long time, we have 10 or 11 empty operator positions. It is difficult because of a minimum staffing requirement. We are discussing that issue amongst all of us. NBC's new Human Resources Manager, Casandra Bennett, has taken the lead in reaching out to high school seniors in our service area who are not on a college path, but will need a job in May or June. Ms. Bennett was in Central Falls today giving her presentation to see if any of those students, some of whom are already working, might be interested in a full-time position. A meeting is also programmed with Central High School in Providence at the end of the month. We are hopeful we are going to be able to get more operators through this outreach program.

Information Technology

One of NBC's commissioners asked if IT could make a presentation on the state of NBC's cybersecurity. We are trying to discern the best way to do that without exposing our vulnerabilities because all board meetings are open to the public and recorded.

IT is in the process of obtaining new iPads for the commissioners and hopefully by the summer we can transition to more of a paperless environment like we had before COVID.

Legal

About 1000 new bills were introduced to the General Assembly in March. Our General Counsel, Jennifer Harrington, continues to submit position papers and/or collaborate with legislators. Major issues of concern for us are: PFAS, our lien sale authority, renewable energy projects, collective bargaining agreements and MBE goals in construction projects.

Legal staff finalized drafting the contract for services with the consultant that was selected for the regional solution for the biosolids disposal with Springfield and Worcester.

Ms. Horridge concluded her report by reminding the Commissioners to file their Ethics Commission forms, which are due by April 29th, 2022.

Commissioner Marcello asked if the tunnel material stored at Bucklin Point is to remain at the site or if it is going to be eventually stored somewhere else?

Ms. Laurie Horridge explained that the plan right now is that it will remain at the site as they are landfills already, and that's probably why the DEM was considering our request.

Chairman Mesolella advised that he and Ms. Horridge had a meeting the prior week regarding the plan to potentially store additional material at the site by recontouring the facility.

Commissioner Marcello commented that many people in East Providence are questioning what is going to happen with this. Just in general, when they see the storage of this stuff piled up and they just want to know what is going on with it.

Chairman Mesolella advised Commissioner Marcello that by next month's meeting we should have some revised profiles. He believes that what was discussed during the meeting the prior week is going to be very advantageous to the Bay Commission in terms of tunnel material disposal.

He also shared that he did a couple of interviews this week and last week with regards to accepting the Heritage Award on behalf of Narragansett Bay Commission. He talked about the contributions that CSO Phase III will make to the redevelopment and the revitalization of Pawtucket and East Providence. Unfortunately, only Ms. Horridge and the Chairman will be able to attend the ceremony in person, but the event will be available to be watched live if anyone is interested.

6. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Rotella and seconded by Commissioner MacQueen. The vote taken by the Commission was unanimous. The motion carried.

The Board of Commissioners meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Laurie Horridge
Executive Director/Secretary