

**UTILITY ADVISORY TASK FORCE  
MEETING MINUTES  
July 21, 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, Fields, Fischer, Guibord, Romano, Shah

Absent: Monaco, Neiman

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Flag Salute**
- 3. Open Public Meeting Statement**
- 4. Approval of Minutes (June 23, 2021)**

The June 23, 2021, meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

**5. PSE&G Presentation – Inspection, Maintenance and Reliability Plan**

Michael Coyle, Public Affairs Manager of Public Service Electric & Gas Company (“PSE&G”) gave a presentation on the PSE&G gas system infrastructure. He stated that PSE&G serves 323 municipalities in New Jersey and 70% of the state’s population, and receives gas from the Transco, Texas Eastern, Algonquin and Columbia interstate pipelines. He provided a PowerPoint presentation and described the gas delivery system where high-pressure pipelines deliver gas to a city gate at which pressure is reduced and the gas then distributed to serve power plants, industrial customers, large commercial customers and residential customers. On very cold days, PSE&G peaking plants containing liquefied natural gas (LNG) are used to meet increased demand. Generally, gas mains run through the streets, regulators moderate the amount of gas going into a neighborhood, and valves control the gas supply to smaller sections of that neighborhood. He noted that there are 10,418 gas meters serving the customers in Bernards Township, most of which are read remotely as meter readers drive down the streets.

Mr. Coyle reported that PSE&G has replaced thousands of miles of gas pipes under a capital improvement plan, which includes replacing older cast iron pipes of which PSE&G has the most in the country. In response to Ms. Shah’s question as to whether there are cast iron pipes in Bernards Township, Mr. Coyle offered to look into the matter and report back to the Task Force. He reported that regarding communications, PSE&G provides a dedicated phone line for Township Police, Fire Departments and the Office of Emergency Management (“OEM”). Ms. Fields stated that Bernards Township has an OEM representative who manages town-wide issues. Mr. Coyle emphasized the importance of having as much information as possible when calling in to report a problem to PSE&G customer service. He added that the PSE&G customer website has a “My Account” section

that he encourages all customers to sign up for which, among many other things, is good for reporting and tracking outages. Ms. Shah asked about gas leaks. Mr. Coyle explained that PSE&G has “Leakmobiles” to detect suspected or reported gas leaks, and also serve as a preventative tool. Mr. Edelstein sensed that many leaks might be due to residential contractor work, and Mr. Coyle stated that most leaks are due to road repaving projects that disturb the gas pipes. Ms. Shah asked why PSE&G is not proactive, rather than reactive, in replacing cast iron pipes. Mr. Coyle explained that the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities does not allow this as it would be a tremendous unjustified expense passed on to the rate payer. Rather, PSE&G uses a risk-based approach of replacing (or patching) gas mains as and when they leak. Ms. Romano asked about the interstate pipelines that run through Bernards Township. Mr. Coyle assumed that there must be metering stations nearby and that these interstate pipelines are transporting natural gas that ultimately supplies the Township.

**6. Task Force Progress Report Update**

Mr. Guibord reported that he submitted the Task Force Progress Report to Mayor Fields who in turn submitted to the Township Committee.

**7. Resident Survey Review**

Mr. Fischer and Ms. Shah reported that they spoke at the end of June on the survey results and how to filter/present them. Mr. Fisher will circulate survey percentages and draft graphs over the next week to the Task Force members. Mr. Guibord proposed writing narratives to accompany the graphs. The members discussed some of the percentages from the survey.

**8. Public Comment**

None.

**9. August Meeting Agenda**

The survey results will be reviewed at the August meeting.

**10. Comments by Members**

None.

**11. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

**Submitted by Scott Guibord**

**On behalf of the Utility Advisory Task Force**