

**New Hartford Water Pollution Control Authority
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 7:00 PM
New Hartford Town Hall
530 Main Street, New Hartford, Connecticut**

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

ABSENT: David Douyard.

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

1. APPROVE MINUTES:

A. January 2, 2020.

MOTION: Ms. Greenwood, Mr. LeClaire second, to approve the January 2, 2020 Minutes; unanimously approved.

B. January 16, 2020.

The January 16, 2020 Minutes should include the following changes:

The portion of text in the first paragraph of the second page that reads, "...*Mr. Butler pointed out the shrinking pool of operators who have the expertise, too...*" should instead read, "...*Mr. Butler pointed out the shrinking pool of operators who have the expertise to operate plants...*";

The portion of text in the sixth paragraph of the second page that reads, "...*Mr. Butler reported that Aquarian has acquired seventy-one systems since 2011...*" should instead read, "...*Mr. Butler reported that Aquarian has acquired sixty-eight systems since 2011 and has three more systems pending approval before PURA...*"

The portion of text in the first paragraph of the third page that reads, "...*can make their rate of return off of it, and that it is consistent with their business system to buy small systems...*" should instead read, "...*can make their rate of return off of it, and that it is consistent with their business plan to buy small systems...*".

MOTION: Mr. LeClaire, Mr. Toro second, to approve the January 16, 2020 Minutes as amended; unanimously approved.

2. MONTHLY FINANCIAL REVIEW:

A. Quarterly Billing and Debt Service.

The Board reviewed financials previously emailed to them from Administrative Office Assistant Jill Healey. Mr. Toro questioned the register that reflected what appeared to be a refund of \$335 to a woman. It was discussed that the sum may represent an amount that had been paid on the account after the debt had already been satisfied. Mr. Butler noted that he would report back on the matter. Mr. Toro questioned the amounts paid to Halloran and Sage. Mr. Butler explained that it was the firm that employed Attorney Matt Willis. Mr. Toro questioned the payments made to USA Blue Book. Mr. LeClaire explained that it is a company that sells sewer and water parts to municipalities.

B. Debt Service Update.

Noting that they were in the seventh month of their current fiscal year, Mr. Butler elaborated on the apparent positive balance of \$35279. He explained that it did not reflect the \$135K worth of repairs that are necessary. Mr. Butler reported that as of February 1, the WPCA is eleven

quarters in arrear for payments on the wastewater treatment plant and three quarters in arrears on payment of the Town debt.

3. OPERATIONS REPORTS SEWER & WATER (AWC/TWC):

A. Aquarian Water Company – Appropriations.

Mr. Butler explained how a pump at the wastewater treatment plant needs to be replaced. He explained that one new rejuvenated pump will be created from the three pumps that were already purchased several years ago. Mr. Butler also noted that a snowblower needs to be repaired.

MOTION: Mr. Marsh, Mr. Toro second, to approve an appropriation not to exceed \$4K for pump salvage to reconstruct one new used pump out of three and to replace the snowblower; unanimously approved.

B. Torrington Water Company – Contract Adjustment and DPH Directive.

The Board reviewed a report previously emailed to them. Mr. Marsh questioned the two high pH readings at the Pine Meadow well and whether there was a reason for that. Mr. Butler explained that he did not know the cause for this as the report had just been received the day prior to the meeting. Ms. Greenwood questioned the incidences where the meters are reading backwards. Mr. Butler explained that two meters had been installed backwards. Ms. Greenwood also questioned the discolored water that had been included in the report. Mr. Butler noted that it was within the acceptable standards. While it may or may not be the case with this particular residence referenced in the report, Mr. Butler explained that sometimes old iron pipes can be the cause, or it may be related to a water heater going bad.

Mr. Butler reported a request from Torrington Water Company to adjust the contract by \$2028.78 and to change the hourly labor rate from \$85 per hour to \$90 per hour. He reminded the Board that when TWC first began operating the water system, their hourly labor rate was the same and had not imposed an increase in six years. The consensus of the board was that not increasing their contract was an oversight.

MOTION: Mr. LeClaire, Ms. Green second, to increase the rate paid to Torrington Water Company by 2% as stated in their contract; unanimously approved.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Ms. Pobuda second, to increase the hourly labor rate paid to Torrington Water Company from \$85 to \$90; unanimously approved.

Mr. Butler reported receiving an order from the Department of Public Health Water Quality and Compliance Division notified the town needed to conduct a random sample for lead and copper. He explained that between 1982 and 1987, something had been used in both that was not considered to be acceptable to EPA. He explained that while it has been corrected, there has been a number of water installations across the country where this has occurred.

Additionally, Mr. Butler that there must be a complete random sampling of all connections that involve galvanized pipe. He explained that it is susceptible to the same issue being addressed by lead and copper testing. As this would have involved every connection in the system, Mr. Butler explained that in an effort to mitigate the costs, every building permit between 1982 and 1987 was researched which resulted in sampling being necessary at only twenty properties. He estimated the cost of this sampling to be at \$2K.

4. OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE WPCA:

A. AET Update – BOS/AET Meeting 1/13/20 and AET Meeting 1/21/20 – 1/31/20.

Mr. Butler shared his regret with false information being communicated in three emails from one of the selectmen. He reported that one of those emails contained assertions that customers of public water systems pay less in charges than customers of private systems. Mr. Butler distributed a chart containing rates of New Hartford as well as rates of customers in Aquarian Water Company's eastern division from the period of 2005 to 2019.

Mr. Butler reported that the Town's website has now been updated with a very large amount of data relative to the potential sale of the water and wastewater assets. He indicated that a projection of the resulting rates was now there for people to reference.

Mr. Butler noted that if the Board was to review a "what if" situation relative to the assets not being sold, the capital needs of \$1.5M would still remain. The need to sewer Pine Meadow at a cost of \$3.5M would still remain, too, according to Mr. Butler. He noted that the existing town debt of \$197K on the plant and \$45K on all the other debt would not go away.

Mr. Butler noted that a mailer had been workshopped and it was now a conceptual document being considered by the Board of Selectmen. He noted they have been responsible for mailers for town-wide issues.

Regarding future public presentations, Mr. Butler opined that the format should be different in the sense that it should include bullets, pictures, diagrams, and charts that make sense to people.

B. DPH – Discussion 01/27/20.

Mr. Butler reported that notes from his conversations with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA), Department of Public Health (DPH), Office of Consumer Counseling, and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) have all been uploaded to the AET section of the town website.

He noted having had a conversation with Lori Mathieu from DPH to provide her with an update.

C. BOS Resolution 1/28/20.

Mr. Butler distributed a copy of the recent resolution adopted by the Board of Selectmen regarding the sale of the water/wastewater assets.

Mr. Butler explained how the Board will act in an ombudsman role should Aquarian purchase the assets. The process of establishing and raising rates with PURA was discussed.

MOTION: Mr. LeClaire, Ms. Pobuda second, to adjourn at 8:27PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela A. Colombie
Recording Clerk**