

**MINUTES of the Lower Township MUA**

**Meeting Date: January 7, 2026**

**Call to order:** A meeting of the Lower Township MUA, was held at 2900 Bayshore Road, Villas, NJ, 08251. The meeting convened at 5:00pm.

**ROLL CALL OF THE MEMBERS**

Jacqueline Henderson Present  
James P. Ridgway Present  
Harrison Bitting Present  
Karen Rechner via Zoom  
Bryan Steere Present

**STAFF / PROFESSIONALS**

Steven A. Morris, Esq., The Morris Law Firm, MUA Solicitor  
Ronald N. Curcio, PE, Polistina & Associates, MUA Engineer  
Stephen Testa, RHT & K, MUA Financial Consultant  
Stephen Blankenship, Executive Director  
Melissa Jasinski, Board Secretary

- Call to Order
- Determination of Quorum
- Sunshine Law
- Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence
- Comments or Questions from the Public on Agenda Items – There were none.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of Minutes: December 3, 2025 Regular Minutes
2. Approval of Bills
  - a. **Resolution No. 1-2026 \$49,990.79** Operating Account (Authorizes payment of operating expenses up to \$50,000)
  - b. **Resolution No. 2-2026 \$357,387.96** Excess operating account (Authorizes payment of operating expenses in excess of \$50,000)
3. **Resolution No. 3-2026** Authorizing Transfer from the Sturdy Capital Improvement Fund Account to Sturdy Operating Account. For Payment of **Sewer** Capital items in the amount of **\$35,586.50**
4. **Resolution No. 4-2026** Authorizing Transfer from the Sturdy Capital Improvement Fund Account to Sturdy Operating Account. For Payment of **Water** Capital items in the amount of **\$1,285,112.82**
5. **Resolution No. 5-2026** Customer Change Resolution Approving Reductions to Accounts  
*Motion was made by Mr. Bitting for the approval of the Business Consent Agenda and seconded by Mrs. Henderson.*  
*Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye*  
*The Chair asked the public if there were any questions on the Regular Agenda: There were none.*

**REGULAR AGENDA**

6. **Preliminary Commercial (Residential) Application** – 101/103 Oak Street (Del Haven)  
Applicant, David A Eife, reviewed the proposed construction of a three-story duplex at 101/1-3 Oak Street, Del Haven. As the property is located in Middle Township, the applicant is requesting that the Authority provide water service. Depending on the building's construction, a utility easement may be required to serve one of the properties, and one

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service may come off Oak Street and the other off Sunray Beach. The applicant is collecting information to address this issue and plans to file a “final” application with the Authority.

- 7. Final Commercial (Residential) Application – 9900 Pacific Avenue (Diamond Beach)**  
Mr. Curcio reviewed the commercial/residential sewer application for four (4) new duplex dwellings at 9900 Pacific Avenue, Diamond Beach. The development will include the construction of two (2) duplexes fronting North Station Avenue and two (2) duplexes fronting Austin Avenue for a total of eight (8) new residential units. The property currently contains a restaurant with a second-floor apartment, which will be demolished and has a single sewer service. Public water service will be provided by the City of Wildwood. Joseph Maffei, Engineering Design Associates, and owner/applicant, LJKQ Real Estate, NJ LLC, are in agreement with the items noted in Polistina’s Review Letter, dated January 5, 2026. The applicant currently holds two (2) sewer allocations from the previous residence, and will be required to purchase six (6) additional sewer allocation fees at \$1,600.00 each.  
***Motion was made by Mr. Ridgway and seconded by Mr. Bitting for Resolution No. 6-2026 Approving a Multi-Residential Sewer Application for 9900 Pacific Avenue by LJKQ Real Estate NJ, LLC subject to the conditions noted in Polistina review letter, dated January 5, 2026.***  
***Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye***
- 8. Resolution No. 7-2026 – Ratifying an Award of an Emergency Water Main Repair Contract to Perna Finnigan, Inc.**  
Steven Pierce, LTMUA Director of Operations and Maintenance, reviewed a water main leak that occurred on December 13, 2026, in the northbound approach lane to the State Highway Rt. 109 Bridge. Due to the problem's complexity and the critical geographic location, it was determined that this repair was outside the Authority's safe operating parameters and scope. Perna Finnigan, Inc. was authorized to perform an emergency repair at a cost not to exceed \$53,000.00.  
***Motion was made by Mr. Bitting and seconded by Mrs. Rechner for Resolution No. 7-2026 Ratifying Award of an Emergency Repair Contract with Perna Finnigan Inc., for an Emergency Water Main Repair in the North Bound Approach Lane to the State Highway Route 109 Bridge in the amount not to exceed \$53,000.***  
***Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye***
- 9. Resolution No. 8-2026 - Awarding an Engineering Contract for the Replacement of the Emergency Generator at the Airport Pump Station**  
With increased flow from the Vacuum Sewer System entering the Airport Pump Station and ongoing development at the Airport Complex, an emergency backup generator is necessary. Polistina & Associates, LLC has submitted a proposal dated January 2, 2026, to perform engineering services for the replacement of the emergency generator at the LTMUA’s Airport Pump Station in an amount not to exceed \$10,100.00.  
***Motion was made by Mr. Bitting and seconded by Mrs. Rechner for Resolution No. 8-2026 Awarding Engineering Contract for the Replacement of the Emergency Generator at the Airport Pump Station in an amount not to exceed \$10,100.00.***

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*Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye*

**10. Resolution No. 9-2026 - Approving an Engineering Contract for the Inspection and Rehabilitation of Well No. 2**

The Authority is undertaking annual rehabilitation of its existing wells. Well 2, located on Fire Lane in North Cape May, is the first well to be inspected and rehabilitated. Polistina & Associates, LLC has submitted a proposal dated January 2, 2026, to perform engineering services for the inspection and rehabilitation of LTMUA Potable Water Well No. 2 in an amount not to exceed \$9,040.00.

*Motion was made by Mrs. Henderson and seconded by Mrs. Rechner for Resolution No. 9-2026 Approving an Engineering Contract for the Inspection and Rehabilitation of Well No. 2 in an amount not to exceed \$9,040.00.*

*Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye*

**11. Resolution No. XX-2026 - Authorizing the Purchase of Submersible Pumps & Appurtenances**

This item will require advertising prior to the passage of a resolution, which will occur in the coming months and will be re-presented to the board at a future meeting.

*Motion was made by Mr. Bitting and seconded by Mrs. Rechner to table the Authorization of the Purchase of Submersible Pumps & Appurtenances.*

*Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye*

**12. Cape May County MUA 2026 Rate Schedule**

The Executive Director reviewed the Cape May County MUA's rate charges affecting the LTMUA (Shawcrest and LTMUA effluent disposal). The proposed 2026 service charge for effluent disposal is \$630,972.00.

**13. Resolution No. 10-2026 - Authorizing an Executive Session– Contract Negotiations**

*Motion was made by Mrs. Henderson and seconded by Mr. Ridgway for Resolution No. 10-2026 Authorizing an Executive Session.*

*Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Aye, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye*

*The Board entered into closed session at 6:44 pm and returned to regular session at 6:49 pm.*

**Administrative Reports**

**Solicitor-** Nothing to report.

**Engineer**

- Town Bank Road Interceptor Lining Project: The contractor completed lining work and should complete the manhole rehabilitation work within the next month.
- Additional lining associated with the Racetrack Drive and E Tampa Avenue easements will be solicited.
- The Poplarwood and Diamond Beach Pump Station Projects bid openings are scheduled for January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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- The three (3) pump station project (Racetrack Drive, Route 9, and the WWTP Headworks), financed through the IBank, is progressing with modifications being made and applications being re-filed.
- Diamond Beach Force Main Project: The contractor has not yet started and has indicated difficulty in obtaining county permits. In the interim, issues with the valves at Route 9 required immediate work to install a bypass. The contractor agreed to perform the work as a change order to their existing contract.

**Financial Consultant-**

- Discussed submitting reimbursement request to the EPA for a large payment for the NCM Watermain Replacement Project- Phase I. The IBank will schedule short-term financing once the Authority's 2024 Audit is completed. The audit is in progress.

**Executive Director**

- The contractor is actively working on the NCM Watermain Project. An update was provided.
- Lower Township Public Works Complex: A watermain extension for the project was discussed previously. DeBlasio is working to finalize the design for the Township. The main could be installed as a change order to the Authority's NCM Water Main contract.
- Staff is discussing the replacement of an existing older water main with galvanized services with DeBlasio under the NCM Water Main Project -Phase II. This may result in a change order to DeBlasio's engineering contract.
- A group of engineering students at Lower Township Regional High School is currently working on a hand-wash project and has reached out to the Township and Authority for guidance.
- The meter replacement project is ongoing, with ~ 1,700 meters being replaced.

**Public Comments-**

-LTMUA retirees, their family members, and members of the public made statements regarding the potential of changes to retiree health benefits.

-Current LTMUA employees made statements about changes to health benefits and ongoing contract negotiations.

-Ms. Conroy, a property owner in Villas, followed up on a water leak beneath her property that occurred last year. She was instructed to submit documentation related to any damages she incurred as a result of the leak. She also indicated that she wanted to consolidate services at three commercial units into one. She was instructed to submit a written request indicating the same.

**Comments from the Board**— There were none.

***Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00pm was made by Mrs. Rechner and seconded by Mrs. Henderson.***

***Roll call vote: Mr. Bitting- Absent, Mrs. Rechner- Aye, Mrs. Henderson- Aye, Mr. Ridgway- Aye, Mr. Steere- Aye***