

UTILITY ADVISORY TASK FORCE
Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2021 - 7:00 PM
Warren Craft Meeting Room

The mission of the Utility Advisory Task Force is to assess the level of communication and service from the utility companies providing services to Bernards Township, identify areas of concern and in need of improvement, suggest ways to collect and report chronic outages and disruptions, facilitate and/or coordinate resident feedback to the Board of Public Utilities, and represent Bernards Township customers before the BPU when appropriate.

Present: Edelstein, Estrin, Fischer, Guibord, Romano, Shah
Absent: Fields, Monaco, Neiman, Robina

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Flag Salute**
- 3. Open Public Meeting Statement**
- 4. Approval of Minutes**

The April 21, 2021, meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

5. Bernards Sewerage Authority Presentation

Tom Timko, Bernards Township Engineer and Director of the Bernards Township Sewerage Authority (“Authority”) made a presentation to the Utility Advisory Task Force (“Task Force”). He reported that the Authority serves 75% of Bernards Township (“Township”) and the other 25% (The Hills) is served by the New Jersey American Water Company. He described the collection system as being a combination of gravity mains and pumping stations. He reported that there are 110 miles of sewers, 3.5 miles of force mains and 11 pumping stations with generators. He said that the treatment plant can process up to 5 million gallons a day and is a 24/7 operation with staff on site 7 days a week. A monitoring system is used for overnight hours and there are 2,800 KW generators at the plant. The 2020 budget was 6 million dollars, of which 2 million was for capital improvements.

Mr. Timko said that the treatment process consists of 1) several stages of screening to remove large items that can harm the machinery, 2) waste pumped to oxidation ditches that hold 1.7 million gallons, and 3) further clarifying where various chemical levels are monitored, including phosphorus. Clear water is then discharged into the river and the remaining bulk waste or sludge is transported offsite via carting trucks. Mr. Guibord asked which river the clean water is discharged into and Mr. Timko replied it is the Dead River. Mr. Timko stated that the Authority operates at stricter standards than the state mandates. In response to a question from Ms. Shah, Mr. Timko stated that all treatment plants are ideally moving to ultraviolet light (“UV”) treatment versus chemical treatment,

but it would cost the Township approximately 35 million dollars to convert to UV treatment.

Mr. Timko explained that during storms, rainwater and illegal sump pumps impact the amount of water flowing into the plant. Smoke and video inspections are done to find illegal hook ups. Maintenance on the system is based on the budget for the year, rather than a calendar-based approach. All pumping stations and the treatment plant have been updated and reflect current standards. Mr. Guibord asked how often bulk waste is trucked out. Mr. Timko replied daily. Ms. Shah asked if there were any issues historically with the treatment plant. Mr. Timko described a one-off event that caused the generators to run but not as quickly as they should have. Mr. Guibord asked how long the generators at the plant could run. Mr. Timko said they will run as long as there is fuel for them and added it would be beneficial if the Authority could leverage solar fields in the Township. Mr. Edelstein asked about solar fields in the Township.

6. Altice USA/Optimum Update – The Hills

Mr. Guibord reported that Marilyn Davis of Optimum advised that on May 13 the internet service upgrades in The Hills were completed.

7. Resident Survey Update

Mr. Guibord said that the survey is ready to go out. The Board of Education is going to put the survey in the virtual School District Friday Folders. The survey will be announced in the Bernardsville News, Patch, Rave, TAPinto Basking Ridge and Facebook. Nextdoor was discussed but determined to be repetitive of others. Ms. Shah said she would post the survey on some Facebook groups and WhatsApp. Mr. Estrin will post the survey with the Hills Master Association. Mr. Fisher will do the same with the Cedar's and Society Hill's management associations. Ms. Shah questioned how quickly we could send the survey out. Mr. Guibord replied that it could go out tomorrow and tonight he would send everyone the link to the survey for distribution.

8. Task Force Report

Mr. Guibord stated that, having spoken to Mayor Fields, the June Task Force report to the Township Committee ("TC") will be a progress report, and any findings and recommendations to be made to the TC will be in a later report.

9. Public Comment

None

10. June Meeting Agenda

A PSE&G representative will make a presentation to the Task Force in June. Mr. Edelstein questioned when an Optimum representative would attend a meeting, and Ms. Shah recommended that a Verizon representative also attend a meeting.

11. Comments by Members

None

12. Adjournment

Meeting Adjourned at 7:55PM

Submitted by Scott Guibord

On behalf of the Utility Advisory Task Force