

**WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2014 – 7:00PM
ANN ANTOLINI SCHOOL LIBRARY – 30 ANTOLINI ROAD**

PRESENT: Acting Chairman Kenneth Krohner, Denton Butler, Mary Beth Greenwood, Steve Hanright, Michael LeClaire, Bill Michaud; First Selectman Daniel Jerram; Jason Hofmann, The Water Planet.

ABSENT: None.

Acting Chairman Kenneth Krohner called the meeting to order at 7:05PM. All regular members present were seated for the meeting. The proceedings were recorded digitally and copies are available at Town Hall.

1. WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS.

Mr. Krohner welcomed new members Denton Butler and Mary Beth Greenwood.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A. December 12, 2013 regular meeting.

The Board agreed to table this matter to the February 6, 2014 regular meeting.

3. MONTHLY REPORT – UNITED WATER.

Mr. Krohner stated that no report had been received from United Water.

4. MONTHLY REPORT – THE WATER PLANET.

Mr. Hofmann distributed copies of his monthly report to all Board members. He stated that the plant had remained in compliance with its permit during the previous month. Average daily flow for the month of December was 56,000 gallons; total flow was 1.7 million gallons. A total of 147,450 gallons of septage was processed during December. Mr. Hofmann explained that Russ's came and cleaned out both the Route 219 and Prospect Street pump stations, as is periodically required. He also noted an electrical failure with the odor control mechanism; he was in the process of soliciting price estimates for the repair work. Because of several days of extremely cold temperatures, ice jammed the SBR 2 waste valve and it failed to close properly. Board members questioned whether the heat tape had worked properly; Mr. Hofmann explained that with temperatures as cold as they had been, this problem could occur even with properly installed heat tape. He said that they had water running nonstop in order to keep the system warm. Mr. Butler questioned whether the odor control system failure was due to frozen medium. Mr. Hofmann responded negatively, noting the system had been drained and emptied already as was standard practice for this time of year.

Mr. Hofmann then reviewed with the Board information he had compiled regarding the septage receiving program. Between March 2013 and January 2014, the total number of Russ's trucks dumping septage at the plant was 891; assuming 2,340 gallons each, this meant a total of 2,085,420 gallons of septage received since the start of the program.

In order to process the septage, the Water Planet required additional overtime and weekend hours. Mr. Hofmann explained the process by which septage was treated, noting that since the septage is much more concentrated, the process is much more involved than it is with sewer-related waste. When a truck is received on a Friday, it requires a person to come in over the weekend periodically to oversee the process. The overtime costs associated with processing septage to date were approximately \$12,820.75.

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He noted that from March 2013 to January 2014, 103 sludge trucks had been required at the plant; for the same period in 2012, prior to the implementation of the septage receiving program, only 20 trucks were needed. Therefore, the septage receiving program meant an additional 83 trucks were needed for sludge hauling. At 6500 gallons per truck, this meant a total of 539,500 gallons of sludge related to the septage receiving program that needed to be removed from the plant. At 0.12 cents per gallon, the cost of hauling this sludge for removal was approximately \$64,740.

Since he did not have access to these bills, Mr. Hofmann assumed a \$1000 cost each for both electricity and equipment maintenance and repair. He noted that the blowers were required to run twice as long when processing septage than was needed when processing sewage. When all of these costs were added together, he estimated the total cost for processing septage was \$80,000, which equaled \$0.038 per gallon or \$38 per 1000 gallons of septage received.

Mr. Michaud questioned whether the overtime costs would decrease this year in light of the upgrades that were made as a part of the USDA change order work. Mr. Hofmann responded negatively. He stated that the remote control work performed ensures the plant maintains compliance with its permit. However, overtime would still be required as there was no way to oversee the process automatically. Mr. LeClaire questioned whether it was possible to process the septage automatically overnight, and Mr. Hofmann explained the process currently being used at the plant. Mr. Butler questioned whether there was any way to improve anything to reduce how much sludge was removed from the plant, such as adding water. Mr. Hofmann explained that the system was based on pounds of septage coming in and out; the strength of the concentration did not change the required work. He said that it was currently an 18-hour process. It could be made into an 8-10 hour process; however, someone would still be required onsite and it would be a longer work day. He also noted that the quicker the batch was completed the quicker it had to be removed. Mr. Hofmann said that they were trying to figure out how to recirculate the septage such that it went through the process twice; however, it could not be done during the winter. He said that for every 4 trucks dumping septage at the plant, one truck would be needed to remove the resulting sludge.

Mr. LeClaire questioned whether a mechanical press would help, and Mr. Hofmann responded negatively. He said that the septage settled out better in the summer than the winter, and less trucks were therefore required. He said that the plant had three tanks, and the third could be used in the summer; however, since the volume of material coming in decreased in the winter, the third tank would starve because it was not being consistently fed. Mr. Hofmann said that the tank could not go more than 88 days without additional material being added. The third tank could be taken offline in September; however, 250,000 gallons of water would then be needed to clean it out.

Mr. Michaud questioned whether the plant had the ability to take in additional septage or whether it was now at maximum capacity. Mr. Hofmann said that prior to the septage program, the plant averaged between 60,000 and 100,000 gallons per day. The plant had a total capacity of 400,000 gallons per day, which meant that 300,000 was available. Septage had an organic strength fifteens times greater than normal sewage. One-fifteenth of 300,000 gallons was 20,000 gallons per day at most able to be safely processed. At the busiest times of the past six months, the Russ's trucks were meeting that number. Because the septage now being received was so strong, Mr. Hofmann stated that the plant was essentially at capacity.

Mr. Hofmann said that there were many days where Russ's did not meet that number; however, it was often close and he was not sure how the Town could negotiate a contract with another vendor given these uncertain parameters. Mr. Michaud suggested an "as available" contract for up to 15,000 gallons per day. Mr. Hofmann noted that the sludge removal costs would also necessarily increase with the increased septage.

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Mr. Butler noted how tight the margin was in October and November 2013, observing that the contract was for 3-4 trucks per day and that three trucks was approximately 10,000 gallons. Mr. Hofmann said that there were days when the plant only received one truck from Russ's and other days with 7-8 trucks. The Board then reviewed the average number of truckloads received per day from Russ's. At 891 total trucks, the average over six months was approximately 3 trucks per day.

Mr. Jerram then questioned what staffing was required over the weekend when processing septage. Mr. Hofmann explained that one person was needed for three hours on Saturday and three hours on Sunday.

Members noted that the next Joint Taskforce meeting was scheduled for 7PM on February 4th.

5. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Tom Goddu, Pine Meadow, asked whether there was a way to warm up the mix in the holding tank during the winter. Mr. Hofmann responded negatively, explaining that the plant did not have a digester. Mr. LeClaire concurred, noting that most plants now operating have done away with digesters. Mr. Butler stated that the Building Oversight Committee had looked into this and determined that it was not warranted for a plant of this size.

Brian Zelasko, 10 Turkey Hollow, then addressed the Board to question whether there was any accountability in terms of septage haulers dumping material at the plant, or whether it was done on the honor system. Mr. Hofmann explained the process by which Russ's employees dump septage at the plant, and Mr. Butler and other Board members stated that it was easy for the plant workers to see what has been added to the system.

As the Board had no further questions for Mr. Hofmann, he left the meeting at 7:40PM.

6. FIRE HYDRANTS:

Mr. Krohner noted that there were still some fire hydrants to be painted and some flags to be installed. However, some of the bolts on the fire hydrants had rusted, and a cutting torch would be necessary to remove them. Mr. Krohner stated that he just wanted to advise the Board that this would work would be done. Approximately 20 flags had been installed to date. Mr. LeClaire questioned whether any additional funds would be needed for this project, and Mr. Krohner stated that budgeted amount was still adequate.

7. LIEN RELEASES – 283 MAIN STREET AND 82 PROSPECT STREET:

Mr. Krohner noted that the accounts for both 283 Main Street and 82 Prospect Street had been paid in full; the liens could therefore be removed. Mr. Butler questioned whether this had been documented and confirmed. Mr. Krohner and Mr. Jerram both stated that Lila Tuxbury in the Finance Office had confirmed receipt of the payments.

MOTION Mr. LeClaire, second Mr. Butler, to authorize the release of the liens on both 283 Main Street and 82 Prospect Street as both outstanding debts had been paid in full; unanimously approved.

MOTION Mr. Butler, second Mr. Hanright, to amend the agenda to move item 8 to the end of the agenda; unanimously approved.

9. DISCUSSION REGARDING WPCA CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES, OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE AND RESOURCES, COMMUNICATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION, MONTHLY REPORTS:

Mr. Butler suggested that between now and the next meeting, all Board members identify what they feel are the main issues to be addressed by the Water Pollution Control Authority. He suggested that the Board agree to have this subject be the exclusive topic of their next meeting so that they could identify and prioritize their goals for the upcoming year, as well as set due dates for achievement of those goals.

Mr. Butler noted that had also spoken with several residents who had expressed willingness to assist the Board on special projects. Lastly, Mr. Butler questioned whether all Board members received all reports and financial information every month. Mr. Jerram noted that Lila Tuxbury had all the information in the Finance Office and it was available at any time to anyone who asked to review it. Mr. Michaud stated that Ms. Tuxbury routinely sent him this information, and he in turned prepared quarterly reports for the Board at large. He stated that he had never had any difficulty getting needed information from Ms. Tuxbury, and he shared summaries of this information regularly at the Board's meetings.

Mr. Butler then suggested that Board members determine what information they need on a monthly basis in order to effectively perform their duties and prepare for a meeting and run the organization like a business. Mr. Michaud, while concurring that communication could perhaps be improved, explained that different Board members had traditionally taken charge of different projects, reporting back to the Board at large on a monthly basis and asking for help as needed. Mr. Butler cited the current pending status of Orders to Connect as a reason the Board should consider improving communications and identifying challenges and priorities.

A member of the audience asked if it would be possible for Board members to state at this time what they felt the Board's priorities to be. Mr. Butler expressed the opinion that the Board needed to operate like a business by being accountable and responsible to the users and residents of the Town as well as achieving results. Mr. Michaud stated he believed the main priority was expansion of the user base, which he felt to be the only way to decrease user rates and achieve sustainability of the system. Ms. Greenwood stated that she concurred with Mr. Michaud. Mr. Jerram stated he believed that the priorities were fair user rates while at the same time confronting the Board's various outstanding debts.

In response to a question from Maria Moore, Town Hill Road, Mr. Jerram and the Board explained that there were two similar amounts of money potentially owed by the Board. One was the \$120,477 potentially due for the Board's share of the USDA loan repayment; this was included in Mr. Krohner's discussion of the budget. The other was \$130,000 loaned to the Board from the Town in February 2009; this amount was not included in the numbers Mr. Krohner discussed. Mr. Michaud noted that the Board had included repayment of one-tenth of this second amount in the 2013-2014 budget.

10. BUDGET/SEPTAGE RECEIVING.

Noting that the septage receiving issue had already been discussed earlier in the meeting, Mr. Krohner briefly updated the Board on the balance in their account. He said that the balance as of January 17, 2014 was \$185,467, of which \$43,346 was going to be used to pay outstanding invoices that he had approved. This left a net balance of \$140,120, of which \$120,477 was encumbered due to the ongoing discussion regarding the share of the USDA loan payment due from the WPCA to the Town.

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Mr. Krohner then turned to delinquent accounts. He stated that \$122,367 in user payments was past due more than 91 days as of January 14, 2014; user payments currently due totaled \$158,971. The combined amount of money owed to the Board was \$281,339. Mr. Krohner stated that while he was aware that 283 Main Street and 82 Prospect Street had been liened, he was not sure if the properties affiliated with any other delinquent accounts had in fact been liened, and he did not have a list of the specific accounts that were past due. Mr. Jerram offered to speak with Ms. Tuxbury to generate a list with that information, and the Board requested him to do so.

11. WWTP DEBT SERVICE.

Maria Moore questioned the Board to ask if it were possible to get a copy of the breakdown of the five loans which were currently outstanding for the WPCA. Mr. Jerram stated that this information had already been provided to the Board of Finance; however, it could be done again. Mr. Michaud noted that one debt would be retired within the next year. Mr. Jerram stated that some of the outstanding debts included water line extensions, water storage tank work, the wastewater treatment plant, and a bond for work on the Prospect Street sewer line.

12. ORDERS TO CONNECT.

Mr. Michaud stated that he had contacted Bob Krzys, the former Chairman of the WPCA, to get a status report on this issue. He said that the Board had contracted with their engineer to identify potential abutters; a total of 33 were identified. A public hearing had then been held regarding the orders to connect. Abutters were sent Notices to Connect and given the right to request a waiver. Of the 33, approximately 17 requested a waiver. Three or four had sufficiently demonstrated that they were not in fact abutters to the sewer line as per the Rules and Regulations of the Board. A determination still had to be made on the remaining waiver requests. Mr. Michaud suggested adding this item to the February 6th agenda, and he said that he would get all pertinent information from Mr. Krzys before that meeting.

13. WPCA TASK FORCE – MEMBERSHIP CHANGES.

Mr. Krohner noted that, along with Mr. Michaud, Mr. Krzys and Mr. Rosengren had been two of the Board's representatives at the Joint Taskforce meetings. Since Mr. Krzys and Mr. Rosengren were no longer on the Board, two new members were needed. Mr. Butler volunteered to participate. Both Mr. Michaud and Ms. Greenwood expressed interest in attending; it was noted that a quorum of WPCA members at the Joint Taskforce meeting would necessitate the filing of an agenda and minutes.

Ms. Greenwood noted that the Board had been requested to provide additional information and questioned whether these items had been addressed. Mr. Michaud expressed frustration that several of the items on the list were topics that had already been answered at previous meetings. He expressed the opinion that other members of the Joint Taskforce needed to stop delaying a final decision on this issue. Members of the Board then discussed the 61%-39% split of the debt. Mr. Michaud noted that the proposed compromise reached at earlier Joint Taskforce meetings whereby the Town would cover the portion of the debt that had been originally planned to be paid for with sewer line extensions and economic development would still only result in the Town at large paying the same \$160,000 payment that residents had agreed to at referendum; this compromise would then allow the existing users to pay no more than the 19% that they had always agreed to pay.

A member of the audience noted that users were in fact paying twice on this debt, both as users and as Town taxpayers.

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8. EXECUTIVE SESSION REGARDING CONTRACT WITH THE TORRINGTON WATER COMPANY:

MOTION Mr. Butler, second Mr. LeClaire, to enter executive session at 8:27PM for the purpose of discussing negotiations on the water operator and billing and collections contract with Steve Cerruto of the Torrington Water Company; unanimously approved.

The Board came out of executive session at 8:55PM. No action was taken during the executive session. The recorder was then turned on.

MOTION Mr. Butler, second Mr. Hanright to exit executive session at 8:55PM; unanimously approved.

MOTION Mr. Butler, second Mr. Krohner, to adopt the Rules and Regulations of the Torrington Water Company as shown on their website.

Several members of the Board expressed the desire to review the full Rules and Regulations prior to voting on this motion. They agreed to revisit this topic at the February 6th regular meeting.

Mr. Butler then withdrew the motion on the floor, and Mr. Krohner withdrew his second.

MOTION Mr. Butler, second Mr. LeClaire, to empower Mr. Krohner to sign and execute an agreement with the Torrington Water Company for water operations and billing and collections for both water and sewer usage to be effective February 1, 2014 through January 31, 2016; unanimously approved.

The Board then discussed necessary maintenance and repairs to water storage equipment as itemized in a list provided to the Board by Torrington Water Company. Members discussed using money currently allotted to capital improvement in the budget to pay for these repairs. Mr. Michaud explained that there was a \$20,000 line item in the budget for General Capital Improvements for Water Operations. Members verified that this would not adversely impact budgeted money for any sewer operations repairs that might become necessary. Mr. Michaud stated that there was a separate line item for improvement related to sewer operations.

MOTION Mr. Krohner, second Mr. Butler, to authorize the use \$10,000 of budgeted capital improvement funds in February 2014, and \$1000 per month in March 2014, April 2014, May 2014, and June 2014 for a total of \$14,000 for the purpose of competing maintenance and repairs of water storage tanks at Blackbridge Well and Pine Meadow Well based on the initial list of recommended repairs provided to the Water Pollution Control Authority by the Torrington Water Company which is included in the water operations and billing and collections contract effective February 1, 2014 through January 31, 2016; unanimously approved.

14. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION Mr. LeClaire, second Ms. Greenwood, to adjourn at 9:10PM; unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

**Stacey M. Sefcik
Commission Clerk**