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Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority Board of Directors Presents Offer from Aqua Pennsylvania to Acquire Wastewater Services
Board seeks public input before making a final decision

WARRINGTON, PA – The Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority (BCWSA) Board of Directors today received a formal offer of more than $1.1 billion from Aqua Pennsylvania to acquire its wastewater services. With a formal agreement in hand, the board can now seek input from municipal stakeholders and the public before a final decision is made.

BCWSA selected Aqua Pennsylvania, a subsidiary of Essential Utilities Inc., as the proposed purchaser after conducting an extensive examination of all assets and determining the most beneficial decision for all concerned. Aqua Pennsylvania agreed to BCWSA’s terms to ensure customers have rate protections for several years, municipalities and their taxpayers realize significant financial benefits, the highest level of environmental standards are met, and no current or former employees would be negatively impacted.

“Receiving the formal offer allows us to present it to the public and receive feedback. We’ve said from the beginning that this would be a transparent process,” said John Cordisco, BCWSA Chairman. “We want stakeholders, customers and community members to have an opportunity to review the terms of the agreement before any final decision is made. It is a commitment we made to our customers and communities we serve.”

Aqua Pennsylvania presented the best opportunities for BCWSA’s customers and county taxpayers. After paying BCWSA’s debt balance, the offer would provide Bucks County government and its residents with about $1 billion in sale proceeds. This would allow a portion of the proceeds to be contributed to a fund to absorb rate increases over the next 10 years, including a complete rate freeze in the first year. The sale of only the wastewater operation means significantly lower rate increases, estimated to be less than $20/month more by 2033. BCWSA would continue to own and operate the water service.

Along with creating a fund for customers, the county could allocate the money for needs that it deems appropriate, such as eliminating its debt, freezing any tax increases over an extended period of time, and other essential needs to benefit residents. Operations at BCWSA’s current headquarters would continue for at least 25 years.

“We are very pleased that Bucks County Water and Sewer Authority (BCWSA) decided to work with Aqua Pennsylvania in its consideration to sell its wastewater utility. We are excited about the
opportunities we could bring to the employees, continue strong service to the customers and be a valued community partner. We intend to build upon BCWSA’s legacy of providing reliable, high-quality service,” said Essential Chairman and CEO Christopher Franklin.

BCWSA anticipates future infrastructure challenges that will require a significant financial commitment to maintain improvements for all customers. Communities across its coverage area are serviced by an aging sewer system that needs ongoing repairs and upgrades. Additionally, Aqua Pennsylvania will also seek PUC approval for the ability to replace damaged customer wastewater laterals (the pipes that connect homes and businesses to the public sewers) to address the stormwater inflow, which is something BCWSA is not permitted to do.

“A private entity like Aqua Pennsylvania can handle infrastructure needs more efficiently and effectively since they can spread costs and work over a larger system,” said Cordisco. “Many of our customers have already experienced the costly headaches caused by aging laterals that have failed and damaged their properties. Aqua Pennsylvania can provide a solution to thousands of homeowners with older properties, especially low-and-fixed income individuals and families.”

Aqua Pennsylvania would assume all necessary permits to operate the systems and assume all Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) consents and orders related to the systems. Additionally, under the proposed offer, all employees (union and non-union) would maintain their jobs based on current salaries and collective bargaining agreements. All pension plans would remain intact and existing employee benefits would be maintained.

Representatives from Aqua Pennsylvania and BCWSA will hold public open houses that will be scheduled in the upcoming weeks. are currently scheduled as follows. For more information about the formal offer and public meeting schedule, please visit www.BCWSAcommitment.org

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**Bucks County Water & Sewer Authority (BCWSA) -** is an independent, non-profit agency formed in 1962 under the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Act. We are one of the largest water and sewer authorities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania providing water and sewer services to more than 100,000 households, business accounts, and some 525,000 people in the southeastern Pennsylvania region.