

**New Hartford Water Pollution Control Authority
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 7, 2017 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, and Polly Pobuda, and Joe Toro.

ABSENT: David Douyard.

Chairman Denton Butler called the meeting to order at 7:03PM.

1. PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED CHANGE TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 4 OF THE SEWER RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Mr. Butler had copies available of both the existing regulations as well as the proposed change to Article III, Section 4. He noted that as this is a continuation of last week's public hearing, the typographical error of the word "with" to "within" has not been corrected nor has the correction been made regarding only those properties directly abutting a sewer line would be subject to an Order to Connect.

Jerry Ecklund of 55 Church Street inquired about preventing back-ups into homes. Mr. Butler explained that a backflow system is generally fail-safe. Mr. Butler explained that the options available in terms of storage tank holding, the type of available pumping systems, back-flow preventers, etc. would be something a property owner would discuss with their independent contractor. Mr. Ecklund questioned whether exemptions will be considered for those with very limited use. Mr. Butler reviewed the type of administrative analysis this Board will undertake.

Donna Berman of 41 Church Street questioned how situations wherein people cannot afford to connect will be handled. Mr. Butler explained that various low-cost loan options are being researched. Ms. Berman questioned why the Board will be requiring people to connect to the system. Mr. Butler explained that the principal driver behind this is to protect the environment, noting that the sewer line often runs along the oldest homes in New Hartford and that an aquifer providing drinking water is in the center area, too. An additional driver to this Board seeking additional connections is that by doing so, the added revenue will help to defray the cost of operations, according to Mr. Butler. Ms. Berman noted that this area of town is seemingly the least well-off segment financially and questioned whether it has been considered to share the cost of the system among the whole town. Noting that her point has been an issue raised before, Mr. Butler recommended that she consider attending the Board of Selectmen September 26, 2017 regular meeting.

Michael Haller of 540 Main Street questioned how many users are needed to make a dent in the fiscal problems. Mr. Butler noted that even if all of the thirty-two properties that have been initially identified were to connect, they would not solve all the problems but would indeed make a very appreciable difference.

Ms. Berman polled the Board to gather how many on the board live in Pine Meadow. It was noted that there were three board members but that none of them about a sewer line.

Mary Ann Gunning of 45 Church Street questioned whether reducing the use of fertilizers could better serve the goal of protecting the environment thereby maintaining safety of the aquifer. Mr. Butler noted that the WPCA only has authority within 200 feet of the radius of the wells.

David Krimmel of 24 Dings Road questioned the language regarding abutters and whether it was possible that one might have to gain an easement across another's property. Mr. LeClaire explained that the Board is proposing to do away with that section.

David Rosengren of 495 Town Hill Road identified himself as a lawyer and past WPCA board member from 2008 through 2013, explaining that he is very familiar with the issue of hooking up abutters for approximately a decade. He opposed removing the definition of an abutter. Mr. Rosengren advised that the only thing this Board can consider is the public health safety and welfare within the service area.

Noeleen Soraghan of 138 Town Hill Road expressed concern with the lack of the wording in the proposed change as well as the changes in the sewer service area map.

Mr. Rosengren addressed the Board again, opining that the proposed language illegally provides for the Town to force private residents to construct sewer lines.

Ms. Berman addressed the Board again, suggesting that the WPCA figure out a solution that does not burden only some members of the community but rather propose something that allows the whole town to share in that.

Elise Crowston of 33 Church Street, noting that she recently connected to the sewer line two weeks ago, explained that she thought the process was more difficult and stressful than need be. She urged this Board to come up with procedures and guidance for new connections.

Ms. Gunning addressed the Board again, questioning why her comments were not included in the August 31, 2017 Special Meeting Minutes regarding, "...something that I heard that if every household in New Hartford was to contribute \$25 per \$100K of assessment, that it would cover the cost of the sewer". Mr. Toro corrected her reference to the sewer, noting that she meant debt service. Mr. Butler explained that not everything gets included in the minutes but the audio recording is available for all.

The public hearing was closed at 7:42PM.

2. DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES CONCERNING ANY CHANGES TO ARTICLE III, SECTION 4:

The board was polled for their impressions taken from the continuation of the public hearing at this meeting. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Butler reminded the Board that a subcommittee, comprised of Ms. Greenwood, Mr. Marsh and him, will meet to refine and revise Article III, Section 4. He explained to all that this Board is not required to hold a public hearing on this matter but nonetheless chose to do so. Mr. Butler noted that the regulation, ready in its final form, will not likely be subject to a vote in less than ninety days.

3. OPERATIONS REVIEWS - WATER & SEWER:

The August, 2017 Water and Sewer reports were noted as having been received in advance of this meeting. A higher reading of manganese at the Black Bridge Well was noted. Mr. Butler indicated that he will follow up with Torrington Water Company Vice President Steve Cerutto in this regard but indicated that it may be a blip from an April, 2017 flushing.

4. MINUTES - AUGUST 31, 2017 MEETING:

The August 31, 2017 Minutes should be amended as follows:

- The third paragraph of the first page should have the following language added to the end of it, "...Ms. Wexler referred to the vagueness of this ordinance as a potential cloud over her property...";
- The sixth paragraph of the first page should have the following language added to the end of it, "...Ms. Gunning reaffirmed her understanding that \$25 per \$100K assessment would offset the debt service..."; and
- The fourth paragraph of the fourth page, the portion of text that reads, "...Mr. Toro provided an update on his research into the cost of the caustic soda that Torrington Water Company purchase from SAVOL...", should instead read, "...Mr. Toro provided an update on his research into the cost of the caustic soda/sodium hydroxide that the WPCA purchases directly from SAVOL. Torrington Water provides the WPCA with their sodium hypochlorite (bleach)...";

MOTION: Ms. Pobuda, Mr. Toro second, to approve the August 31, 2017 Minutes as amended; unanimously approved.

5. ACCESS TO DEBT SERVICE FUNDS - PROPOSED MEMO TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

Mr. Butler reminded the Board that after twice briefing the Board of Selectmen about the state of the finances of the WPCA, he had been asked that given a scenario where this Board had access to the debt service funds, where would the money be used to tackle some of the bigger problems this Board faces. He reminded this Board that they had again reviewed the list of priority items that would top the list with the wet well located at the juncture of Routes 219 and 44 being first.

Mr. Toro shared his opinion that the WPCA ought to send a clear message to the Board of Selectmen, in the form of a motion, what this group is seeking in terms of the debt service. Mr. Toro disagreed with the notion of suspending the debt service and having it tacked on to the end of the loan cycle, explaining that he believes it should be permanently suspended.

MOTION: Ms. Greenwood, Mr. Toro second, to state support for the Board of Selectmen's consideration to permanently suspend the requirement for the New Hartford Water Pollution Control Authority's quarterly payments of \$16,536.77 to debt service for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. We encourage the Board of Selectmen to eliminate this requirement, effective immediately. This is the only way the WPCA will be able to pay its operating expenses within the constraints of the current budget; Motion amended.

MOTION TO AMEND: Ms. Greenwood, Mr. LeClaire, to remove the word "permanently" so that it reads, "to state support for the Board of Selectmen's consideration to suspend the requirement for the New Hartford Water Pollution Control Authority's quarterly payments of \$16,536.77 to debt service for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. We encourage the Board of Selectmen to eliminate this requirement, effective immediately. This is the only way the WPCA will be able to pay its operating expenses within the constraints of the current budget; Motion passed with Ms.

Greenwood, Ms. Pobuda, Mr. Marsh, and Mr. LeClaire voting aye while Mr. Toro and Mr. Butler were opposed.

6. ALL OTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THE WPCA:

Mr. Toro presented with findings from his researching a scenario wherein the Town, as a whole, would share in the WPCA's debt service. He noted that the annual debt payment for this Board is \$197,454 and that there are 2702 residential properties, 63 commercial properties, and 9 industrial properties. Mr. Toro reported that the WPCA pays \$66,147 annually with the Town absorbing the balance of the WPCA debt service. He then reviewed figures explaining that the average homeowner, with a house assessed at \$193,596, would pay an additional \$45.01 per year through 2041.

Additionally, Mr. Toro reported that he has found local lenders to be receptive to setting up some type of financing for those residents who may need options upon receiving an order to connect.

Mr. Butler read aloud his email to the owner/developer of 433 Main Street regarding the obligations necessary prior to their ever receiving a Certificate of Occupancy. He noted that the owner/developer has five business days to execute an application and pay fees for the sewer and water connections for both 433 Main Street and 455 Main Street as well as file the photos documenting the sewer lateral connection. Mr. Butler reviewed several other mandates included in the email he had forwarded this date.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Mr. LeClaire second, to allow the chairman to carry the full force of our regulations for water and sewer on the owner of 443 Main Street for noncompliance; unanimously approved.

MOTION: Mr. Toro, Mr. LeClaire second, **to adjourn at 9:12PM; unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela A. Colombie
Recording Clerk