

REGULAR MEETING OF THE MUSCONETCONG SEWERAGE AUTHORITY

Chairman Rattner called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Following the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, announcement was made that adequate notice of this meeting had been provided for as defined by the "Open Public Meetings Act".

MEMBERS PRESENT: Donald Bates, James Benson, Andrew Cangiano, Michael Grogan, Brian McNeilly, Melanie Michetti, Michael Pucilowski, Steven Rattner, Richard Schindelar, Joseph Schwab, John Sylvester

MEMBERS ABSENT: Thomas Bruno

OTHERS PRESENT: Patrick Dwyer Esq., John Scheri PE, Debbie Palma QPA, Susan Grebe Administrator

Chairman Rattner opened and closed the meeting to the public.

The regular meeting minutes of May 25, 2017 were approved on a motion offered by Mr. Schwab, seconded by Mr. Sylvester. Roll Call:

Mr. Bates	Yes	Mrs. Michetti	Yes
Mr. Benson	Yes	Mr. Pucilowski	Yes
Mr. Bruno	Absent	Mr. Rattner	Yes
Mr. Cangiano	Abstain	Mr. Schindelar	Yes
Mr. Grogan	Abstain	Mr. Schwab	Yes
Mr. McNeilly	Abstain	Mr. Sylvester	Yes

The Expenditures/Treasurer's Report of June 1, 2017 was accepted on a motion offered by Mr. McNeilly, seconded by Mr. Schindelar and the affirmative roll call vote of members present.

Treasurer's Report- June 1, 2017
Operating Account

Balance as of May 1, 2017:		<u>\$ 1,245,662.04</u>
Receipts (May):		
Hospitalization	2,282.46	
Disability Reimbursements	2,062.45	
Void Check #3922	331.00	
		<u>\$ 4,675.91</u>
		<u>\$ 1,250,337.95</u>
Disbursements (May):		
NJSHBP (May health ins.)	\$15,469.21	
Administrative Salaries	\$5,943.95	
Operating Salaries	\$22,584.35	
Unemployment	\$370.35	
Social Security	\$2,211.12	
Administrative Salaries	\$5,943.95	
Operating Salaries	\$22,445.26	
Unemployment	\$335.99	
Social Security	\$2,200.49	
ADP	\$757.75	
Accurate Waste	\$750.00	
American Wear	\$543.36	
Nicholas Barbato (disability reimb)	\$80.40	
Bearing & Drive Solutions	\$4,376.97	
Bio Triad Environmental	\$18,150.00	
Blue Diamond Disposal	\$283.55	
Cintas First Aid	\$93.91	
Cleary Giacobbe	\$1,984.00	
Constellation New Energy	\$17,055.60	
Coyne Chemical	\$4,755.96	
Eurofins QC Inc.	\$2,388.00	
Firefighter One	\$3,455.00	
Susan Grebe (petty cash & mileage)	\$105.97	
JCP&L	\$13,789.97	
Lowe's	\$123.71	
Mott MacDonald	\$350.00	
NJ American Water	\$1,212.67	
Northern Tool	\$238.44	

Nusbaum Stein	\$1,500.00
One Call	\$22.50
PCS Pump & Process	\$5,500.00
Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission	\$36,800.00
Polydyne	\$1,508.40
R-D Trucking	\$29,664.00
Roxbury Township Water Dept.	\$134.94
James Schilling (Disability & miles reimb)	\$169.85
Shell Fleet	\$222.55
Treasurer, State of NJ	\$18,970.07
USA Bluebook	\$279.86
VM Associates	\$1,282.50
Verizon	\$744.66
Verizon Communications	\$53.51
Verizon Wireless	\$225.20

Total Disbursements for May: \$ 245,077.97
Balance as of June 1, 2017: \$ 1,005,259.98

RENEWAL & REPLACEMENT ACCOUNT

Balance as of May 1, 2017: \$ 625,003.52
Receipts: 0.00
Disbursements: Nusbaum Stein (Contract #260) 1,564.20
Mott MacDonald (Contracts #260 & 265) 6,880.57
Daily Record (Contract #260) 174.92
Star Ledger (Contract #260) 576.22
Dave Helner Associates (Wemco Repl. Parts) 12,362.00
Balance as of June 1, 2017: \$ 603,445.61

ESCROW ACCOUNT

Balance as of May 1, 2017: \$ 7,271.34
Receipts: 00.00
Disbursements: Mott MacDonald (Hopatcong State Park WQMP Amendment) 589.50
Nusbaum Stein (Hopatcong State Park WQMP Amendment) 512.60
Balance as of June 1, 2017: \$ 6,169.24

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT/RESERVE FOR RETIREMENT ACCOUNT

Balance as of May 1, 2017: \$ 1,183,237.85
Receipts: 0.00
Disbursements: 0.00
Balance as of June 1, 2017: \$ 1,183,237.85

ANALYSIS OF BALANCES:

Capital Improvement \$ 1,133,237.85
Reserve for Retirement \$ 50,000.00

EXPENDITURES REPORT - 2017 BUDGET

6/1/17

	2017	YEAR-TO-DATE		%
	BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	BALANCE	
Admin - Salaries and Wages	\$165,000.00	\$71,735.98	\$93,264.02	56.52%
Trustee Admin Fees	\$20,000.00	\$7,515.00	\$12,485.00	62.43%
Administrative - Other Expenses	\$40,000.00	\$17,404.89	\$22,595.11	56.49%
Legal	\$30,000.00	\$12,239.20	\$17,760.80	59.20%
Audit	\$10,000.00	\$0.00	\$10,000.00	100.00%
Engineer	\$30,000.00	\$2,450.13	\$27,549.87	91.83%
Pension	\$90,000.00	\$618.00	\$89,382.00	99.31%
Social Security	\$68,000.00	\$29,169.34	\$38,830.66	57.10%
Unemployment	\$7,000.00	\$0.00	\$7,000.00	100.00%
Hospitalization	\$228,500.00	\$86,677.99	\$141,822.01	62.07%
Disability Insurance	\$10,000.00	\$1,612.95	\$8,387.05	83.87%
Operating - Salaries and Wages	\$700,000.00	\$300,422.31	\$399,577.69	57.08%
Reserve for Future Retirement	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	100.00%
Telephone	\$20,000.00	\$4,823.43	\$15,176.57	75.88%
Electric	\$500,000.00	\$148,941.90	\$351,058.10	70.21%
Propane/Fuel Oil/ Gasoline	\$40,000.00	\$7,393.47	\$32,606.53	81.52%
Supplies/Chemicals	\$160,000.00	\$63,222.31	\$96,777.69	60.49%
Laboratory Supplies	\$12,000.00	\$1,693.01	\$10,306.99	85.89%
Office	\$25,000.00	\$12,188.21	\$12,811.79	51.25%
External Services	\$70,000.00	\$19,726.90	\$50,273.10	71.82%
Education/Training	\$20,000.00	\$5,068.56	\$14,931.44	74.66%

Laboratory Fees	\$30,000.00	\$5,069.36	\$24,930.64	83.10%
Maintenance/Repairs	\$150,000.00	\$47,835.18	\$102,164.82	68.11%
Insurance	\$110,000.00	\$97,149.97	\$12,850.03	11.68%
NJDEP Fees	\$25,000.00	\$19,320.07	\$5,679.93	22.72%
Permit/Compliance Fees	\$25,000.00	\$380.60	\$24,619.40	98.48%
Equipment	\$60,000.00	\$7,210.20	\$52,789.80	87.98%
Sludge Removal	\$700,000.00	\$268,088.00	\$431,912.00	61.70%
Contingency	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00	100.00%
Capital Improvement	\$200,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$150,000.00	75.00%
Renewal and Replacement	\$200,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$150,000.00	75.00%
TOTAL	\$3,770,500.00	\$1,337,956.96	\$2,432,543.04	64.52%

EXPENDITURES REPORT - 2016 BUDGET

6/1/17 - Final

	2016	YEAR-TO-DATE		%
	BUDGET	EXPENDITURES	BALANCE	REMAINING
Admin - Salaries and Wages	\$160,000.00	\$156,302.98	\$3,697.02	2.31%
Trustee Admin Fees	\$20,000.00	\$15,030.00	\$4,970.00	24.85%
Administrative - Other Expenses	\$35,000.00	\$26,397.40	\$8,602.60	24.58%
Legal	\$30,000.00	\$27,784.60	\$2,215.40	7.38%
Audit	\$10,000.00	\$8,782.50	\$1,217.50	12.18%
Engineer	\$35,000.00	\$24,065.08	\$10,934.92	31.24%
Pension	\$90,000.00	\$173,574.24	-\$83,574.24	-92.86%*
Social Security	\$65,000.00	\$64,521.22	\$478.78	0.74%
Unemployment	\$7,000.00	\$5,448.24	\$1,551.76	22.17%
Hospitalization	\$215,260.00	\$204,123.22	\$11,136.78	5.17%
Disability Insurance	\$10,000.00	\$4,983.65	\$5,016.35	50.16%
Operating - Salaries and Wages	\$666,640.00	\$664,936.38	\$1,703.62	0.26%
Reserve for Future Retirement	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Telephone	\$20,000.00	\$13,649.53	\$6,350.47	31.75%
Electric	\$510,000.00	\$364,950.43	\$145,049.57	28.44%
Propane/Fuel Oil/ Gasoline	\$40,000.00	\$11,884.02	\$28,115.98	70.29%
Supplies/Chemicals	\$160,000.00	\$149,231.90	\$10,768.10	6.73%
Laboratory Supplies	\$10,000.00	\$9,655.05	\$344.95	3.45%
Office	\$20,000.00	\$19,961.47	\$38.53	0.19%
External Services	\$70,000.00	\$48,425.16	\$21,574.84	30.82%
Education/Training	\$20,000.00	\$16,386.38	\$3,613.62	18.07%
Laboratory Fees	\$30,000.00	\$18,154.00	\$11,846.00	39.49%
Maintenance/Repairs	\$150,000.00	\$129,583.85	\$20,416.15	13.61%
Insurance	\$110,000.00	\$93,674.95	\$16,325.05	14.84%
NJDEP Fees	\$25,000.00	\$20,652.05	\$4,347.95	17.39%
Permit/Compliance Fees	\$25,000.00	\$13,795.48	\$11,204.52	44.82%
Equipment	\$60,000.00	\$57,493.74	\$2,506.26	4.18%
Sludge Removal	\$700,000.00	\$605,298.00	\$94,702.00	13.53%
Contingency	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00	100.00%
Capital Improvement	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	0.00%
Renewal and Replacement	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	0.00%
TOTAL	\$3,723,900.00	\$3,353,745.52	\$370,154.48	9.94%

* Auditor's Adjustment
Transfers

The pending vouchers for the month of June were approved for payment on a motion offered by Mr. McNeilly, seconded by Mr. Schwab and the affirmative roll call vote of members present.

ESCROW ACCOUNT	
Nusbaum Stein	\$220.00
RENEWAL & REPLACEMENT ACCOUNT	
Daily Record	\$177.56
Hayes Pump	\$13,685.00
Nusbaum Stein	\$1,298.00
Star Ledger	\$498.94
OPERATING ACCOUNT	
ADP	\$224.37
ATS Environmental	\$995.45

Adapco	\$5,289.57
Scott Allen (dental & eye reimbursement)	\$687.48
American Wear	\$407.52
Bearing & Drive Solutions (payment correction)	\$0.99
Cintas First Aid	\$49.81
Cleary Giacobbe	\$857.50
Robert Colabella (work boot reimbursement)	\$59.76
Constellation New Energy	\$14,432.34
Coyne Chemical	\$4,507.35
Delaware River Basin Commission	\$820.00
Eurofins QC Labs	\$535.00
Federal Express	\$34.86
Ferraioli, Wielkocz, Cerullo & Cuva	\$7,500.00
Fisher Scientific	\$258.79
Susan Grebe (dental & mileage reimb)	\$281.19
Hach (\$91.96
JCP&L	\$7,166.03
Kenvil Power Mower	\$182.45
Lowe's	\$357.61
MSA Payroll 6/2/17	\$31,334.87
MSA Payroll 6/16/17	\$32,458.31
Maryland Biochemical Company	\$7,329.07
NJSHBP	\$13,688.06
NJ American Water	\$719.58
Napa Auto Parts	\$78.60
Netcong Hardware	\$179.88
Nusbaum Stein	\$710.60
One Call	\$33.75
PERS	\$2,392.54
R-D Trucking	\$19,584.00
Shell Fleet	\$247.20
Staples	\$499.31
Treasurer, State of NJ	\$200.00
USA Bluebook	\$5,097.44
Verizon	\$741.31
Verizon Communications	\$69.13
Verizon Wireless	\$225.18

Chairman Rattner noted correspondence received from CP Professional Services, which was a Notice of a Green Acres Public Hearing regarding easements in Mount Arlington and asked if it would affect the MSA pump stations in that area. Mr. Cangiano explained about the easements dating back to 1996 and the Green Acres proposal. The proposal will not affect MSA pump stations.

The following correspondence for the month of June was received and filed on a motion offered by Mr. Pucilowski, seconded by Mr. McNeilly and the affirmative vote of members present.

- A. 5/24/17 NJDEP - ITC East, Mount Olive Township WQMP Adopted Amendment
- B. 5/22/17 CP Professional Services - Notice of Green Acres Public Hearing, Borough of Mount Arlington
- C. 5/26/17 To NJDEP - Transmitting Resolution #17-25 for Consent to Hopatcong State Park WQMP Amendment Subject to Conditions
- D. 6/6/17 NJDEP - Correction to Map for ITC East, Mount Olive Township WQMP Adopted Amendment
- E. 6/14/17 NJDEP - One Year Time Extension, ITC Active Adult Community TWA No. 12-0104
- F. 6/14/17 NJDEP - One Year Time Extension, ITC Active Adult Community TWA No. 12-0208

The commissioners briefly discussed the Director's Report and Repairs and Maintenance Report. There were no major concerns. In consideration of Mr. Schilling's absence, questions regarding the Director's report could be discussed at the MSA July 27th meeting when Mr. Schilling is present.

The Director's Report, and Repairs and Maintenance Report, for the month of June were accepted on a motion offered by Mr. McNeilly, seconded by Mr. Cangiano and the affirmative vote of members present.

Mr. Scheri briefly outlined his report. The Engineering Committee met on June 19th to discuss the headworks facilities project. Ferriero Engineering contacted him regarding a multifamily residential project to be located at 34 Bank Street in Netcong. The commissioners discussed some concerns regarding the installation of a 60-inch diameter storm culvert for the project that will cross the MSA's interceptor. Mr. Scheri noted that he advised Ferriero Engineering to contact the MSA administrator with a copy of the TWA Package and an escrow deposit.

The Engineer's Report for the month of June was accepted on a motion offered by Mr. Schwab, seconded by Mr. Pucilowski and the affirmative vote of members present.

Mr. Schwab asked about the budgets for Contracts No. 260 and 265. Mr. Scheri had sent a report to Mr. Schilling and the Engineering Committee with a summary and recommended budgets for each of the projects. Copies of the report were distributed at the meeting to all the commissioners for their review. The budgets could be discussed further at the July meeting.

Chairman Rattner briefly discussed the Finance Committee meeting held on June 5th and the Auditor's findings. He asked if the commissioners had reviewed the 2016 Audit, specifically the general comments section, and if anyone had any questions or concerns. There were no concerns from the commissioners.

Resolution No. 17-26 Approving Certification of MSA 2016 Audit to Local Finance Board, was moved by Mr. Sylvester, seconded by Mr. Bates and the affirmative roll call vote of members present.

**RESOLUTION NO. 17-26
MUSCONETCONG SEWERAGE AUTHORITY
2016 ANNUAL AUDIT
CERTIFICATION TO LOCAL FINANCE BOARD**

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-15 requires the governing body of each local authority to cause an annual audit of its accounts to be made, and

WHEREAS, the annual audit report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016 has been completed and filed with the Director of the Division of Local Government Services pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-15, and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-17 requires the governing body of each authority to, within 45 days of receipt of the annual audit, certify by resolution to the Local Finance Board that each member thereof has personally reviewed the annual audit report, and specifically the sections of the audit report entitled "General Comments and Recommendations", and has evidenced same by group affidavit in the form prescribed by the Local Finance Board, and

WHEREAS, the members of the governing body have received the annual audit and have personally reviewed the annual audit, and have specifically reviewed the sections of the annual audit report entitled "General Comments and Recommendations" in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40A:5A-17,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the governing body of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority thereby certifies to the Local Finance Board of the State of New Jersey that each governing body member has personally reviewed the annual audit report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016, and specifically has reviewed the sections of the audit report entitled "General Comments and Recommendations", and has evidenced same by group affidavit in the form prescribed by the Local Finance Board.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Authority is hereby directed to promptly submit to the Local Finance Board the aforesaid group affidavit, accompanied by a certified true copy of this resolution.

Resolution No. 17-27 Awarding Contract #265 to JEV Construction for Aeration Basins No. 1, 2 and 3 Gate Rehabilitation, was moved by Mrs. Michetti, seconded by Mr. Cangiano and the affirmative roll call vote of members present.

**RESOLUTION NO. 17-27
Resolution of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority
Awarding Contract No. 265 to JEV Construction LLC
For Aeration Basins No. 1, 2 & 3 Gate Rehabilitation
Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-1, et seq.**

WHEREAS, on June 21, 2017 the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority received bids for Contract No. 265 Aeration Basins No. 1, 2 & 3 Gate Rehabilitation as described in the Technical Specifications in accordance with a Notice to Bidders; and

WHEREAS, the following bids were received:

	<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Amount</u>
1.	JEV Construction, LLC 116 West Main Street, 2 nd Fl. Clinton, NJ 08809	\$308,000
2.	Ferraro Construction Corp. 5 Park Drive Franklin, NJ 07416	\$459,113

WHEREAS, the Commissioners of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority hereby make the following findings of fact:

1. JEV Construction, LLC (hereinafter "JEV") submitted the lowest responsible bid for the contract, which bid is in the amount of \$308,000.
2. The bid of JEV complied with the following requirements of the Notice to Bidders including:
 - a. P.L. 1975, c 127 (N.J.A.C. 17:27) Affirmative Action Requirements;
 - b. Business Registration Act;
 - c. Non-Collusion Affidavit;
 - d. Ownership Statement P.L. 1997c.33;
 - e. Listing of Subcontractors; and
 - f. Certificate of Registration Under the Public Works Contractor Registration Act.
3. The Treasurer of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority has certified that funds are available.
4. WHEREAS, Mott MacDonald, Consulting Engineers for the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority reviewed the bid package from JEV and by letter dated June 21, 2017 recommended that Contract No. 265 be awarded to JEV.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Commissioners of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority that Contract No. 265 for Aeration Basin No. 1, 2 & 3 Gate Rehabilitation is hereby awarded to JEV Construction, LLC in the amount of \$308,000; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the amount of the Contract shall not exceed \$308,000 without further approval from the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority, and the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority shall not be liable to pay any amount over and above \$308,000 without its prior written approval; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that JEV shall sign a Site Access Agreement as prepared by MSA prior to entering upon MSA's facilities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Steven Rattner as Chairman is hereby authorized to sign and award Contract No. 265 to JEV Construction, LLC on behalf of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority.

Mrs. Palma left the meeting at 8:07 PM.

Chairman Rattner discussed the monitors being installed by the Musconetcong Watershed Association along the river. He explained that the MSA has direct access to one of the monitors through the back of the MSA facilities. The monitor is measuring water depth, conductivity, turbidity and temperature. There are four monitors along the River. The monitors are not officially calibrated machinery. The Association has been getting a lot of funding from different environmental groups. They have posted the monitoring information on a website. Chairman Rattner will e-mail the link to the commissioners for their information and review. The Musconetcong River Management Council holds meetings every two months. The Musconetcong River Management Council is the federal agency under the Department of Interior, but it is housed by the Watershed Association. Their headquarters is in Asbury, NJ. All municipalities along the Musconetcong River are members of the Musconetcong River Management Council. Chairman Rattner suggested it would be a good idea if the River Management Council could hold one of their regular business meetings at the MSA. He noted that the River Management Council has been supportive of the MSA. If none of the commissioners objected, Chairman Rattner volunteered that he could take care of the meeting obligations for one evening so the Musconetcong River Management Council could hold one of its meetings at the MSA facilities and they could see the new monitoring station. Mr. Schwab suggested that Mr. Schilling should be aware of any potential meetings that would be held at the MSA facilities. The matter would be on the meeting agenda for discussion next month.

The commissioners discussed the monitoring of the river. Chairman Rattner explained that the main thing being monitored is the outflow from Lake Hopatcong. The commissioners discussed about the removal of the dams on the Musconetcong River and the shad fish return. Mr. Schindelar had a concern about possible droughts and low flows, and how that could affect the plant. Chairman Rattner indicated that the plant has operated with the flows shut off completely in the past and it is part of the Authority's permit. Chairman Rattner further explained that the Musconetcong Watershed Association is a nonprofit organization. The Musconetcong River Management Council was organized and required under legislation when they designated

the Musconetcong River wild and scenic. He talked about funding from the William Penn Foundation and how the Watershed Association is planning to acquire approximately 600 to 800 acres for open space along the River in the upper Musconetcong Protection Area, which would include areas of Mount Olive, Netcong, Stanhope and Byram.

Mr. Dwyer reported on the status of the SOP for sewer allocation transfers. He had discussions with Mr. Beinfield, MSA Bond Counsel, who originally prepared the service agreements. They have been discussing what the MSA or Member Municipalities could or should add to the service agreements. Presently, the way the service agreements are written, the Member Municipalities can sell their allocation if they want. Chairman Rattner suggested that rules and requirements for allocation transfers should be documented.

Chairman Rattner indicated that the matter regarding the value of the MSA's dump truck could be discussed at the July meeting when Mr. Schilling is present. Mr. Sylvester asked if any of the commissioners would object if someone from Netcong DPW comes to the plant to assess the truck to see if it is worth fixing. It was suggested that he coordinate that with Mr. Schilling.

Mr. Pucilowski reported on the discussions at an engineering meeting held on June 19th. The Committee reviewed the headworks project. There were two concerns, one was the overall cost with or without the building and if there would be a way to construct a building that may be less expensive, or possibly some type of a canopy can be constructed. He suggested that the Committee should meet again soon to further discuss the project. Mr. Schwab asked if there were any estimated costs. Mr. Pucilowski responded that the building would be approximately \$150,000.00 for a block building. Another \$100,000.00 was estimated for flow monitors. He explained further ideas about meters and suggested that Mr. Scheri attend the next meeting to help the Committee determine the actual requirements and estimated costs for the project. Mr. Scheri noted that the total estimated construction cost without a building for the project is between 1.1 to 1.2 million dollars. With a masonry building it would be approximately 1.5 million dollars, and with some type of a pre-engineered/manufactured building would be about 1.3 to 1.4 million dollars. Mr. Pucilowski explained some of the problems he saw at HMUA that they had with retro fitting a prefabricated building. Mr. Schwab suggested the Authority consider a building design that could include hoists, all appurtenances, and be built to last, instead of a prefab building.

Chairman Rattner briefly updated the commissioners on Legislature Bills A4569 and S2834 for water purveyors which would require additional reporting management. He was interested in finding out costs for the municipalities. At this time there are too many variables to estimate costs.

Motion made by Mr. Schwab, seconded by Mr. Schindelar and the affirmative vote of members present, Chairman Rattner adjourned the meeting at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Grebe,
Administrative Assistant