

JOINT MEETING NEWS

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New Executive Director Takes the Helm

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. **Hanifa Z. Johnson** to the position of Executive Director. Ms. Johnson takes on the position from Samuel McGhee who retired effective January 1, 2020.

Ms. Johnson brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position. She served as the Director of Public Works for the Township of Hillside, NJ, and as a Principal Engineer for the Department of Water & Sewer Utilities for the City of Newark, NJ. Ms. Johnson also served for several years as Senior Project Engineer with Maser Consulting and Project Engineer with Birdsall Services Group. Additionally, business development became an acquired skill during those years.

Ms. Johnson has a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, and currently holds a C-2 Collections License. She is also pursuing her certification as a Public Works Manager (CPWM) through Rutgers University. Ms. Johnson is a long-time resident of Newark, NJ.



Upcoming Events

National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) 50th Annual Summer Conference, scheduled for **July 13-16, 2020** in Seattle, WA has been cancelled. www.nacwa.org

July 27-31, 2020. 105th Annual New Jersey Water Environment Association Annual Conference at Bally's, Atlantic City, NJ. www.njwea.org

October 3-7, 2020. Water Environment Federation (WEFTEC) 93rd Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA. www.weftec.org

As dates may change due to the impact of COVID-19, please check websites for the above organizations to confirm meeting dates. Their websites are listed at the end of each event.



A newsletter of the Joint Meeting of Essex and Union Counties, a wastewater treatment plant serving eleven member municipalities:

East Orange
Hillside
Irvington
Maplewood
Millburn
Newark
Roselle Park
South Orange
Summit
Union
West Orange

Also serving:

Elizabeth
Livingston
New Providence
Orange

2020 Joint Meeting Board of Directors

Officers

Donald DeAugustine
Chairperson, Hillside
Renee C. Burgess
Vice Chair/Secretary, Irvington
Gerard Guarino
Treasurer, West Orange

Members

Alicia Holman, *East Orange*
Mayor Victor De Luca, *Maplewood*
Tara Prupis, *Millburn*
Anibal Ramos Jr., *Newark*
Joseph E. Petrosky, *Roselle Park*
Walter Clarke, *South Orange*
Stephen Bowman, *Summit*
Joseph M. Florio, *Union*

Executive Director

Hanifa Z. Johnson

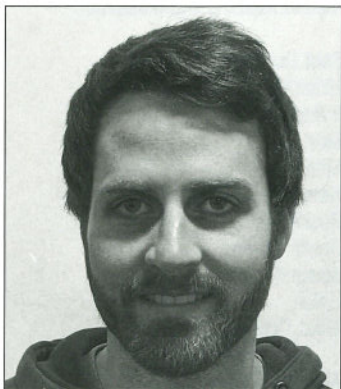
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Employee News

New Employees

Kyle Murtha, below left, is our newest Operator in Training. Before coming to Joint Meeting, Kyle worked in the construction industry. He attended Monmouth County Vocational School where he earned his certificate in Plumbing. Kyle currently resides in Millstone Township, NJ.

Javier Quinones, below right, joins our Site Services Department as a Custodian for the plant. Prior to Joint Meeting, Javier worked for several years at the ARC Kohler School in Union County. He currently resides in Elizabeth, NJ.



New Family Members

Andres Gallego, Collections Supervisor, and his wife celebrated the arrival of their son, Jaxson C. Gallego, on November 9, 2019. Jaxson weighed in at 7 lbs. 10 oz. and was 20 inches long.



Jim Paluch, Assistant Superintendent/Collection System Operations, and wife Virginia are the proud grandparents (once again), having been given an early Christmas present (December 23, 2019) from their daughter Erin and her husband Eric of their newest grandson, Xander, above left. Welcome to the Paluch brood, Xander, Grandchild Number Six!!!

Wastewater Operator **Jessie Ordner**, his wife Lauren and daughter Nora (holding the newborn) welcomed a new addition to their family. Aaron Ordner, above right, was born into the world on March 31, 2020 at 10:49 p.m. at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City. Aaron arrived weighing 9 lbs. 2 oz. and was 22 inches long. Mom and baby are doing well.

Achievements

Congratulations to **Joe Branche**, Site Services, below left, for completing the 39-hour Basic Plumbing Course at Middlesex County Vocational & Technical School.

Assistant Superintendent **Francis Bonaccorso**, below right, was elected NJ State Vice President for the New Jersey Water Environment Association. He is scheduled to take office sometime this summer.



Victoria (Tory) Bonaccorso, wife of Asst. Superintendent Francis Bonaccorso, passed her Dissertation Defense of her research on Video Case Studies and the Development of Collective Professional Knowledge for her Doctoral Degree. She is scheduled to graduate with her Ph.D. in Mathematics Education from Montclair State University in May 2020. Tory was able to accomplish this while working and caring for her family, including her two boys.



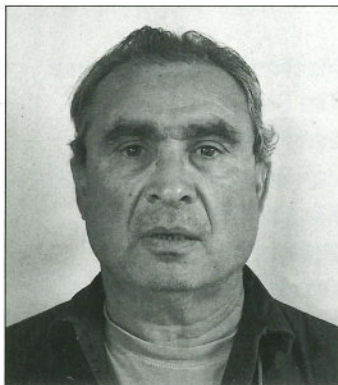
The North Jersey Section of the New Jersey Water Environment Association held its 47th Annual Dinner Dance & Awards Night on March 7, 2020 when the 2020 Legacy Scholarship Awards were presented to two members of the Joint Meeting family.

Akinola Akinokun was the recipient of the Eva Bendlin Award. He is a senior at Sayreville War Memorial High School in Parlin, NJ where he has been playing in the school's marching band and concert band for a total of six years. Akinola is also a member of the Future Business Leaders of America and has participated in both state and national competition. He is a member of the Spanish Honors Society at his school and was inducted last year. Akinola's father **Adewale Akinokun** is the Assistant Manager of the IPP Department.

Gabriella Mortola was the recipient of the Robert C. Fischer Award. She is a freshman at Kean University and earned straight A's. Gabriella graduated from Roselle Park High School where she received both academic honors and academic excellence awards. Her extra-curricular activities included tutoring elementary school students, being involved in the Future Health Career Club, and being a member of the Cheer Legacy All-Stars. Gabriella's father **Humbertt Mortola** is a member of the JM Information Technology department.

Retirement

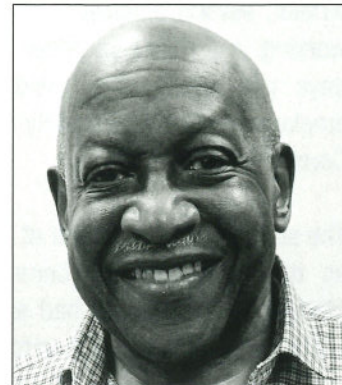
Pete Vlasakakis will complete 25 years of service with Joint Meeting. He has been one of the mainstays of the Site Services Department. We will all miss Pete and wish him well in his retirement.



Joint Meeting Loses Two Friends

The Joint Meeting has recently experienced the loss of two former employees, **Samuel McGhee** and **Patricia Rufolo**.

Former Executive Director **Samuel McGhee** passed away in early April. Mr. McGhee had recently retired after serving 15 years as the Executive Director.



In his tenure at Joint Meeting, one of his desires was to support initiatives, which permitted employees to pursue educational goals as well as professional certifications.

In his 15 years at Joint Meeting, Mr. McGhee oversaw several accomplishments such as the new cogeneration facility, which is a self-operating energy source. He also oversaw the successful recovery of the facility after Superstorm Sandy.

Mr. McGhee always took the opportunity to praise the efforts of his employees. At all times he encouraged employees to perform at 100% effort and believed in giving second chances. Mr. McGhee understood that employees possess different skill sets and sometimes changes were necessary to fit the "right peg into the right hole."

Former Finance Associate **Pat Rufolo** also passed away in early April. Pat had been a staple with Joint Meeting for more than 40 years.



Pat retired in 2010 after 36 years. She continued with Joint Meeting as a consultant in the Finance Department and served as Secretary to the Board of Directors. Pat possessed a wealth of knowledge, which served all her co-workers well.

"We Did It Together"

We are very pleased to be able to bring this newsletter to you while our work family and our home families are challenged by the Corona Virus (COVID-19). At the time this article was written, several employees had volunteered for and completed working in a residency mode (staying on site 24 hours, seven days per week). The residency was required to prevent employees leaving the facility and possibly being exposed to the Corona Virus.

The staff and management of Joint Meeting were fully prepared as the impact of the Corona Virus became a reality. The Management team has had experience in dealing with a crisis situation as recently as Superstorm Sandy.

A Contingency Planning Meeting was held on March 13, 2020. The meeting focused on five points: 1. Safety, 2. Permit, 3. Process, 4. Equipment and 5. Documentation. The Task Force responsible for putting planning into action included Executive Director **Hanifa Z. Johnson**, Superintendent **Steve Dowhan**, Assistant Superintendent **Fran Bonaccorso**, Operations Manager **Glen Riscen**, Safety Manager **Rick Stafford**, IPP Manager **Mike Phillips**, Purchasing Officer **Michelle DeFrancis**, Maintenance Manager **Roman Wisniewski**, IT Manager **Ray Jimenez**, Project Manager **Chris Pabst**, Asst. Maintenance Managers **Joel Altman** and **Glen Schoenig**, Asst. Superintendent Collections **James Paluch**, Administrative Manager **Grace Quintero** and HR Director **Robert Barry**. During the planning stages, employee safety continued to be our number one priority. The facility enacted Incident Command, designating Operations Manager **Glen Riscen** as the Incident Commander.

Issues which were reviewed included:

- Entry of staff/contractors working on property with temperature readings and checking for symptoms
- Isolation of JM employees once on-site residency was commenced
- Potential for necessary changes during residency time period
- The continuation of administrative functions by staff from home (payment of bills etc.).

One of the first orders of business was to review staffing and to determine which positions were essential and non-essential personnel. Once this was done, it was determined that a request be made for essential employee volunteers to stay at the facility in a "residency mode" for a period of seven to 14 days. As always, many employees volunteered for the residency. Employees represented Site Maintenance, Mechanical Maintenance,

Electrical, Operations, Boiler/Cogen Operations, Laboratory and Supervisory staff for each department. The staff who were working represented a skeleton crew from each department. Staff represented a 45% reduction of normal staffing. The challenge for the on-site supervisory staff was to maintain productivity while keeping employees safely apart. Regular temperature monitoring of the staff occurred before they began their shift and after their shift.

The Task Force reviewed daily situation reports from the NJ State Emergency Operations Center as well as Executive Orders from Governor Murphy. Regular conference calls were held to determine status of employees and operations updates.

Employees who chose to sacrifice their time with their family to stay on the property were:

Operations Department

Sean Adams
Curtis Brown
Maurice Clark
Carlos DeLacruz
Marlon Echeverria
Harby Guerrero
Marcia Lezama
Markill Mars
Darius Mayes
Jessie Ordners
Allan Patterson
Michael Pelayo

Maintenance Site Services

Fredy Gamboa
Anthony Guest
Javier Quinones
Eugene Rivera
Ray Tango
Steve VanDeursen

Security

Giovanni Cruz

Mechanical Maintenance

Tim Brown
Lenny Bucher
Jan Dmytrach
Mike Maffia
Hector Reveron
Oscar Rodriguez
Tom Shanks

Operations Management

Matthew Bodzioch
Chris Pabst
Glen Riscen
Jason Rucki
Rick Stafford
Carlo Vigliorolo
Joe Wiewiorski

Maintenance Management

Joel Altman
Roman Wisniewski

Electrical Department

Adris Hariprasad
Aron Harris
Nick Vargas

Boiler/Cogen Operations

Willie Negron
Laquan Robinson

IPP/Laboratory Department

Julio Cabrera
David Dipner
Melanie Follmer
Christine Ginn
Paul Hunt
Ed Kobovitch
John Petito

I.T. Department

Humbertt Mortolo



"We Did It Together" Pictured are some of the employees who participated in the quarantine at the plant. Left to right are **John Petito**, **Adris Harisprasad**, **Jason Rucki**, **Rick Stafford**, **Tim Brown** and **Anthony Guest**.

Celebrating Milestone Years of Service

Congratulations to the following dedicated employees for their years of hard work and for reaching service milestones.

25 YEARS

Stephen Dowhan, Operations
Pete Vlasakakis, Site Services

20 YEARS

Steven Mercandetti, Industrial Pretreatment
Reneece Porter, Operations

15 YEARS

Melanie Follmer, Laboratory
Raimundo Jimenez, IT Department
Rudolph Johnson, Security
Stephen Pascucci, Administration
Eugene Rivera, Site Services

10 YEARS

Robert Barry, Administration
Antonio Diaz, Mechanical Maintenance
Thomas Shanks, Mechanical Maintenance

Perfect Attendance

During calendar year 2019, four employees had a perfect attendance record. The records included no sick or absent days due to illness or injury and no occasions of lateness. The employees are:

Francis Bonaccorso, Assistant Superintendent O&M
Steve Dowhan, Superintendent
James Paluch, Assistant Superintendent-Collections Department
Glen Riscen, Operations Manager

Seven employees have achieved a perfect attendance record for the 4th Quarter of 2019. Those individuals achieving a record of no lateness, no sick time and no absences are:

Giovannie Cruz, Security
Jan Dmytrach, Mechanical Maintenance
Adris Hariprasad, Electrical
Brian Hernandez, Operations
Harby Guerrero, Operations
Tony Rivers, Site Services
Christopher Stafford, Collections

Five employees have achieved a perfect attendance record for the 1st Quarter of 2020. Those individuals achieving a record of no lateness, no sick time and no absences are:

Harby Guerrero, Operations
Aron Harris, Electrical
Rudolph Johnson, Security
Thomas Shanks, Mechanical Maintenance
Christopher Stafford, Collections

Congratulations to all of the above listed employees for their excellent attendance records.

Joint Meeting Welcomes New Board Members

The Joint Meeting Board of Directors announced that two new members have joined the Board.

Joint Meeting Board is pleased to welcome **Tara Prupis** to the Board of Directors. Ms. Prupis replaces Mayor **Dianne Thall-Eglow** for the Township of Millburn.

Alicia Holman, representing the City of East Orange, has joined the Board of Directors. Ms. Holman replaces **Jacquelyn Johnson**.

We thank the former members of the Board of Directors for their service to Joint Meeting and welcome the new Board Members.

Students Tour Joint Meeting

Joint Meeting was pleased once again to open its doors to the youth of America by providing a tour of the facility for the students of Millburn High School in October 2019. Pictured below, the JM staff providing the tour included, left to right, Assistant Superintendent **Francis Bonaccorso** and Executive Director **Hanifa Johnson**. Chaperones for the school included Michelle Rosenthal and Cindy Parlevecchio.



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Joint Meeting of Essex and Union Counties

Wastewater Treatment Plant
& Administrative Offices
500 South First Street
Elizabeth, NJ 07202
(908) 353-1313
FAX (908) 353-7925

Joint Meeting Administrative Staff

Executive Director
Hanifa Z. Johnson

Chief Engineer
Position Vacant

Superintendent
Stephen Dowhan

Director of Admin. and Finance
Position Vacant

Director of Human Resources
Robert Barry

Industrial Pretreatment Manager
Michael Phillips

Project Manager
Christopher Pabst

Purchasing Officer
Michelle DeFrancis

Asst. Board Secr./Financial Asst.
Position Vacant

*Asst. Superintendent
Operations/Maint.*
Francis Bonaccorso

*Asst. Superintendent
Collection System*
Jim Paluch

Operations Manager
Glen Riscen

Maintenance Manager
Roman Wisniewski

Safety Officer
Richard Stafford

Administrative Office Manager
Grace Quintero

IT Manager
Ray Jimenez

Board Committees 2020

The Board of Directors committee assignments for the 1st half of 2020 are:

Operations Committee

Chair: Renee C. Burgess
Walter Clarke
Gerard Guarino
Tara Prupis

Public Relations Committee

Chair: Walter Clarke
Renee C. Burgess
Joseph E. Petrosky
Tara Prupis

Finance and Budget Committee

Chair: Gerard Guarino
Stephen Bowman
Victor De Luca
Joseph M. Florio

Personnel and Procurement Committee

Chair: Anibal Ramos Jr.
Victor De Luca
Joseph M. Florio
Alicia Holman

