

**New Hartford Water Pollution Control Authority
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 18, 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, Polly Pobuda, and Joe Toro.

ABSENT: David Douyard and Polly Pobuda.

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

1. DISCUSSION ESA PROVISIONING:

Mr. Butler read portions of a correspondence from Rivers Alliance Executive Director Margaret Miner to the WUCC (Water Utility Coordinating Committee), noting several questions regarding the difference between state statute and Department of Public Health. Mr. Marsh reported that the WUCC is expected to respond late May, just before the June 1st ESA deadline.

2. MINUTES – 05/04/2017:

The May 4, 2017 Minutes should be amended as follows:

The second sentence of Agenda Item #3 *Water Supply Plan Initiative*, the language that reads, "...Mr. Butler noted that of these customers, 26 had zero usage for the month of April..." should instead read, "...Mr. Butler noted that of these customers, 26 had zero usage for the quarter ending March 31st..."; and

The last sentence of Agenda Item#4 *Budget Workshop – Rate Change Considerations*, the language that reads, "...Mr. Butler noted that he has made several inquiries to Tower Generator..." should instead read, "...Mr. Butler noted that he has made several inquiries to Tower Generator and is disappointed in their performance and billing practice...".

MOTION: Mr. LeClaire, Mr. Toro second, to approve the May 4, 2017 Minutes as amended; unanimously approved.

3. REPORT OF FOG UPDATE:

Mr. Butler reported that there has been a second incidence of fats and oils being dumped into the sewer lines. He noted that the wetwell on Prospect Street received between twenty and twenty-five gallons of grease. He noted that there are only six duplexes plus a seventh dwelling that are below the wetwell. Mr. Butler read aloud a correspondence sent to these property owners explaining the problems that can arise from the dumping of fats, oils and grease, noting the cost of \$3K for repairs associated with these events. In his letter, he explained how the dumping may also be occurring through accessing the manhole covers, noting that such an action is deemed a crime and punishable under Connecticut law. Mr. Butler sought the public's help in this regard.

4. BUDGET WORKSHOP:

A. Rates and Fees Review.

Mr. Butler noted that in addressing the approximately \$100K gap between projected FY18 revenues and projected FY18 expenses, he reviewed the service charge schedule, last revised in 2015. He noted that he is not proposing a change to the Water Usage charges. His suggested changes include a 15.8% to basic meter charge per quarter as well as a 5% increase

in fees for the public fire service hydrants and the private fire service hydrants, and a \$.22 increase for sprinkler heads. Mr. Butler also noted he has proposed rather dramatic changes to the connection fee charges. He then reviewed how all those proposed fees break down. The increases proposed for the cost of new sewer connection charges was also reviewed. Mr. Butler explained that all of these proposed changes are projected to generate an additional \$19,697.52.

The number of sprinkler heads in the buildings that have them was reviewed and discussed. Mr. Butler suggested that regarding the increase in new sewer connections, a caveat be included noting that pending applications shall have 120 days to execute against the connection fee in place when initially filed.

Mr. Butler explained that his conversation with First Selectman Dan Jerram had included the observation that formerly planned maintenance costs are now deemed demand maintenance items.

Ms. Greenwood distributed a document for historical reference, indicating that the sewer operating costs have consistently increased from 2009 (\$234K) through 2016 (\$358K). She noted that this is just further evidence that the current customers are paying a lot to run the capacity that was built into the plant. She opined that any further discussion should include the operating costs and the escalating capital costs of the repairs that need to be done.

Mr. Butler noted that he ought to have a response from this Board's legal counsel, Matt Willis, with respect to a benefit assessment on abutters who elected to not correct and the ability to charge them on post construction basis. He explained that those are dwellings that have had access to the system but have chosen to not use it. Mr. Butler reminded the Board that the town is in the third year of a five year agreement wherein the Town is in a 69/31 split. Attorney Willis had advised that if the Town is inclined to grant this Board relief, the easiest way would be through that schedule.

B. Discussion with Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Greenwood distributed a second version of a Draft for Discussion Only – New Hartford WPCA FY2017-18. She noted that the only change with this version compared to the first is the agreed change to the revenues.

First Selectman Dan Jerram questioned what comprises the \$69K non-routine charges under the Water budget. Ms. Greenwood explained that this includes a water supply plan (\$200), meter change-outs (\$4K), snowplowing (\$3,150), hydrants (\$2K), Tower Generator (\$1200) and non-routine charges from Torrington Water Company in the sum of \$60K. Mr. Butler explained that the \$60K for Torrington Water Company includes calibration of instruments, electrical, Call Before You Dig, and any non-routine items charged by TWC based on the contract. Mr. Butler noted that this would include fire hydrant replacement and water main breaks which likely total near \$20K. Mr. Jerram questioned whether that figure includes the larger ticket items. It was noted that the largest is \$82K for the well rebuild as well as \$16K for the water tank repair.

Various proposed maintenance items were reviewed and discussed. Mr. Jerram advised that representatives from this Board approach the full Board of Selectmen, noting that if a case is being made for economic development along Main Street, an argument can be made for the well rebuild.

Mr. Butler reminded this Board that back when the adjustment was made to the payment schedule, this Board received severe criticism for things that were perceived as having not been done, such as having a receivables problem, etc. Mr. Butler noted that this Board has since liened properties now having twenty-eight customers on payment programs, with all but one improving on balances, and the Board has tightened up on the shutoffs in that the WPCA doesn't delay now that the practices of Torrington Water Company have been adopted.

Mr. Toro opined that the AET (Asset Evaluation Team) needs to reconvene and put an RFP out. Ms. Greenwood reminded Mr. Jerram that a question that had arisen from a previous AET meeting was what the cost is if the debt was spread around to all the taxpayers in town. Mr. Jerram questioned what portion of the debt Ms. Greenwood was referencing. She noted that the question pertained to the cost of spreading the remainder of all the debt relative to the wastewater plant to all the town. Mr. Butler indicated the cost would be \$66,769. Mr. Butler noted that the cost could be calculated by taking that figure and dividing it by the number of dwellings in town. Mr. Jerram estimated that to be approximately \$25 per dwelling. With regards to the AET, Mr. Jerram indicated that those meetings can take place outside of the budget season, at a time when the RFP work and FOIs can be better handled.

Regarding the ESA provisioning, Mr. Butler inquired as to whether Mr. Jerram had the opportunity to discuss the matter any further with the town's legal counsel. He indicated that he had not as the attorney has been traveling.

Mr. Toro questioned whether this Board should approach the chairman of the Board of Finance. Mr. Jerram advised them to speak to the Board of Selectmen first and review the timeline.

5. CONTINUE RULES AND REGULATIONS REVIEW:

No business was discussed.

MOTION: Mr. LeClaire, Mr. Marsh second, **to adjourn at 8:41PM; unanimously approved.**

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