

HERMITAGE

Plant contracts OK'd; authority waits on DEP

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By Joe Pinchot, *Herald Staff Writer*

Hermitage Municipal Authority awarded and signed contracts Wednesday for the water pollution control plant expansion, although the state Department of Environmental Protection still has to approve the bid documents.

Consulting Engineer Joseph P. Pacchioni recommended the authority members award and sign contracts prior to DEP approval because of the strict time lines they are under for project financing.

Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority, nicknamed PENNVEST, has awarded a \$13.78 million low interest loan, and needs all documents by Oct. 15 to review them in advance of a Nov. 9 closing, Pacchioni said.

These contractors were awarded contracts: general contractor A.P. O'Horo Co., Youngstown, \$22,120,000; electrical contractor Penn-Ohio Electric Co., Masury, \$2,380,000; Renick Brothers Construction Co., Slippery Rock, for plumbing, \$333,650, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning, \$770,000; and Cleveland Brothers Equipment Co. Inc. for supplying biogas and diesel generators, \$1,198,000.

Pacchioni said he anticipates DEP will respond soon, and noted he has been informed of no problems. Construction likely will start in January, he said. Authority Manager Tom Darby said the Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority turned down a small authority grant request and quipped, "This is our first rejection. I'm not used to that." The authority previously was awarded two other grants. "We'll continue to find other avenues for grant money," Darby said.

Also Wednesday, the authority awarded a \$65,000 change order to Infilco Degremont Inc. to install a test pile in the ground where an anaerobic digester will be located. Infilco was hired in April 2009 to supply the digester for \$3.8 million. Soil tests have shown that the soil in the area will not be able to support the heavy digester, and officials recommended installing 46 concrete piles, 45 feet long, to hold up the digester.

Some authority officials balked at the \$339,500 price tag to install all the piles, but agreed to the test pile, which will determine how many piles actually will be needed. Officials will come back with a second change order request, likely next month, to account for the rest of the piles.

The digester will "cook" sludge and food waste to create a biogas that will be burned to generate electricity that will be sold to the power grid, and a high-quality sludge that will not have to be trucked to a landfill for disposal.