



PROVIDENCE WATER

Tap Water Delivers

**THE CITY OF PROVIDENCE
WATER SUPPLY BOARD
April 15, 2020 MINUTES**

The Hon. Jorge O. Elorza
Mayor

Ricky Caruolo
General Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Xaykham Khamsyvoravong
Chairperson

Joseph D. Cataldi
Vice Chairperson

Michael J. Correia
Council President Pro Tempore

Jo-Ann Ryan
Councilperson

Sara Silveria
Ex-Officio

Cristen L. Raucci, Esq.
Member

Dr. Alma M. Guerrero Bready
Member

Carissa R. Richard
Secretary

William E. O’Gara, Esq.
Legal Advisor

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Xaykham Khamsyvoravong, Chairman
Mr. Joseph Cataldi, Vice Chairman
Councilman Michael Correia, Board Member
Ms. Sara Silveria, Ex-Officio
Ms. Cristen Raucci, Esq., Board Member
Dr. Alma Guerrero Bready, Board Member

Mr. Ricky Caruolo, General Manager
Mr. William O’Gara, Esq., Legal Advisor
Ms. Carissa Richard, Board Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

Councilwoman Jo-Ann Ryan, Board Member

PROVIDENCE WATER SUPPLY BOARD STAFF ATTENDING:

Mr. Gregg Giasson, Deputy General Manager - Operations
Mr. Peter J. Pallozzi, Deputy General Manager – Administration
Mr. Antonio M. Araujo III, Director – Support Services
Mr. Richard Pimental, Network Administrator – Information Technology
Mr. Levi Swanson, Governmental Aide

OTHERS ATTENDING:

None

MEMBER

Rhode Island Water Works Assn.
New England Water Works Assn.
American Water Works Assn.
Water Research Foundation

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Pursuant to Executive Order 20-05, Issued March 16, 2020
The Providence Water Supply Board held a meeting by teleconference
PUBLIC ACCESS TO MEETING – DIAL INTO CONFERENCE CALL:
Call #: 1 (562) 247-8422
Access Code: 743-552-379

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Khamsyvovavong called the meeting to order at 3:32 pm and noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we are currently using electronic communications to conduct meetings.

Legal Advisor O’Gara stated that per Governor Raimondo’s Executive Order 20-05, issued March 16, 2020, the Providence Water Supply Board is relieved from the prohibitions regarding the use of telephonic or electronic communication to conduct meetings provided that it is meeting for an essential purpose and makes provisions to ensure public access to the meeting by adequate, alternative means. The Executive Order defines essential purpose as “that which is necessary for continued government operations or to ensure compliance with statutory or regulatory guidelines.” This relief is in full force and effective through April 15, 2020.

2. ROLL CALL:

A quorum was established by calling attendance of all Board members. Chairman Khamsyvovavong welcomed Dr. Alma Guerrero Bready as a new member of the Board.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

3.1 January 15, 2020 Meeting

A motion by Vice Chairman Cataldi, seconded by Councilman Correia, to approve Agenda Item 3.1 was made. All members present were in favor of the motion. The motion passed 6 to 0.

4. REPORTS:

4.1 Status Report from General Manager

Chairman Khamsyvovavong noted that due to the challenging circumstances, the agenda for this meeting had been simplified. There are no standard monthly reports and most matters have been deferred until the next meeting.

General Manager (GM) Ricky Caruolo provided the Board with a verbal status report. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Providence Water (PW) has been operating with a skeleton workforce in order to continue to deliver safe and reliable drinking water to our customers. March 13, 2020 was the last day that our Central Operations Facility (COF) was open to the public. GM Caruolo noted that he has been reporting to the COF every day, along with Deputy GM Gregg Giasson and Tony Araujo, Director of Support Services. Maintenance employees are brought in to ensure that the facility is properly cleaned and disinfected. There is also an emergency crew that reports to the COF and they are practicing social distancing.

GM Caruolo stated that he has been in constant contact with Local Union 1033 leadership in order to determine which employees from the bargaining unit are deemed essential. Employees are responding to issues by means of telecommunication. Deputy GM Peter J. Pallozzi is involved with all of the daily operations and participating in conference calls between executive management, personnel, etc.

GM Caruolo noted that in order to bill customers, we still need to read meters and are able to do this without entering homes. We have changed our customer service operations so that customers can leave voice mail messages and we are able to call them back to provide information. We are continuing to provide information for real estate closings and have had several requests for seasonal water service in places such as community garden and parks.

At the Scituate Treatment Plant, Sr. Manager Steve Soito and Manager Rich Razza are reporting to the building every day, as well as laboratory management personnel that ensure our testing is in compliance with the RI Department of Health (DOH). We also have control board personnel and two mechanics reporting to the Plant. Our biggest issue is keeping up with planned projects and preventive maintenance. We are taking care of issues as they arise and trying to stay proactive.

GM Caruolo indicated that we were able to donate N-95 masks and gloves to the DOH and we also have some masks for staff as well. We were able to pick up 10 gallons of hand sanitizer that was produced at a local brewery. We are doing what we need in order to stockpile essential items. We continue to work in conjunction with the State of Rhode Island, City of Providence and the DOH. We are one of the eight sectors identified by the Department of Homeland Security as critical infrastructure

Three of our employees have tested positive for COVID-19. In conjunction with DOH mandates, those employees are not reporting to work for 14 days. We are continuing to work on a consent agreement with the DOH regarding the disclosure of this type of information.

The Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC) has requested several reporting requirements from Providence Water. These requests are time consuming and can be somewhat difficult to process while operating with a skeleton workforce. We have had (remote/phone) hearings pertaining to our loans for \$19 million and \$3 million, as well as answering data requests as we continue to receive them. The DPUC just sent us 26 data requests with sub-parts. The Bristol County Water Authority has also sent related data requests.

We have begun to call in field crews from our Transmission and Distribution department because we have received an enormous amount of new service requests. Work crews have been reduced from five men to four. These crews would typically go to a job site with a backhoe and a crew truck and now they will report to the job site with a back hoe, crew truck and two smaller vehicles.

GM Caruolo and Deputy Giasson participated in a phone call with Mr. Jeff Diehl from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. Mr. Diehl indicated that there could possibly be a significant amount of principal forgiveness for our most recent \$ 19-million loan. Even though we have seen a decrease in billing collections, it has not been enough to raise concerns and we had no issue making our debt service payment in March. We are monitoring the Governor's press conferences on a daily basis and have voluntarily stopped charging interest to overdue accounts.

There has been significant progress with our solar project and we are looking forward to being completely green in calendar year 2020 - producing green energy and retiring the renewable energy certificates. There are some delays which are out of our control, as some of the equipment is being shipped from Spain and China. We are working to determine the length of the delays.

GM Caruolo responded to Chairman Khamisvoravong's questions about billing collections and funds on hand. Board members thanked GM Caruolo for doing an excellent job during difficult circumstances.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

There was no other business to discuss.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion by Vice Chairman Cataldi, seconded by Councilman Correia, to adjourn the meeting, was made. All members present were in favor of the motion. The motion passed 6 to 0. The meeting was adjourned at 3:39 pm.

ATTEST: A true attest.

Carissa R. Richard (electronic signature)
Board Secretary