

LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY CAPITAL PLANNING SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Litchfield Firehouse, 258 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759

April 9, 2026, at 6:15 pm

1. CALL TO ORDER: C. Levesque called the special meeting of the Litchfield WPCA to order at 6:15 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Members present were Chris Levesque (Chairman), Keith Shortsleeve (Alternate), John Bongiorno (BOS Liaison), W. Buckley, Kate Honan, and Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent.

Absent: R. Alexe Public Works Director..

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES — March 12, 2026.

C. Levesque moved to approve the March 12, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes as agenda item 3. J. Bongiorno made a motion to approve; motion was seconded. All members voted aye and the motion was carried.

K. Shortsleeve noted for the record that Section 9 of the March 12 minutes references a “Keith” in connection with stainless steel haunches being fabricated; he clarified that this refers to Keith Godreau of Spectrum Environmental, not himself, and suggested the last name be added for clarity.

Motion: K. Honan put forth a motion to accept the special meeting minutes from 3/12/26. J. Bongiorno second and there was no further discussion. All members voted “aye” and the motion was carried. W. Buckley and K. Shortsleeve abstained.

4. DISCUSSION RE: RFP — REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS.

C. Levesque summarized the status of the RFP for grant-eligible engineering services. A draft scope was previously circulated and discussed, incorporating redline comments from the prior meeting including addition of sewer lateral geometry. The RFP includes a quality-based selection (QBS) front end and DEEP-required grant language to support application for 55% study grant funding through the Connecticut Clean Water Fund.

The following scope and process items were discussed:

- Members are requested to submit any remaining redline comments to T. Donoghue for compilation into a final document for review at the next meeting.
- K. Shortsleeve recommended adding strategic groundwater monitoring to the scope: specifically, installation of a limited number of piezometers in areas of suspected I/I to track groundwater table elevations relative to sewer invert at key seasonal periods. C. Levesque agreed this was a valuable addition and noted he would incorporate it into the scope.
- Members discussed the Diamond Maps GIS platform currently in use by the WPCA. Questions were raised regarding compatibility with ESRI/ArcGIS, long-term obsolescence risk, and consultant familiarity with the system. T. Donoghue confirmed that data is exportable between Diamond Maps and ESRI. It was agreed that Diamond Maps experience and GIS data management approach should be included as interview questions during consultant selection.
- K. Shortsleeve emphasized that the scope should make clear the study’s purpose: to identify and prioritize I/I problems and provide the foundation for the next phase of construction and rehabilitation, not merely to satisfy a periodic compliance requirement.
- Members discussed the CMOM regulatory requirement and confirmed the WPCA is not currently under a consent order or DEP enforcement action. The study is being pursued proactively to address known system conditions and support long-term capital planning. W. Buckley referenced past experience in which DEP issued orders to municipalities notwithstanding adverse referendum outcomes, noting that DEEP has broad statutory authority to compel action and that proactive compliance is strongly preferable.

- T. Donoghue noted that influent temperatures in the 50–53°F range suggest significant groundwater infiltration through the system, particularly along the White’s Woods interceptor corridor.

The scope was generally praised as comprehensive and well-structured. Final document to be circulated for member review prior to the next meeting.

5. DISCUSSION RE: CAPITAL APPROPRIATIONS — PROCESS FOR CAPITAL AUTHORIZATIONS.

C. Levesque and J. Bongiorno led a discussion on the proper process for capital authorization applicable to the proposed I/I study. Key points discussed:

- The anticipated project cost is approximately \$500,000, with 55% potentially grant-funded by DEEP’s Clean Water Fund, leaving approximately \$225,000 in loan obligation.
- The WPCA would seek a state low-interest loan (approximately 2% over 20 years) rather than traditional municipal bonding. The loan would carry the full faith and credit of the Town of Litchfield.
- J. Bongiorno noted that the capital appropriation process likely requires the project to be submitted through the Town’s capital committee and included in the capital budget, which is then reviewed by the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and ultimately goes to a Town Meeting.
- Members agreed that because the WPCA is a separate entity and its budget is not routinely presented to the Board of Finance (despite an ordinance requirement to do so), the proper process should be confirmed with Town corporate counsel and the Town’s bond counsel (Robinson & Cole). W. Buckley emphasized that bond counsel should be contacted directly to walk through the specific use case, noting they will have direct experience with state loan processes of this type.
- T. Donoghue noted that the relevant ordinances date to the 1995 transition from the Sewer Commission to the WPCA and may not reflect current practice. He agreed to provide the ordinance text to C. Levesque.
- It was agreed that R. Alexe (Town Public Works Director) would be asked to interface with bond counsel and the Town Treasurer to confirm the appropriate authorization process for a state loan of this type, using a clear use-case document to be prepared by C. Levesque.
- J. Bongiorno recommended deferring bonding to a later phase (construction/rehabilitation), rather than bonding the study itself, and suggested timing any bond request for FY2028–2029.

Action: C. Levesque to prepare a written use-case document describing the proposed financing structure (55/45 state loan) and provide it to J. Bongiorno for transmission to Town corporate counsel.

6. DISCUSSION RE: CAPITAL OUTLAY — OPERATING BUDGET.

C. Levesque explained the distinction between capital outlay (equipment, parts, and machinery included in the annual operating budget) and formal capital appropriations. He confirmed that the Board of Finance reviews the Town’s capital budget, within which WPCA capital outlay would appear. Members agreed this item would be reviewed further with Town counsel as part of the broader capital governance clarification.

7. DISCUSSION RE: DEBT SERVICE FUND.

C. Levesque presented the concept of a formal debt service fund structure for the WPCA. Key points:

- Annual debt service payments (principal and interest as separate line items) would be included in the WPCA operating budget.
- The Town Treasurer would manage disbursement of the payment on the WPCA’s behalf, consistent with how the Town currently handles WPCA payroll and other shared services.
- C. Levesque noted the WPCA currently carries no outstanding debt.
- J. Bongiorno suggested that the use-case document being prepared for bond counsel should also address the debt service fund mechanics, so that counsel can confirm the proper accounting treatment.

Members agreed the document outlining the debt service structure would be circulated to J. Bongiorno and forwarded to Town counsel along with the capital authorization use-case.

8. OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS.

None presented.

9. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

- Circulate final redlined RFP scope to all members for review and approval prior to next meeting.
- C. Levesque to prepare capital authorization and debt service use-case document for transmission to Town corporate counsel and bond counsel via R. Alexe.
- T. Donoghue to provide relevant WPCA ordinance text (Board of Finance budget approval requirement) to C. Levesque.
- Confirm with R. Alexe and Town Treasurer the proper process for WPCA state loan authorization, capital committee submission, and debt service fund setup.
- QBS evaluation committee formation and scoring criteria to be finalized at a future meeting.
- T. Donoghue to present GIS and field conditions update in spring, including wetlands and sealed manhole work.
- Review of collection system governance document deferred to next meeting.

10. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjourn the special meeting at 7:27 pm. J. Bongiorno seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted "aye," and the motion was carried.

Terrence Donoghue, Interim Recording Secretary