

**LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Litchfield Firehouse, 258 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759

March 12, 2026, at 7:00 pm

1.CALL TO ORDER: C. Levesque called the regular meeting of the Litchfield WPCA to order at 7:00 pm.

2.ROLL CALL

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

Absent: Bill Buckley and Keith Shortsleeve.

3.SEATING ALTERNATES: No alternates were seated.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF 2/12/26 REGULAR MEETING.

Motion: J. Bongiorno put forth a motion to accept the 2/12/26 regular meeting minutes. K. Honan seconded and there was the following discussion. K. Honan corrected the spelling of the last name of the member of the public who spoke at this meeting, the correct spelling was Peter Dauten. J. Bongiorno amended his motion to include this correction, and there was no further discussion. All members voted “aye”, and the motion was carried.

5. REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN.

C. Levesque provided an update on pending state legislation affecting sewer utilities. Three areas were discussed:

Pending State Legislation

- Right to Know: Proposed legislation would require sewer utilities to post overflow events on municipal websites and post signs near overflow locations. C. Levesque noted that utilities already report this data to DEEP's statewide website, making the new requirements largely redundant. CT WIA is reviewing the legislation.
- Treatment Plant Capacity Reporting: A second bill would require wastewater utilities to report plant capacity and flows. The industry position is that DEEP already receives this data monthly through existing permit requirements, making additional administrative burden unnecessary. Trade groups have formally opposed this legislation.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs): A third bill would expand ADU provisions, including defining affordable accessory dwelling units in ways that could allow planning and

zoning to reclassify certain developments. C. Levesque raised concern that the legislation could reduce connection charge revenue while increasing system burden on sewer utilities. This bill is several pages in length and its full implications are still being assessed. T. Donoghue noted he had been asked to take action on one component.

Connection Charge Agreements

- C. Levesque reported that he distributed examples of connection charge agreements to R. Alexe and T. Donoghue. These documents are intended to memorialize sewer assessments on the land records, so future staff and commissioners can verify what a given property has previously been charged.
- The process would apply to all new connections, additions, and changes in use (e.g., a warehouse converted to apartments). Documents would be notary-sealed, signed by the property owner, and filed with the Town Clerk.
- T. Donoghue noted that for a property on South Street (17 and 18), assessment charges were built into the original sewer contract in 1991; this documentation was located with the assistance of Sandy.
- Conclusion: Implement connection charge agreement process as standard practice going forward to protect institutional knowledge and enforce proper billing.

6. DISCUSSION OF FY 27 OPERATING BUDGET.

T. Donoghue presented a budget summary spreadsheet organized into three tabs: budget summary, revenue summary, and expense actuals. C. Levesque had provided a template format. Key discussion points included:

Budget Summary

- Total proposed FY27 budget: \$1,249,000 — down 2.2% from FY26 (\$1,277,000). The reduction is primarily due to staff vacancies.
- Administration costs are approximately \$430 over FY26. Operations line items are largely flat.
- Electrical costs were adjusted upward from FY26, as the solar array did not come online on the originally anticipated schedule.
- Capital non-recurring line item has decreased from \$223,000 to \$155,000, reflecting declining debt service on a prior bond, now paid off for approximately three years. Morris pays a share of debt service per the intermunicipal agreement (IMA); this line is currently at zero.

Revenue and Collections

- Anticipated revenue for FY27: \$1,215,700. As of the end of February, \$1,050,000 had been collected — approximately 80% of the annual budget.

- \$174,000 in current-year charges remain outstanding. \$51,000 from FY25 is still outstanding, a significant improvement over prior year. Marissa has sent out 86 lien notices on prior-year balances.
- J. Bongiorno emphasized the importance of building a budget that does not rely on delinquent collections and noted that the fund balance should not be treated as a revenue substitute. He proposed that no building, fire, or other town permit be issued to property owners with outstanding WPCA balances; this proposal was raised at a Board of Selectmen meeting.
- Other revenue sources: Thomaston dumping fees (\$3,500 year-to-date; estimated \$10,000 for the full year, compared to \$90,000 in FY24, a year with higher hauled waste activity); Morris user fee (\$66,000 budgeted; \$107,000 collected in the prior wet year); connection fees (anticipated from several large projects); SIU charge from Arethusa dairy (\$19,000 billed); and construction fund interest.

Collections Enforcement

- Discussion of enforcement options for chronic non-payers. State statute allows foreclosure proceedings, subject to dollar amount thresholds. Sandy previously contacted mortgage companies when properties were in default, prompting payment.
- C. Levesque noted that an ordinance authorizing use of a State Marshal for collection was passed and needs to go to public hearing. It was suggested that this hearing be consolidated with other pending ordinance changes (including the garbage contract) in the June public hearing cycle.
- Conclusion: Proceed to schedule public hearing for marshal enforcement ordinance; use June cycle to bundle with other pending ordinance changes.

Budget Format Going Forward

- C. Levesque requested that the budget be restructured as a zero-sum document (revenue = expenses) for the May/June adoption cycle, with a separate actual vs. budget comparison tab for monthly tracking.
- T. Donoghue confirmed he will revise and recirculate the spreadsheet. Goal is to build monthly actuals comparison capability for year-over-year analysis.

7. DISCUSSION RE: LWPCA BOOKKEEPING INTEGRATION INTO TOWN HALL.

R. Alexe reported that the current arrangement is working well. Marissa is working effectively with Public Works, residents are able to come in for bill payment, and a payment drop box is available at Town Hall. Communication has improved significantly. It was agreed to remove this item from future agendas. The cloud-based integration originally discussed for July 1 is on hold.

8. DISCUSSION: 2026 ANNUAL REPORT.

T. Donoghue reported that the 2026 Annual Report has been completed and was emailed to board members. Limited feedback was received. T. Donoghue will resend the report for member review and comments. Item to remain on the agenda for the next meeting.

9. STATUS RE: FST TANK COVER.

9a. Update on Removal of FST Cover: Kerma approved the final scope of work, approximately \$34,000. Keith notified R. Alexe by email today that stainless steel haunches are being fabricated; estimated two-week lead time. Stainless steel was selected from three options presented. Once the tank thaws (it refroze recently due to cold temperatures), it will be pumped out and the work scheduled.

9b. Insurance/Enforcement Update: No update provided at this meeting.

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

T. Donoghue reported that the plant report was emailed to board members today. Members confirmed receipt and noted no issues.

1. Assistant Plant Operator Position: No formal update at this meeting.

2. New Vehicle: No formal update at this meeting.

Financial Summary — Expenses

- Actual spend plus encumbrances are at approximately 59% of the total budget year-to-date. Administration is at approximately 84% due in part to the Thomaston bill.
- Thomaston sewer rates have increased \$112 per EDU over the past three years. Current rate is \$545.50 per EDU. LWPCA paid \$44,731 this year for 83 EDUs (including Montessori school). Rate increases are outside LWPCA's control.
- Solar array: The Eversource Energy credit was fully used up this past month due to cold weather and snow cover on the array at Monkey Island. The credit resets in March. The array is now clear of snow.

Note: T. Donoghue reported a non-compliance event at the plant today related to arraignment flow levels. He was at the plant at 3:00 am. Details to follow in plant report.

11.REPORT RE: FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY. Covered under Item 6 (FY27 Budget Discussion) above.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS ONLY ON THE AGENDA. No members of the public were present. None presented.

13. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

- Review of 2026 Annual Report — members to provide comments to T. Donoghue prior to next meeting.
- FY27 Budget — revised zero-sum format for review and adoption (May/June cycle).
- Public hearing scheduling for State Marshal enforcement ordinance and other pending ordinance changes (consolidate with June cycle).
- Connection charge agreement process — formalize and implement as standard procedure.

14. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion: J. Bongiorno moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 pm. K. Honan seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted "aye" and the motion was carried.

Terrence Donoghue, Interim Recording Secretary