



# *Atlantic City Municipal Utilities Authority*

## **MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING MEETING OPEN SESSION**

**NOVEMBER 26, 2024**

**ATLANTIC CITY MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUTHORITY  
401 N. VIRGINIA AVENUE  
ATLANTIC CITY, NJ 08401**

In accordance with the provision of the Open Public Meetings Law, (N.J.S.A. 10:4-10), the Regular Board Meeting of the Atlantic City Municipal Utilities Authority Board of Directors was called to order by Chairman Gary L. Hill at 10:04AM. The Board of Directors held their Public Hearing meeting as designed below both via Zoom Conference or In-person on November 26, 2024 at the Board Room, located on the first floor of the Administrative Offices, 401 N. Virginia Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

### **1. CALL TO ORDER – OPMA NOTICE - OPENING STATEMENT**

WaStella Johnson read the Opening Statement.

### **2. ROLL CALL**

The Roll was called.

### **PUBLIC HEARING PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETING:**

Board Members present at that time were: Gary L. Hill, Chairman (via Zoom); Mohammed Dedar, Vice Chairman/Deputy (Absent); Glenn Banfield, Treasurer (Absent); Nynell Langford, Board Member (via Zoom); John Eccles, Jr., Board Member (via Zoom); Stephanie Davies, Board Member, Alternate 1 (via Zoom); and Sayed Kausar, Board Member Alternate 2 (Absent).

### **MUA STAFF PARTICIPATING IN THE MEETING:**

India Still, Executive Director (via Zoom); Clifford Keen, Deputy Executive Director, Operations (via Zoom); Anita Thapa, Assistant Director of Accounting & Finance (via Zoom); Karen Upshaw, Director of Administration (via Zoom); G. Bruce Ward, Solicitor (via Zoom); Michael Riley, Labor Counsel (Absent); and Stella Johnson, Board Secretary.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

William Swain representing the State of New Jersey (via Zoom); Eric Callocchia representing NewGen (via Zoom); and Bryan Morris representing Phoenix Advisors (via Zoom).

3. FLAG OF SALUTE

4. 2025 BUDGET HEARING – Anita Thapa, Assistant Director of Accounting & Finance

The MUA had two (2) Budget Meetings prior to the approval of the Introduced 2025 Budget and the Board approved them at the October 16, 2024 Board Meeting. The Budget Committee and staff were thanked for all of their hard work.

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board Open the Budget Hearing at 10:08am. A motion was made by John Eccles, Jr. and seconded by Stephanie Davies. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

There were no public comments or anyone present at this Public Hearing Meeting. Last month at the October 16, 2024 Board Meeting, the MUA Introduced and the Board approved the 2025 Annual Budget in the amount of \$21,360,062, including the Municipal Appropriations of \$918,114. The MUA also Introduced and approved the Capital Appropriations of \$58,007,650. The MUA expects to utilize \$12,454,324 of Unrestricted funds for the Capital Projects. The State DCA also conditionally approved the 2025 Budget on October 29, 2024, pending the Adoption of the 2025 Rates, which will be presented to the Board for approval at the December 18, Board Meeting.

Bryan Morris of Phoenix Advisors also reviewed the Budget. Mr. Morris conveyed that he worked closely with the MUA's Administration to review the Capital, and worked with NJIB to make sure the MUA is taking advantage of all the State and Federal programs. There is a lot of money for Principal Forgiveness, which helps offset the borrowing cost, as well as the low interest loans that are offered. All of this is taken in consideration when completing the budget and the Rate Study.

CLOSE BUDGET HEARING SESSION

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board Close the Budget Hearing Session at 10:12am. A motion was made by Gary L. Hill and seconded by John Eccles, Jr. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

## 5. RATE HEARING

### OPEN RATE HEARING SESSION - India Still, Executive Director

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board Open the Rate Hearing at 10:12am. A motion was made by John Eccles, Jr. and seconded by Stephanie Davies. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

The MUA thanked the consultant Eric and staff because they submitted a nice proposal, which covers all the pieces that the MUA asked for them to look at. These items will be discussed during the presentation, as well as the senior discount and demographic of AC community. This Rate Study gives us a level of comfort in planning and being proactive, especially with the huge agenda in the way of projects, because the MUA will have finances in place. Ms. Still thanked the Board for approving the consultant and having the MUA do the rate study. This gives the State some comfort as well, and helps the MUA with their negotiations. This is vital. Ms. Still also thanked NewGen.

## 6. RATE STUDY PRESENTATION – Eric Callocchia, NewGen

Working with the staff was helpful and provided input, as well as Bryan Morris to get a solid forecast. Eric Callocchia presented a powerpoint presentation and gave a brief description of the following: Study Process and Purpose; Key Performance Indicators; Operating Costs; Capital Improvement Plan; Revenue Requirements Forecast; Recommended Rate Increases; and Customer Bill Impacts/Affordability. A detailed written report will be provided to the Board.

It was asked how the MUA is doing with the increasing of staff? Mr. Callocchia conveyed that there is a three (3) year phase in for increases. The MUA is reaching our goals. NewGen allows the MUA to go back into the tool they provide to manipulate as the projections, conditions and external factors change. The forecast includes the senior citizen discounts, which will take time to get the estimation. Therefore, it will not impact the seniors until 2025. Unfortunately, the Municipal Appropriations to the City will not level out, because it is five (5%) percent of the MUA's total Operating Cost. This report will be given to all of the Board Members because the Budget will be adopted at the December 18, 2024 Board Meeting.

The statute for the Connection Fee requirements, the process, and the data the MUA use to support the MUA's Connection Fees are in compliance with the statutes. NewGen also looked at other utilities how they calculate their connection fees. It is based on capital budget. Even with the principal forgiveness, it was modeled over a five (5) to ten (10) year period. The MUA has over \$200 million in Capital Improvements, based on NewGen's forecast, and this is what drives the connection fee. However, the connection fee will not increase in 2025. It will not increase until 2029.

The MUA's Rules, Rates and Regulations are for review. It will be adopted at the December 18, 2024 Board Meeting.

### CLOSE RATE HEARING SESSION

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board Close the Rate Hearing Session at 10:47am. A motion was made by John Eccles, Jr. and seconded by Nynell Langford. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

### 7. CONSENT AGENDA

#### OPEN BOARD MEETING

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board Open the Board Meeting at 10:48am. A motion was made by Gary L. Hill and seconded by John Eccles, Jr. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

#### RESOLUTION #233: EMPLOYEE VEHICLE POLICY

To approve the Employee Vehicle Policy to inform staff of the ownership rights of the Authority over the proper usage, handling and maintenance of Authority vehicles and to communicate prohibited use and conduct.

A motion was made by Gary L. Hill and seconded by Stephanie Davies to approve the resolution. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

#### RESOLUTION #234: 4106 STEWART AVENUE – JOSEPH DELUCA – PLUMBING SYSTEM FAILURE

An abatement to grant a fifty (50%) percent abatement of \$242.09 to Joseph DeLuca, 4106 Stewart Avenue, Account Number 786801-0.

A motion was made by Gary L. Hill and seconded by Stephanie Davies to approve the resolution. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

RESOLUTION #235: SPECIAL COUNSEL - AMENDMENT

To amend Resolution #38 of February 21, 2024 with the Law Offices of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick, Cole & Giblin, LLP as Special Counsel to increase the original contract by \$80,000.00, which shall increase the current contract price from \$95,000.00 to \$175,000.00.

A motion was made by Gary L. Hill and seconded by Stephanie Davies to approve the resolution. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

END CONSENT AGENDA

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

RESOLUTION #236: EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Gary L. Hill and seconded by John Eccles, Jr. to go into Executive Session at 10:54am. By roll-call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board exit the Executive Session at 10:58am by roll call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar, Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

DISCUSSION IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

In Executive Session the Board discussed the second negotiations with the GWU Union. The MUA also discussed the postponement of the valve flushing exercise, due to the outages, the holidays and to make sure the MUA has an accurate list for communications for our communities, businesses and casino. This activity will be done in early 2025.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gary L. Hill requested that the Board Adjourn the Board Meeting at 11:01am by roll call Gary L. Hill, Nynell Langford, John Eccles, Jr. and Stephanie Davies. Mohammed Dedar. Glenn Banfield and Sayed Kausar were absent.

Respectfully,

WaStella E. Johnson  
Board Secretary