

# ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY

## 2020 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### MANAGEMENT

- In response to the COVID-19 emergency disaster, the Board of Commissioners (the “Board”) issued a Declaration of Emergency (the “Declaration”) on March 17, 2020 consistent with the directives set forth by Executive orders issued by the Governor of the State of New York and by state and local health departments.
- The Board directed the Authority’s Executive Staff to implement the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (the “Plan”), reducing the number of workers reporting to a worksite, allowing employees to work remotely, compensating at-risk employees, compensating rotating and furloughed employees, altering timekeeping procedures, and ensuring all mission-driven essential functions and operations would be carried out during the pandemic.
- The Authority created an on-line health screening questionnaire for all employees and visitors seeking clearance to report to an Authority workplace or worksite.
- The Board made several amendments to the Declaration including extending its effective date and adopting the Health and Safety Plan consistent with State-mandated requirements of the NY Forward Phased Reopening Plan.
- The Board of Commissioners suspended or amended certain policies and procedures in accordance with the Governor’s Executive Orders and the Authority’s Declaration of Emergency.
- The Authority, with the assistance of a consultant, completed a Risk and Resiliency Assessment (RRA), along with an Emergency Response Plan (ERP), in accordance with Section 213 of America’s Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 and submitted a certification of compliance to the EPA.
- The Authority, with the assistance of a consultant, completed a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) to ensure that critical and essential functions are continued with minimal delay under emergency conditions.

- In restructuring its Claims/Risk Management Unit, the Authority now uses its insurance broker to conduct risk assessment, to set insurance requirements on contracts, and to review certificates of insurance and bonds.

## **OPERATIONS**

- The Authority began implementing the Comprehensive Strategic Plan (CSP) that establishes a 15 mile per year replacement goal for transmission and distribution mains.
- The Authority started the design phase for improvements to increase the capacity of Van Der Water Treatment Plant to expand its northern and eastern service area, and to portions of Genesee County.
- The Authority started upgrading and improving its existing powdered activated carbon systems (PAC) at Van Der Water and Sturgeon Point Water Treatment Plants.
- The Authority started the design phase for extensive improvements to the Ball Pump Station.
- The Authority acquired four new analytical instruments, including a TOC analyzer, GC/MS, ICP/MS and IC/LC/MS/MS and welcomed two new analytical chemists. The addition of these instruments and personnel to the department has allowed ECWA to expand its list of certifications and perform the majority of NYSDOH and EPA required testing in-house.
- The Authority, with assistance from outside consultants, upgraded operating systems, added additional hardware and software for remote access, and made other systems improvements.
- The Authority expanded its Engineering Department in response to the planned implementation of improvements identified in the Capital Improvement Plan. These improvements require planning, design and construction of improvements to the Authority's infrastructure. Experienced and qualified professional engineers were hired to oversee and manage the projects being developed and implemented.
- The Authority entered a Cooperative Agreement with the Village of Lancaster for the installation of a water main project.
- The Authority entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Buffalo and Erie County Industrial Land Development Corporation (ILDC) to join as a co-applicant on a funding application to construct critical infrastructure improvements necessary to further develop the former Bethlehem Steel site.

## **FINANCE**

- In January 2021, the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) awarded the Authority the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its 2019 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR).
- The Authority retained a financial consultant to provide consulting services, update the cost of service study and rate structure model and to train Authority personnel on maintaining the rate model.
- The Authority adopted its Annual Investment Guidelines and subsequently amended the Collateralizing of Deposits provision thereby providing the opportunity to improve money market accounts and revenues.
- The Authority has reviewed, revised, and published its Tariff for 2021.

## **OVERSIGHT**

- The Board adopted a Policy and Procedures for Data Security to implement and maintain reasonable safeguards to protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the private information it collects from employees, customers and vendors and to establish a notification protocol in the event of a data breach.
- The Board reauthorized and continued a Policy for Defense and Indemnification of Members, Officers and Employees (Policy No. 94.0).
- The Authority adopted a revised Code of Ethics & Conflicts of Interest Policy.
- The Authority adopted a revised Annual Financial Disclosure Statement.
- The Authority adopted a revised Whistle Blower Policy
- Forty-six (46) Authority employees filed Financial Disclosure Statements with the Authority's Independent Ethics Panel.
- The Legal Department conducted a legal audit of the 2019 FOIL files and reported its finding to the Board of Commissioners.
- The Legal Department drafted, and the Board adopted the revised standardized agreements for Domestic Services, Private Fire Protection (PFP), Combined Domestic/PFP Agreements, Hydrant Relocation and Main Extensions consistent with the provisions of the Authority's Tariff.

- The Board of Commissioners reviewed and revised the following policies and procedures:
  - Policy No. 9.0 Use of Authority Vehicles
  - Policy No. 11.0 Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest Policy
  - Policy No. 16.0 Whistleblower Protection Policy
  - Policy No. 12.0 Termination and Severance Pay
  - Policy No. 44.A Healthcare Waiver
  - Policy No. 46.0 Medical Coverage for Retirees
  - Policy No. 94.1 Fleet Management

## **PUBLIC ACCESS & TRANSPARENCY**

- All Board and Committee Meetings are streamed live.
- The Office of the Secretary received and responded to forty-one (41) requests for information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL).
- The Authority continues to update its website, in compliance with guidelines published by the Authorities Budget Office.