

**LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
258 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759
October 9, 2025, at 7:00 pm**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** C. Levesque called the regular meeting of the Litchfield WPCA to order at 7:03 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Members present were Chris Levesque (Chairman), Ken Merz, John Bongiorno (BOS Liaison), Bill Buckley, Kate Honan, Keith Shortsleeve, Raz Alexe PW Director, and Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent.

Absent: Ken Merz.

- 3) SEATING ALTERNATES:** None seated.

4. MINUTES:

Motion: J. Bongiorno put forth a motion to accept the 9/11/25 regular WPCA meeting minutes, and K. Honan seconded. The discussion was to correct the spelling of two DEEP official's names and to clarify a sentence regarding phases 1 to 5 of the engineering study. All members voted "aye" and the motion was carried.

- 5. PUBLIC COMMENTS RELATIVE TO AGENDA ITEMS.** None presented.

- 6. REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN.** C. Levesque presented the idea, that he was working on with K. Merz for forming a Subcommittee for Strategic Planning and Ordinance Work
- A member proposed forming a 3-person subcommittee to focus on:
 - Reviewing and contextualizing the Woodward & Curran study and defining priorities for the next nine months.
 - Identifying partners, funding opportunities (loans and grants), and possible collection system improvements to manage plant capacity needs and factor of safety.
 - Working through recommendations, exploring regionalization options, and addressing governance and coordination with the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance on spending plans.
 - Subcommittee meetings would be public per rules, allow attendance by others, and could include guest experts; the subcommittee would report monthly on progress.
 - The proposer cited limited individual availability and the need for dedicated focus to handle the workload; mentioned speaking with Ken and potential involvement of Raz and Ted for technical support, and Bill for industry experience.
 - No vote or formal resolution occurred; proposal to bring a resolution at the next meeting if members are interested.
- Training and Education Resources
- Sacramento State University wastewater operator training mentioned:
 - Cost "\$80" for approximately "90 hours" of self-paced content.

- Provides CEUs needed for wastewater exams; typical first-level requirement is “nine CEUs,” with completion over “three months” and online syllabus tests submitted to DEEP to sit for the exam.
 - Additional materials referenced:
 - Textbooks and manuals (including rate-setting guidance and operator-focused manuals; mention of “Matt Caffinetti’s textbook” and older texts such as “Vandenberg and Wiseman”).
 - Trade organizations and upcoming conferences: Connecticut Rural Water and Connecticut WEA (affiliated with New England WEA); events include a “poo and brew” at the end of the month at a self-contained beverage plant.
 - Suggestion to incorporate brief educational presentations (“five-minute” topic segments) at meetings; one member offered to present at the next meeting a “30,000-foot” overview of plant operations, design, and elements, with modular follow-ups.
- Regulatory, Historical, and Technical Context
 - Historical debate noted about siting of the plant relative to the Chippaug Basin and Naugatuck Basin, and implications for water use classifications and drinking water supply.
 - Discussion on differences between health department regulations (drinking water purity/adequacy) and DEP/DEEP discharge quality regulations, with some discharge parameters (e.g., copper and chlorine) stricter than drinking water standards.
 - Technical concepts highlighted:
 - 7Q10: permits designed for 7-day, 10-year low flow conditions, setting conservative discharge limits to protect receiving streams.
 - Current local conditions: Bannan River running very low; plant flows averaging “260,000”; discharge estimated “150 to 175 gallons” per minute into the river; estimated discharge proportion around “25%” of flow during current low conditions.
 - Comparative example from Danbury: discharge comprised “90%” of flow in the Still River under 7Q10 conditions, leading to very strict limits.
 - General note: wastewater is “99.9% water,” with operational nuances around disinfection and ecological impacts discussed.
- NPDES/DEEP Permit Status and Sampling Methodology
 - The permit renewal has been submitted; the team has been waiting for DEEP for two years, and the current permit remains in effect until DEEP acts. A draft permit exists and has been commented on; it is in DEEP’s court.
 - There were disputes with DEEP over parameters and testing methodology. A DEEP representative had advised taking “instantaneous grab samples” selectively when conditions are good, which was criticized as inappropriate by the plant operator.
 - DEEP is not expected to come back with plant upgrade requirements to obtain renewal; paperwork and data have already been submitted.
- Woodward & Curran Study Scope, Costs, and Approach
 - The study was referred to as a facility plan in effect, with items to implement that are independent of the NPDES permit.

- Estimated upgrades are “\$40 million” per the report, not including headworks or collections; participants objected that the study effectively designed a “new plant” without repurposing existing assets. A fee of “\$400,000” was cited, not fully paid yet.
- Alternative approach favored by several participants: phase improvements, repurpose usable equipment, and focus on meeting current permit limits rather than full replacement. Phasing would address immediate needs first and spread work over time.
- Regionalization and Prior Funding/Bid History
 - DEEP stated the Torrington option did not proceed because Torrington’s host community benefit demand was too high, not due to routing. Negotiation dynamics were compared to inter-municipal agreements in Danbury.
 - Bid/funding history:
 - Bids came back in June of 2019 with three components; one contractor bid on all three.
 - Reported figures included “\$15.5 million” and “19 and a half million,” with discussion that \$15.5 million matched U.S. Treasury (or USDA) funding.
 - There was a claim that the project was “\$7 million” short and Litchfield was asked to borrow “\$10 million,” prompting concerns about impacting bonded indebtedness and effectively subsidizing Goshen.
 - Questions remain about USDA funding constraints and bid counts; one speaker asserted only one bid (Nickerson), another stated there were three bids obtained via FOIA.
- Governance and Financial Strategy
 - Assessment methodology and cost allocation:
 - Consider mechanisms ensuring new flows (e.g., developer projects) pay their fair share of future projects.
 - Evaluate surcharges for customers in areas requiring pumping (higher operating costs) versus gravity service.

Open Issues & Risks

- Permit and regulatory clarity
 - The DEEP/NPDES renewal remains unresolved; timing and any additional requirements are unclear.
 - Testing methodology disagreements with DEEP may persist and affect compliance processes.
- Scope and cost of plant upgrades
 - Disagreement on full replacement versus phased upgrades and repurposing existing assets is not resolved.
 - The “\$40 million” estimate excludes headworks and collections; total project cost is uncertain.
- Funding and inter-municipal dynamics
 - Conflicting accounts regarding prior bids and USDA funding (number of bids, funding sufficiency) are unresolved.
 - Risk of financial burden if asked to borrow for regional solutions; concerns about impacting bonded indebtedness remain.
- Governance and implementation

- Subcommittee formation is proposed but not yet approved; roles, timeline specifics, and deliverables are not defined.
- Cost-sharing mechanisms for new flows and surcharge policies for pumped areas need development and agreement.

Action Items

[] Prepare and present a high-level “30,000-foot” overview of plant operations, design elements, and contributing factors at the next meeting.

[] Circulate and review the subcommittee purpose statement; draft a formal resolution for consideration at the next meeting if members express interest.

[] Group members to read the subcommittee proposal and provide thoughts over the next month; discuss when Ken returns.

[] Consider a resolution at the next meeting to formally establish the three-member subcommittee.

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7. DISCUSSION RE: LWPCA BOOKKEEP INTERGRATION INTO TOWN HALL. R.

Alexe shared that M. Seaman had the invoices ready to go out on Friday 10/3/25. Things went generally smooth, as T. Donoghue and S. Mitchel helped work on various aspects of updating EDU charges, for non-residential customers based on water usage and other things. The online bill pay is still not live, as the company now “claims” that they needed 8 weeks to set this all up. R. Alexe initially reached out to them in late August.

The Commission was not happy and felt we need to issue an ultimatum that they have it up in running within five days, or offer us a credit toward future charges, as the majority of our customers will be paying within the due date, which is November 3, 2025.

R. Alexe believe the foundation is set to ensure that next year will be much easier.

8. FOLLOW UP: RE: TECHNICAL MEMORANDA 3 & 4 - WOODARD & CURRAN. T.

Donoghue had forwarded an email sent by Michael Headd detailing the status of the project, which is 67% complete. It also detailed a narrative and proposed scheduled to complete. The next date of significance is October, 15th, 2025 in which the WPCA returns comments on Technical Memoranda (TM) 3 & 4. We may have to postpone that, as we may not be completely ready.

9. STATUS: RE: FST TANK COVER

- 1. UPDATE ON APPROACH TO LIFT FST COVER.** T. Donoghue shared that Spectrum Environmental came up to the plant earlier in the week, with the

consulting engineer Jeffrey Fournier from Tucker mechanical and Clay from High caliber Contracting, who runs a building and house lifting /moving company. They reviewed what is before them and they all believe that the use of hydraulic lifts will be able to dislodge the 35 ft. diameter cover and reset it on the haunches. If any of the haunches need to be repaired they will be able to do that. We can expect an updated proposal sometime next week. Once finalized, it should take 3 day to set up and the work should be completed within a week. Both Darren Toth our insurance adjuster and CIRMA, our insurance carrier both want to be present when they actually dislodge and remount the FST cover.

2. **INSURANCE/ENFORCEMENT UPDATE.** T. Donoghue shared that he had forward all the FY 25 expenses to Darren Toth, and that it has total over \$82,000. We will check on the status of reimbursement. To begin FY 26 additional incurred expense are much less, due to us having the sludge thickening really dial in. The main additional expenses are the rental of the frac tank which is \$42.50 per day, or \$1260 per month and the crane services on 7/7/25, which totaled \$10,075 The Commission asked if the proposed cost for the FST project was approved by CIRMA, which it was, and if we expect that number to change. It is \$99,081 and we do not expect it to change, but we will wait for the updated proposal.

3.

10. 2026 WPCA Regular Meeting Dates: T. Donoghue presented the 2026 Regular meeting dates, which have to be submitted to the Town Clerk by the end of November.

Motion: J. Bongiorno put forth a motion to accept the 2026 WPCA Regular Meeting dates. W. Buckley seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

11. REPORT: RE: PUBLIC WORKS / TREATMENT PLANT SUMMARY.

- Ted Donoghue, Superintendent emailed out the plant report, and noted we performed our annual Chronic Toxicity test and there was no issues with plant performance except that we exceed our monthly limits for Total Phosphorous. T. Donoghue was asked about

the Fund 66 balance (Capital expenses) and IMAs with both Thomaston and Morris. How would email out all this information to the board

12. REPORT: RE: FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY, INCLUDING UPDATED FY 25

NUMBER. T. Donoghue had emailed out the reports, and stated for FY 25 they are still awaiting any change from the new auditor. We do not expect any major changes. As mentioned before we did incurred an additional \$82,000 in expenses due to the FST tank explosion, and even with that we came under budget by \$142,000. This surplus is mainly due to the former debt services payment of \$213,000 for the last plant upgrade. M. Seaman did not provide an updated revenue report.

For FY 26 we are under budget, and have spent less for the first three months of the FY 25. On the September expense report T. Donoghue mentioned that we had to perform require maintenance on numerous motors and pumps replacing bearings and laser alignments, which so far has totaled over \$13,000.

13. OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS. None presented.

14. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA

ITEMS.C. Levesque will make the change on the sub-committee proposal to replace the language of Woodridge Lake Water Pollution Control Authority (WLWPCA) with Inter-Municipal Agreements(IMAs).

15. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion: J. Bongiorno moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:52 pm. W. Buckley seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted "aye," and the motion was carried.

Terrence Donoghue, Interim Recording Secretary