

LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REVISED SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
74 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759
December 18, 2025, at 7:00 pm

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** C. Levesque called the regular meeting of the Litchfield WPCA to order at 7:07 pm.

2. **ROLL CALL**

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

Absent: Bill Buckley

- 3) **SEATING ALTERNATES:** None seated.

4. **MINUTES:**

Motion: J. Bongiorno put forth a motion to accept the 10/9/25 regular WPCA meeting minutes, and K. Honan seconded, and there was no discussion. All members voted “aye” and the motion was carried.

5.7-46 VILLAGE GREEN-PETITION OVER USAGE INVOICE FOR DUNKIN’ FY 25.

- Dunkin’ partial owner Bill Zampaglione presented comparative water usage across stores, stating ~85% of water leaves in products (coffee) rather than entering sewer.
- Litchfield Dunkin’ sewer billing rose from ~\$816 annually (since 2019) to ~\$11,700 this fiscal year.
- Aquarion reportedly changed Dunkin’s water meter in May 2022; post-change water use spiked, approaching ~1,000,000 gallons in 2023, then normalized starting September 2024.
- Possible cross-connection issues raised; Hartford HealthCare may not have received water bills; an unused laundromat space exists beneath Dunkin’.
- WPCA noted disputes typically begin with Aquarion for leak/meter adjustments; WPCA lacks a clear policy for such adjustments.
- Discussion of sub-metering sinks/toilets to measure sewer discharge versus total water use; cautioned against multiple Aquarion meters due to added charges.
- Other towns (Thomaston, Torrington) reportedly don’t accommodate deducts for businesses like Dunkin’; irrigation meters, when separated, are exempt from sewer billing.
- WPCA intends to review commercial/industrial billing practices and ordinances.
- Conclusion:
 - WPCA will table broader commercial/industrial billing and dispute policy discussion to the next meeting and add it to the agenda.
 - Dunkin’ and the property owner will pursue Aquarion verification of meter accuracy/function and onsite checks for cross-connections.
- Topic Title: Consideration of Sewer Discharge Metering and Policy Options
 - Description:
 - Idea raised to allow sewer discharge metering where significant water does not enter sewer (analogous to industrial/bottling facilities).

- Current WPCA regulations focus on water meters; no specific provision for discharge meters.
 - Comparable practices (e.g., MDC) for large industrial users discussed; applying to restaurants seen as complex and potentially impractical.
- Conclusion:
 - Further ordinance/regulatory review required; to be addressed in a future agenda.

- 6. **REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN.** C. Levesque began his report by sharing the passing of long time WPCA Chairman David R. Wilson and the board shared a moment of silence in his memory. C. Levesque felt that it would be appropriate to have a bronze plaque made, and hung at the plant to honor D. Wilson's legacy and as recognition of his two decades of serves to the WPCA. A mockup will be drafted and presented to the board at the January meeting for approval.
- 7. **Motion:** K. Merz put forth a motion to have bronze plaque made, and placed at the wastewater plant, to honor long time WPCA Chairman, David R. Wilson. K. Honan seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted "aye" and the motion carried.

- **DRAFT ORDINANCE CONCERNING COLLECTION AND ENFORCEMENT OF WPCA SEWER USER CHARGES.**
 - WPCA drafted an ordinance for collection/enforcement and a matching internal policy describing actions at thresholds.
 - Five accounts total nearly \$200,000 in delinquent payments (~20% of budget).
 - Discussion of aligning enforcement timelines/mechanisms with town property tax practices (e.g., use of state marshals, thresholds by dollar value and time).
 - Clarified lien priority: property taxes and beneficial assessments take precedence; sewer user fees rank lower, similar to utility bills.
 - Current practice: intent to lien after one year delinquent; liens filed on land records; may restrict building permits but not strongly deterrent.
 - Noted 15-year limitation for collections and need to refile liens; quarterly billing models (e.g., Winsted) and marshal involvement discussed.
- Conclusion:
 - a. Place the draft ordinance and internal policy on the next meeting's agenda for comments and edits, then proceed to Board of Selectmen awareness and public hearing; consider bundling minor ordinance changes in spring. This item will be placed on the January 8th WPCA meeting agenda.
 - b. **INTERNAL POLICY: SEWER FEE BILLING, COLLECTION, AND ENFORCEMENT THRESHOLDS.** This item will be tabled and added to the January meeting agenda.
 - c. **SUBCOMMITTEE TO EVALUATE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT TO THE LWPCA'S COLLECTION AND TREATMENT SYSTEMS.** C. Levesque brought up the idea of the 3 person sub-committee, and K. Shortsleeve had this suggestion to utilize the entire 5 person board, as the range of professional experiences vary among members and it might be more productive to handle it this way. The board was open to this suggestions and the following points were made.

- Proposal to divide and conquer by areas of expertise and hold special meetings (possibly a couple per month; an all-nighter was mentioned).
 - Emphasis on a clear scope distinguishing “must-haves” from “nice-to-haves.”
 - Regulatory compliance identified as a key driver with issues at peak flow periods.
 - Need to stabilize headworks flow and consider automated debris removal upgrades.
 - Anticipated capital cost of \$30–\$40 million (excluding collection system and possibly “HEP works”), with expected public scrutiny.
- Conclusion:
 - Agreement in principle to split work into chunks and use a structured prioritization approach; no formal schedule set.
- Collaboration Tools and Document Sharing
 - Idea to use Google for shared documents and topic-based uploads.
 - SharePoint suggested but not available; town currently uses Google due to standardization and security.
 - Free Microsoft accounts discussed but deemed not secure per town standards.
 - Goal: centralized visibility, comments, and progressive drafting toward a consolidated document.
- Conclusion:
 - Use Google-based collaboration due to current town capabilities; SharePoint not available.
- Prioritization Framework and Template

Suggested framework to tag each action as regulatory compliance or age/upgrade-driven, with notes.

 - Proposal that Chris and another participant set up a template if benchmarks are agreed.
 - Aim to expedite review and reach punchlines faster through a collaborative structure.
- Conclusion:
 - Framework concept accepted; template owners suggested but not formally assigned.
- Topic Title: Process for Recommendations and Approvals
 - Woodard & Curran (and/or other vendors) provide recommendations; committee reviews and accepts or adjusts.
 - Recommendations then presented to the Board of Selectmen for approval (A, B, C, D, and F).
 - Upon Board agreement, development proceeds based on approved recommendations.
- Conclusion:
 - Process acknowledged: vendor recommendations → committee review → Board of Selectmen approval → development.
- Capital Project Approach and Expertise
 - Discussion on hiring a construction management (CM) firm for large-scale plant upgrades (reference to prior \$40 million school project).

- Consideration of firms: Woodard & Curran potentially as CM; Ty & Bond, Samson, or other final design firms.
 - Roles outlined: final design engineer, CM/inspector, contractor procurement, and bid management.
 - Emphasis that internal subcommittee alone is not sufficient; external expertise is needed.
- Phased Improvements vs. Holistic Redesign
 - Proposal to phase early maintenance/stabilization items before major capital upgrades (2.5–3 years out).
 - Early priorities: primary tank repairs, UV disinfection installation, improving aeration tank instrumentation (DO probes) and flow balancing.
 - Consensus that UV is mandatory compliance.
 - Balance “patch” work now with planning major pieces for future integration.
- Upstream Collection System and I&I Impacts
 - Strong focus on reducing inflow and infiltration (I&I) to lower plant peak flows and inform plant sizing.
 - Noted clay tile pipes and aging lines; targeted relining and manhole rehab can have immediate impact.
 - Budget concept: annual operations allocation (e.g., \$50,000–\$200,000) for collection system rehab, with studies to identify worst sections.
 - Need to model existing five-year flow data and perform CCTV to confirm priority segments.

7. RESOLUTION: WOODARD & CURRAN TASK 6 REMOVAL OF SCOPE OF SERVICES.

- Motion and approval to remove Woodard & Curran Task 6 (outside-the-fence analysis related to Woodridge Lake) from current scope.
- Rationale: avoid spending ratepayer funds on external connection analysis that others may need to fund; DEEP subsurface group not actively pushing it now.
- Acknowledgment of potential future regional impacts and unintended consequences.

Committee Cadence and Financial Planning

- Agreement to set up a working group outside regular meetings; suggestions to start frequent then adjust cadence; aim to place on the agenda for January 8.
- Committee scope to include financing strategy: loans, grants, phased capital plan, and collection system study scheduling (possible in 2026).

Motion: J. Bongiorno put forth a motion to remove Task 3, from the scope of work that Woodard & Curran are working on. K. Honan seconded and the following discussion occurred. K. Shortsleeve made the point that it might be valuable to determine what impacts the flows from Woodridge Lake Sewer District (WLDS) and how they may impact our plant and any future upgrades J. Bongiorno said it did not makes sense to move forward at this time, as he believes that WLSD should paid for it. K. Shortsleeve inquired if there was any pressure from the CT DEEP. C. Levesque stated that that plant is being worked on under the authority of the sub-surface group at the CT DEEP, and he believes there is no immediate indications that a decision about this part of the study are required at this point in time. There was no further discussion. All members voted “aye,” and the motion was carried.

8. DISCUSSION RE: LWPCA BOOKKEEP INTERGRATION INTO TOWN HALL.

- Online payments via InvoiceCloud not functional for sewer; residents currently sending checks.
- Integration gaps with QDS and Munis; unresolved tickets; lack of technical project management pushing vendors.
- Operational workarounds: check reader deposits, monthly reconciliations, improved address management, liens processing and releases, statements planned for January.
- Concern over vendor performance; request to share emails and involve Denise.

QDS and Payment Portal Integration (Detail)

a. Description:

- InvoiceCloud works for property taxes, but compatibility issues exist for sewer due to QDS.
- Security or website configuration concerns raised; specifics to be provided later.
- Manual processing is effective; technology integration not yet implemented.

b. Conclusion:

- Technical details to be investigated and clarified; topic may be handled by staff.

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

10. STATUS: RE: FST TANK COVER. This agenda items was tabled.

1. UPDATE ON APPROACH TO LIFT FST COVER. T. Donoghue shared that

Spectrum Environmental had dropped all the I-beams and will start staging the work to dislodge the FST cover.

- New steel beam design and attachment approach finalized after initial mock-ups failed.
- Engineering updates from Tucker; teams and equipment ready.
- Schedule to be finalized once beams arrive; timeline suggested as “either tomorrow or Monday.”
- Consideration to document operation (video/drone).
- Delays due to design issues and a personal loss within the contractor’s team.

2. Conclusion:

- Execution imminent pending beam arrival; finalized schedule to be sent.

3. INSURANCE/ENFORCEMENT UPDATE. T. Donoghue shared that he had forward all the FY 25 expenses to Darren Toth.

- Received \$103,000 for Fiscal 205 expenses out of ~\$105,000 submitted (~99% reimbursed).

- Insurance approved \$100,000 for the current job.
- Ongoing expense mainly frack tank rental at ~\$200/month.
- Adjuster (Darren) expedited reimbursement within two weeks.

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

Ted Donoghue, Superintendent, had emailed out the plant report, and noted that there were no issues to report.

1. POSTING OF ASSISTANT PLANT OPERATOR POSITION.

- Level 3 operator resigned 12/1/25 to accept a position at Woodridge Lake Sewer District (to Woodridge Lake); competitive market pressures noted.
- Proposal to hire an Assistant/Operator-in-Training (Class 1 OIT) and develop internally.
- Market rates: MDC grade 1 ~\$36–\$42/hour; Aquarion grade 2 operators ~\$90,000/year, as private sector pay scales are making it hard to compete.
- Assistant pay noted at \$30.67/hour; union scale lags market.
- Internal development: Eric passed grade 2; studying for grade 3; talent pipeline in progress.
- Operators leave to gain in-charge time needed for higher certifications and pay.
- Ask: permission to hire Class 1 OIT or assistant; commission indicated informal approval though not on agenda.

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

NUMBER. T. Donoghue had emailed out the reports and FY 26 revenue collection is strong, and slight ahead of where we were last FY.

- i. Receivables improvement: last fiscal left \$108,000; now \$68,700 for Fiscal 25.
 - ii. Collections mainly in October–November; ahead of last year by ~10%.
 - iii. Fiscal 26 billed just over \$1,000,000 via QDS, plus ~\$56,000 for water customers not on Aquarion.
 - iv. Morris bill is \$79,450; email sent to Mike Doyle; approval expected in January.
 - v. Budget position cited as “only down \$7”; “\$370,322” noted as very good (figures referenced in report).
 - vi. Arethusa surcharge to be sent in January to Marissa.
 - vii. Older receivables decreasing; Fiscal 22 down to ~\$16,000; significant improvements across years.
 - viii. \$103,000 deposited into Fund 66; commission to decide allocation (construction fund, Fund 66, or other). Rebate not recommended.
- b. Conclusion:
- i. Financials strong; more invoices and surcharges forthcoming; fund balance allocation decision next month.

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS FIR ITEMS ONLY ON THE AGENDA. None presented.

14. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

- Add commercial/industrial billing and dispute policy to the next meeting agenda.
 - Review and discuss draft ordinance and internal policy for delinquent sewer charges at the next meeting.
 - Prepare mock-ups for a bronze plaque honoring Dave Wilson for January meeting consideration.
 - Ted/Chris Levesque to follow up with Aquarion regarding meter accuracy, leak adjustments, and validation for Dunkin' account.
 - Property owner (Mark Greenberg) and Dunkin' to verify on-site plumbing and confirm no cross-connections to Dunkin's meter.
 - Compile list of delinquent accounts and cross-check with town property tax status.
 - Model existing collection system flow data; select software; plan CCTV for priority segments; define annual rehab budget line (\$50,000–\$200,000).
 - Schedule working group; include financing strategy (loans, grants, phased plan); target collection system study scheduling (possible 2026).
 - Escalate InvoiceCloud/QDS/Munis integration; assign a technical lead; obtain vendor action plan with dates; share emails and involve Denise.
 - Document blower part sourcing efforts; create vendor outreach list; decision deadline for repair vs. replacement. Reach out to REM.
 - Finalize tank cover removal schedule upon beam arrival; obtain written engineering sign-off; consider documenting operation (video/drone).
 - Send Arethusa surcharge in January; issue Morris invoice (\$79,450) and seek approval in January.
 - Prepare fund balance analysis for allocation of \$103,000 (Fund 66 vs. construction fund) and reconcile budget figures.

15. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion: J. Bongiorno moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 pm. K. Merz seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted “aye,” and the motion was carried.

Terrence Donoghue, Interim Recording Secretary