

**New Hartford Water Pollution Control Authority
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 3, 2020 at 7:00 PM
Held Remotely Via Zoom**

PRESENT: Chairman Denton Butler, Mary Beth Greenwood, Michael LeClaire, Wes Marsh, Polly Pobuda, Joe Toro (7:03PM), and First Selectman Dan Jerram.

ABSENT: David Douyard.

Mr. Butler called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

A. July 2, 2020.

The July 2, 2020 Minutes should include the following amendments:

The third paragraph on the first page, the portion of text that reads, "...Ms. Greenwood reviewed her proposal to decrease the water and sewer rates to \$78.88 per 1000 gallons of water..." should instead read, "...Ms. Greenwood reviewed her proposal to decrease the water and sewer rates to \$8.08 per 1000 gallons of water...".

MOTION: Ms. Greenwood, Mr. LeClaire second, to approve the July 2, 2020 Minutes as amended; Motion approved with Mr. Butler, Ms. Greenwood, Mr. LeClaire, and Mr. Marsh voting aye while Ms. Pobuda abstained.

2. 2019-20 FINANCIAL REVIEW – AUGUST 20-21 UPDATE:

Mr. Butler reported having found errors in the year-end financial report, so the review was postponed. He noted that the errors have been forwarded to King & King for further evaluation.

3. DISPOSITION OF AGED RECEIVABLES:

Mr. Butler reported that there were a number of receivables that have been carried for more than four years. He explained that one category included users who had incurred a late charge for past due accounts. These fees were less than several dollars but have continued to be carried as an open receivable, according to Mr. Butler.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Mr. Marsh second, to remove \$8.67 from our books representing receivables from eight accounts no longer active; unanimously approved.

Mr. Butler reviewed four open accounts on deceased individuals wherein no estate had ever been open. Those four accounts were reported to total \$2,332.87.

MOTION: Ms. Greenwood, Mr. Marsh second, to remove those four accounts of deceased individuals, totaling \$2,332.87, from the receivable balance of the WPCA; unanimously approved.

Mr. Butler reported a balance of \$20,910 in aged receivables of over ninety days. He noted that he had reached out to TaxServ to inquire whether they may be interested in attempting to recover this lost revenue. Where he could, Mr. Butler noted he has liened properties. TaxServ receives compensation for their services by attaching an additional fee beyond principal and interest, according to Mr. Butler.

MOTION: Mr. Marsh, Mr. Toro second, to enter into an agreement with TaxServ, working in connection with The Torrington Water Company, to begin the collection process on a minimal outstanding debt, totaling \$20,910; unanimously approved.

4. OPERATIONS REPORTS:

A. Aquarian Water Company.

The Board reviewed the operations report from Aquarian Water Company. Mr. Butler reported additional information on the sinkholes that were identified in the report.

B. Torrington Water Company.

The Board reviewed the operations report from Torrington Water Company.

Mr. Butler reported that \$22,323 have been incurred in costs in storm-related non-routine charges. He noted that an email will be sent to the Board of Selectmen in response to their request for identified costs associated with Storm Isaias. Mr. Butler explained that \$17,973 was tied to the sewer system while \$4,350 was tied to the clean water. He noted that Mike Crawford of AWC would be in town next week to make an assessment as to whether to seek financial assistance for costs associated with components that are in need of replacement at the wastewater treatment plant after the power outage. For instance, Mr. Butler referred to the necessary replacement of the relays with the auger meister as well as a pump filter.

Mr. Butler explained that he had been meeting with the fire department chief to discuss flow meter readings on several hydrants followed by some retesting. He noted that the Torrington Water Company does not inspect the flow control valves because it is outside of their scope of expertise. Mr. Butler noted that he had been connected with a company that specializes in this type of work.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Ms. Pobuda second, to authorize the chairman to proceed with a water valve inspection at an expense not to exceed \$2K for water valve inspection; unanimously approved.

5. AWC CONTRACT RENEWAL:

Mr. Butler reported that the Aquarian Water Company (AWC) contract is up for its third renewal. After negotiating the increase with AWC, Mr. Butler noted that they had agreed to a 2% increase rather than a 3% increase. He indicated that all other terms and conditions remain the same and noted that the adjustment is consistent with the increase authorized in February for TWC.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Ms. Pobuda second, to accept the renewal for the Aquarian Water Company contract with all terms and conditions to remain intact with the exception of a 2% increase; unanimously approved.

6. OTHER BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE TO COME BEFORE THE WPCA:

A. Asset Review Update – Public Information Session – 9-17-20.

Mr. Butler reported a public information session had been scheduled for September 17, 2020 relative to the Asset Review Committee. Ms. Greenwood noted that she had been looking for information by reviewing all of the AET documents on the town's website but had not been able to find anything on the other towns who have gone through this type of experience with Aquarian. She questioned why this has not been published. Mr. Butler indicated that there was no reason to not have this information available except that he had simply not put the data in a report form. He reminded the Board that since 2011, Aquarian has acquired sixty-eight other water companies. Mr. Butler reported that the reviews he received on Aquarian had been

consistently positive. He noted that the chief complaint on Aquarian from users was on the transition from quarterly billing to monthly billing.

Ms. Greenwood sought information from other towns relative to what effect the transition to Aquarian had on the rates. Mr. Toro noted that comparisons relative to rates are difficult as the subject towns noting increases could have had much lower rates than New Hartford's. He reminded the Board that this town's rates are the highest in the state. Mr. Butler advised that in some instances of town's seeing rate increases after being acquired were a result of the state of their plant needing immediate repairs. Ms. Pobuda noted that PURA sets the rates.

Referring to the progress of the AET, Mr. Toro opined that it was time for the town to vote on whether to sell the assets. Ms. Greenwood reminded the Board that when discussions first occurred around holding public information meetings, it had been agreed that someone other than First Selectman Dan Jerram or Mr. Butler should lead the meetings and present the information. She explained that with both Mr. Jerram and Mr. Butler sharing the common objective that the assets ought to be sold, the presentations have been colored to reflect that. She indicated that the alternative of the town as a whole taking a different role in funding the systems has not been presented or discussed at the public information meetings. Mr. Butler disagreed, noting that there has already been discussion in this regard over the years and it had been demonstrated that the town is not inclined to want to move in that direction.

B. Water Valve Inspection.

Mr. Butler shared an update on the Canterbury Village agreement.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Mr. LeClaire second, to adjourn at 7:50PM; unanimously approved.

**Respectfully submitted,
Pamela A. Colombie
Recording Clerk**