



NORTHERN MORAIN WASTEWATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

113 Timber Trail, Island Lake, Illinois 60042

EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

November 8, 2022

Motion by President Michaels to go into Executive Session at 7:53 pm to discuss personnel issues.

2nd Mr. Ragland

4 ayes 0 nays 0 abstain

MOTION CARRIED

Reason for Executive Session:

Discussion of personnel issues.

Present at Executive Session:

Trustees: Ken Michaels, John Ragland, Timothy Brunn, Cari Tellez

District Manager: Mohammed Haque

District Clerk: Deborah Martin

District Clerk in Training: Elisa Fisher

President Michaels relayed to the Board that Luke Markko, Superintendent/ Class 1 Operator, has given his 2-week notice. The District needs the Class 1 Operator certification to keep operating. He also stated that this position can be contracted out. Manager Haque informed the Board that he got two quotes: one from Eric Lecuyer and one from Scott Trotter for contract options as a Class 1 Operator. This contractor would come to the plant on a as needed basis to review plant operations and be able to sign off on monthly DMR's and regulatory reports. A special condition of the NPDS permit requires that the District have a Class 1 Operator on Staff. The District isn't restricted to only District employees and can contract out this position. Superintendent/ Class 1 Operator Markko was the only operator that was certified as a Class 1 Operator.

Manager Haque recommended that the Board approve the contract with Trotter and Associates for the Interim Wastewater Superintendent. Trotter and Associates has an Engineer that can come out tomorrow and learn the Plant procedures. This individual will also come once a month to review reports and come if there are process control issues. Manager Haque stated that Scott has a lot of familiarity with the Plant. Manager Haque also stated that he can handle the Plant operations; however, he does not have a Class 1 Operator License.

Manager Haque advised the Board that this has been an industry-wide problem in hiring and keeping good Operators. He stated that Kishwaukee Water Reclamation District is offering a \$4,000.00 sign on bonus for operators and even with that incentive they are still struggling. He stated that he has been discussing with Joe Lapastora, District Engineer, and Chris Molidor, District Operator, about restructuring. Manager Haque distributed a handout with the District's current staff structure and the new recommended structure. Manager Haque advised the Board that Staff Engineer, Joe Lapastora, has exceptional organizational skills and is quite detailed in his work. However, he is missing out on hands on experience of plant operations and operational issues that arise. Manager Haque believes that with this restructuring of District Staff, Engineer Lapastora taking on the new role of Director of Operations, and obtaining a new Staff Engineer will provide stability, rather than hiring a new Plant Superintendent.

Manager Haque stated that there are about 10-15 Class 1 Plant Superintendent people in this area that are within driving distance to the District. Manager Haque discussed the possibility of hiring them at a reasonable rate and the reason why people do not want this role. He stated that the job is very stressful and very demanding with a 24/7 365-day schedule. He stated that he is happy with this new revision of District Staff and that District Operator, Chris Molidor, would be moved to Chief Operator. He will be responsible for the daily delegation of operational tasks to other operators. Yet there will still be a need for an Operator and a Staff Engineer.



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President Michaels asked Manager Haque about the summer Engineering Intern, Jonessa Haas; President Michaels felt that she appeared to be very interested in the operations of the District. Manger Haque stated that she just graduated with her master's degree from UW Madison and that he has been in talks with her about a job with the District. However, there are conflicts with her husband, who has been offered a job in Madison, Wisconsin. They are discussing this job offer internally.

Manager Haque reminded the Board that a lot has happened in the last 48 hours. President Michaels asked if Engineer Lapastora is on board with this new staff revision and Manager Haque stated that he was. Manager Haque also stated that he himself, Engineer Lapastora, and Operator Molidor, will be going to go test for the Operator 1 License at the next available opportunity. This will eliminate the need for the Class 1 Operator contract with Trotter and Associates. Manager Haque stated that Engineer Lapastora will have to grow into this position and that he understands this. Manager Haque indicated that Engineer Lapastora has the skill set and knowledge base to be able to do this position.

Manager Haque stated that he does not need the Board's approval to do this, he just wanted to inform the Board that this is the direction that he is heading in. Manager Haque advised the Board that there will be a slight change in the salary Ordinance. He doesn't believe that the change is significant enough that the board needs to approve it today, but the Ordinance will be up for approval in May of 2023, which will reflect this change. Manager Haque said the change is in the title of Unit 3 of the Managerial/ Engineering Staff Exempt, Grade 5 from Superintendent to Operations Director. The Board acknowledged the title change.

Trustee Ragland reconfirmed that the District will be hiring a new Operator and that Operator Molidor will be moving into a new position as Chief Operator, a position that Manger Haque reiterated did not exist before within the District. Trustee Ragland reconfirmed that Engineer Lapastora will be taking on the new position of Director of Operations, which is a replacement for the position of Superintendent. Manger Haque stated that the role of Chief Operator is the bridge between the Director of Operations and the Operators. Manager Haque stated that the only new position that is being added is the Staff Engineer, as Engineer Lapastora will be moving into a new role. Trustee Ragland reconfirmed that NMWRD staff has 4 months to get certified.

No board action was taken.

Motion by President Michaels to close Executive Session and reconvene the Regular Meeting at 8:02 pm.
2nd Mr. Ragland.

4 ayes 0 nays 0 abstain

MOTION CARRIED