

The regular monthly meeting of the Womelsdorf-Robeson Joint Authority was held Wednesday, May 28, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Womelsdorf Borough Hall.

It was noted that in order to assist in the preparation of the meeting minutes, the Secretary records the meeting. The recording is deleted following the approval by the Board of the minutes and no permanent recording is kept by the Secretary.

The following members were present:

Steve Bright Ralph Honigmann Rod Lebo Mark Spotts Jack Morris Barbara Orth

Solicitor Jestyn Payne, Dennis Miller, Jacob Sonnen and Glenn Eberly (Authority Operators) were also in attendance.

Matthew Miller was absent.

The meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag of the USA.

Solicitor advised all that the secretary records the meeting to assist in preparing minutes. Recording is deleted after minutes are approved.

Visitors: Blake Keener, Nat Garber, Larry Lloyd, Will Hawke, Kory Koehler, Tracy Rice and Joe Brackman.

Blake Keener and Nat Garber: Looking for permission to move logs across WRJA property since they are landlocked otherwise. The logger who originally started this project did not get proper approval to remove logs. Chairman stated that we will take under consideration – since it is not on the agenda, we cannot go further with this. Mark Spotts commented it is 1,760 yards to get to the Richie property. In October 2023 White Oak Sawmill came to ask the same question. We denied due to damage this would make to our property.

Will Hawke: Continuing to walk the property and found another 20 tree stands that should be removed. This brings the total to approximately 50 and nothing has been done yet. Have not seen a change in the rules on horses – are they allowed or not? Chairman stated they are not allowed. Need to update signage.

Kory Koehler: Feels WRJA is lacking transparency on decision to ban bikes. People have been hunting the land for a long time and the bikers understand they may not want to share the land when they are only able to hunt a few months out of the year. Feels this is causing issues. Kory cited other groups that utilize rules for hunters. He said that Berks Nature reached out to Berks Trail Works to ask if they could be a resource to maintaining the trails if/when the easement goes through. He noted 3 propositions where WRJA could delegate action to other groups.

1. Restore access for bikes on the property as it once was
2. Give hunters exclusive access during hunting season. From October through January no other user groups would be allowed on the property.
3. WRJA would be open to organizations such as Berks Trail Works to allow the delegation of objectives.

Hoping that everyone can work together to meet all goals.

Please consider adding this proposal to next months agenda.

Chairman questioned Kory's comment about Berks Nature reaching out to Berks Trail Works. It was determined that Kory misspoke. Chairman said no outside group can say who uses the land or how it is used. Mark Spotts commented that any agreement with Berks Nature is to preserve/conservation of the land. Larry Lloyd stated the easement would not have anything to do with land management.

Kory said someone from Berks Nature contacted a member of their organization about maintenance but wasn't sure who. Chairman asked him to get that information and bring it to the next meeting.

Tracy Rice: Attended meetings before and stated she is supporting the conservation easement.

Engineer: Chairman talked about a meeting with the personnel committee and discussed issues with SSM Group. They are recommending dismissing SSM Group. Solicitor distributed a packet with Fred Ebert Engineering information and rate schedule. Chairman noted problems with SSM were billing issues and communication. On motion by Steve Bright, seconded by Ralph Honigmann, and adopted by unanimous vote of the Board, (a) the appointment of SSM Group, Inc. as engineers of the Authority is terminated as of May 28, 2025, and (b) subject to execution of an Engagement Letter satisfactory to the Authority, Ebert Engineering, Inc. is appointed as the Authority's engineer at the billing rates heretofore provided to the Authority. Next step: Engagement Letter with rates and Certificate of Insurance. Fred Ebert stated that the transition for meeting with SSM, transitioning files over and creating initial project list will not be billed to WRJA. Fred will work with Dennis and get with Jamie Lorah at SSM to obtain files. Fred will sign any waivers needed to obtain the documents. Fred gave board members his business card with contact information. We are looking forward to working with Ebert Engineering!

Secretary's Report:

The minutes of the meeting held Wednesday, April 23, 2025 were reviewed and approved on a motion by Rod Lebo, seconded by Jack Morris. Motion carried.

Correspondence: Letter regarding acquisition of Envirep a Cummins-Wagner Company along with a W-9 (gave to Ralph), Letter from County of Berks Tax Claim Bureau regarding 226 W Franklin and the amount of \$185.40 we will receive through distribution of the upset tax sale, Letter and map regarding proposed timber sale, announcement from Diversified Technologies about Cyber Security, 2025-26 Municipal Authorities Act and Related Laws handbook (gave to Solicitor but can order more if anyone else is interested) ArcUser magazines (gave to Dennis). Also received an email from Tulpehocken FFA, postcard regarding solar development and brochure from K2 Renew out of Colorado with a land opportunity.

Treasurer's Report:

1. The Treasurer's Report showing a balance of \$1,966,761.41 was approved on a motion by Jack Morris, seconded by Rod Lebo. Unanimously approved.
2. Bills in the amount of \$46,694.99 were presented for payment, which were ratified or approved on motion by Jack Morris, seconded by Rod Lebo. Motion was unanimous. Kappe invoice and SSM invoices are included with these bills.
3. Ralph has been searching for a new auditor. William Koch Associates seem willing. They will be in contact to let us know for sure if they can take us on as a client. Solicitor Payne noted that they share numerous clients with Koch. Municipal auditing is unique and that Koch will do a good job. David Bright (sewer authority) contacted Ralph to say they are having trouble finding an auditor. Hoping Koch might be able to assist them as well.
4. Edward Jones statements are available upon request.

Engineer's Report:

Fred Ebert will be reporting next month. For May, Jestyn Payne will report.

Solicitor's Report:

1. **East High Street Subdivision:** At a standstill. Spoke with Larry Grabowski at C2C. There is hesitancy with Scott Doughman regarding signing the easement agreement.
2. **Gold Springs Water Storage Tank Repairs:** Chairman reported they are having issues with paint. They will work it out and report to the board. Engineer commented on paint issues.
3. **Maple Avenue Apartments:** As mentioned in the past, Dave Randler paid tapping fees. Now Bachman owns. Financial security information came from C2C Design. If they want to produce new cost estimate they should do so. We would be open to looking at that. Attorney for Bachman, Brett Fegley was not aware but asked about revising the improvements agreement. Chairman recommends having C2C change the estimate. Dennis stated they have not received plans. Ralph said we need a \$4000 plan review fee whenever this moves forward.

4. **Robeson Fish and Game Association:** Attorney Fiorini indicated the RFGA would like a meeting with WRJA representative(s) and with zoning engineer, Technicon. Mark commented that he feels this is the wrong course of action and will cost much money for RFGA.
5. **Bethany Road Project (CMJM, LLC):** Engineer will reach out to C2C to get updates.
6. **Berks Nature Potential Conservation Easements:** Solicitor distributed a packet. Recommends committee to meet to address questions and concerns. Larry Lloyd commented on the upcoming processes.
 - After the draft conservation easement document and the sales agreement are agreeable to Berks Nature and WRJA, then they are sent to the Bureau of Forestry for their review and approval.
 - The sales agreement would be signed first. The final conservation easement is not signed until closing. The easement cannot be finalized until after the survey and updated appraisal.
 - The sales agreement will need to be revisited, and a new agreement signed after the appraisal update and the survey is completed. The updated sales agreement is the basis for the settlement sheet.
 - Their current preference for the Holder of the conservation easement is the Bureau of Forestry with Berks Nature as Administrative Agent as outlined in the easement document.
 - Their current preference for the Sales agreement is between WRJA (seller) and Berks Nature (buyer) as outlined in the Sales Agreement.
 - The MOU, Supplemental Agreement would be signed concurrently with the sales agreement, but it will need to be revisited after all the transactional items are in place and after all grant awards have been identified. A new MOU, supplemental agreement is signed after the new updated sales agreement is signed.
 - Assuming everything falls into place, closing would be in Fall of 2026.Talked about funding. Larry is working on this and explained to the board. The committee will talk after meeting to set a meeting date. (June 20, 9AM at Kozloff Stoudt)
Mark Spotts and Chairman attended a Heidelberg Township meeting where they spoke about a conservation easement. They mentioned revising zoning - turning authority property into a conservation zone.
7. **Trageser and Martin Easements:** No action
8. **Policy/Regulation on Meter Pits and Meters:** Received some information from Dan Standish (SSM). Solicitor will send Engineer the WRJA Rules and Regulations. Should add cost of repairing/replacing commercial meters. Fred will help with this with the help of Dennis and Glenn. Fred said they have samples too.
9. **Alden on Sixth:** Received a plan from SSM. Engineer will follow up with Dan Standish/SSM to see if a letter was sent to the developer. This development would afford us an ability of a loop to tie in dead ends. If no letter was sent, Engineer will take care of this.
10. **New Timber Project:** Joe Brackman made a presentation for timbering County Line sidehill - 88 acres. This was last logged in 2012. There is 1 access easement which goes in front of a house. Joe reported the owner was ok with this in the past. He gave a timeline of Fall with a September bid opening. Motion to proceed by Ralph Honigmann, seconded by Jack Morris. Motion carried.

Operator's Report:

1. Fixed problem meters
2. Patch work is done
3. Continuing leak detection

Other Board Member Comments:

Barbara Orth: upcoming vacations.....

Ralph: June 1 to 12

Steve: June 12 to 22

Barb: June 26 to July 7

Mark Spotts: Talked to salesman from BerkOne who do bulk mailing and billing. They are in the billing and utility business. Mark would like to give them information on us to get comparison with Diversified. He may come to give us a presentation.

Chairman's Report:

Steve Bright:

1. Water rate increase phase II. Received minimal calls on Phase I. Would like to meet with committee to talk about Phase II. WRJA board agreed the committee should proceed.
2. Well site training with SSM was really great. Want to delve into this further once Fred Ebert is established.
3. Tank #2 rehab. Need to get going on this.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:42 PM. by Steve Bright, seconded by Jack Morris. Motion carried.

Next meeting: *Wednesday, June 25, 2025 at 7PM at the Womelsdorf Borough Hall.*

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Orth

Barbara Orth

Secretary

A WATER AUTHORITY — SUPPLYING WOMELSDORF, ROBESONIA AND SHERIDAN, PA.

P.O. Box 94 Womelsdorf, PA 19567

Phone: 610-589-2740

Fax: 610-589-1340

Treasurer's Report APRIL 2025

Balance March 31 \$301,794.67

Customer Collections	\$ 86,098.62
Cert. Fees	\$ 360.00
Other Receipts	\$ 193.02
Shut Offs	\$ 600.00
Meter Recovery Fee	\$ 869.00
Transfer from PLGIT	\$ 250,000.00

Total Income

+\$ 338,120.64
\$357,002.11

Disburements for APRIL

\$571,186.63

Total Disburements

-\$571,186.63
\$68,728.68

Treasury Notes

Expires 02.15.27	2.250%	\$100,000.00
Expires 08.15.28	2.875%	\$140,000.00
Expires 05.15.29	2.375%	<u>\$105,000.00</u>
		\$345,000.00

+\$345,000.00
\$413,728.68

PLGIT

\$ 1,006,293.15

Transfer to checking

\$ -250,000.00

Interest

4.41%

+\$3,781.06

+\$759,671.12
\$1,173,399.80

Edward Jones account value of MARCH 29-April 25, 2025

+793,361.61

\$1,966,761.41