

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

Litchfield Firehouse, 258 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759

June 18, 2026, at 7:00 pm

1. CALL TO ORDER:

C. Levesque called the special meeting of the Litchfield WPCA to order at 7:13 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

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

Absent: John Bongiorno (BOS Liaison).

3. SEATING ALTERNATES (IF NECESSARY):

No alternates were seated.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS ONLY ON THE AGENDA:

No members of the public were present. None presented. C. Levesque noted that public comments at special meetings are limited to agenda items only, and that members of the public may contact T. Donoghue in advance of a meeting to request that items be added to the agenda.

5. APPROVAL OF REGULAR & SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FROM 5/13/26.

C. Levesque called for approval of the special meeting minutes from May 13, 2026.

Motion: K. Honan put forth a motion in favor of approving the special meeting minutes from May 13, 2026. W. Buckley seconded, and there was no further discussion. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

6. REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN.

C. Levesque reported that the WPCA’s presentation to the Board of Selectmen was well received, and that the Board appears satisfied with the direction the Authority is taking.

7. CONSIDERATION AND POTENTIAL ACTION – FINALIZE ITEMS FROM PUBLIC HEARING.

C. Levesque noted that the board would take up each item from the public hearing individually for adoption.

a. Rules and Regulations Revisions:

• **Section X – Collection and Enforcement of WPCA Sewer User Charges (NEW):**

C. Levesque summarized that this section defines the options for collection of outstanding sewer user charges. All administrative fees and marshal’s fees, if used, would be borne by the delinquent sewer user. C. Levesque noted that the associated policy document — which sets the specific monetary enforcement thresholds — allows the board to adjust those thresholds in the future without requiring a public hearing.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to adopt the Section X – Collection and Enforcement of WPCA Sewer User Charges revision to the Rules and Regulations. K. Honan seconded. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

C. Levesque confirmed that all items approved at this meeting, including rates and rules revisions, are effective July 1, 2026 (Fiscal Year 2027), and noted this effective date will be added to the rules and regulations in parentheses.

- **Section X – Capital Outlay and Capital Project Authorization (NEW):** C. Levesque explained that this section defines the process for including capital outlay items in the annual operating budget and for seeking capital project authorizations. Capital outlay items are assets purchased within the operating budget (e.g., pumps, equipment, vehicles) and do not require Board of Selectmen or Board of Finance approval. Capital projects, by contrast, involve expenditures beyond current operating resources — such as the planned SSES/I&I study — and require approval through the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, as the town’s backing may be required for any associated debt. Discussion clarified the distinction between capital outlay (cash purchase, asset recorded with depreciation) and capital projects (longer-term investments potentially requiring bonding or state loans). K. Shortsleeve noted that the section does not include a specific dollar-value trigger for Board of Finance involvement; C. Levesque confirmed that the threshold is whether the expenditure falls outside the operating budget and requires financing. C. Levesque also noted that Fund 66 (the capital construction reserve) may be accessed for qualifying capital needs with board approval, including emergency expenditures. This section will be utilized for the SSES/I&I study capital authorization process this summer.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to approve the – Capital Outlay and Capital Project Authorization. (NEW) Define the process for defining capital outlay items in the annual operating budget. The following discussion took place, K. Shortsleeve asked if these purchases will be used from the operating budget. C. Levesque answered, “yes”, and clarified that Capital Projects that require either, a grant or loan would need to be approved by the BOS and Capital Improvement Committee. W. Buckley mentioned that we should have a WPCA member on that committee, as in the past we once did. There was no further discussion. K. Honan seconded. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

- **Section X – Debt Service Fund (NEW):** C. Levesque explained that this section memorializes the process for carrying debt service within the WPCA’s operating budget. When the Authority incurs capital debt, the annual principal and interest obligation is included as a line item in the operating budget, and the WPCA remits payment to the town treasurer. K. Shortsleeve confirmed there is currently no outstanding debt service. W. Buckley noted that under prior debt, two-line items were carried — one for principal and one for interest — and that payment structures vary by loan type (level principal vs. level payment). C. Levesque noted this section ensures future boards have a documented process.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to approve the Debt Service Fund. (NEW) Defines the debt service fund for the LWPCA and the process for payments related to capital debt. K. Honan seconded. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

b. Proposed Policies:

• **Collection and Enforcement of WPCA Sewer User Charges Policy:** C. Levesque summarized that this policy mirrors the corresponding Rules and Regulations section and establishes specific monetary thresholds for enforcement action, which the board may modify without a public hearing. The thresholds adopted are: (1) balances under \$25.00 — billing and written notice only, with interest accruing; (2) \$25.00 to \$499.99 — demand notice, eligible for lien filing through the tax collector; and (3) \$500.00 or more — eligible for state marshal enforcement, with marshal fees borne by the delinquent account holder. C. Levesque noted that with the annual EDU charge at \$424 per year, a residential account unpaid for two years would exceed the \$500 threshold. T. Donoghue noted that Marissa will need to be briefed on the new policy and that the AR report will be reviewed to identify accounts eligible for marshal referral. C. Levesque noted that collection of even a portion of the estimated \$315,000–\$350,000 in historical receivables could materially improve the Authority’s financial position.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to approve the Collection and Enforcement of WPCA Sewer User Charges. Mirrors the Rule and Regulations section, but allows the Board to modify the monetary thresholds for enforcement action as needed. K. Honan seconded. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

• **Fund Balance and Capital Construction Reserve Policy:** C. Levesque explained that this policy establishes a minimum operating fund balance requirement of 90 days of annual operating expenditures (calculated as 90/365 times the annual operating budget), and provides a framework for transferring amounts in excess of the minimum to the capital construction reserve (Fund 66). Discussion clarified that maintaining a buffer above the 90-day minimum is prudent given the seasonal nature of revenue collections, and that the 90-day floor is a minimum, not a fixed target. Prohibited uses of Fund 66 include routine operating expenditures, salaries and wages unrelated to capital projects, and non-capital administrative costs. Emergency capital expenditures may be authorized from Fund 66 by board action (including via special meeting or written vote).

Motion: W. Buckley moved to approve the Fund Balance and Capital Reserve Policy Establish adequate operating fund balance reserves to ensure financial stability, liquidity, and continuity of operations. Establish dedicated Capital Construction Reserve Fund to support the long-term repair, replacement, rehabilitation, and improvement of wastewater infrastructure and related assets. K. Honan seconded. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

c. Septage Tipping Fee Increase:

C. Levesque introduced the proposal to increase the septage receiving tipping fee, which had been noticed for consideration at the public hearing. No members of the public appeared at the public hearing to comment on this item. W. Buckley moved to set the septage tipping fee at \$0.095 per gallon, consistent with the proposal discussed at the May 13 meeting. During discussion, C. Levesque proposed an amendment to increase the rate to \$0.10 per gallon. W. Buckley amended his motion accordingly. After discussion, the commission determined that no member of the public had appeared at the public hearing to object, and that the \$0.10 rate had been discussed at the public hearing. The amended motion was put to a vote.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjust the septage gallonage disposal rate from nine cents to nine and one-half cents per gallon, effective July 1, 2026. W. Buckley then amended his motion to increase the septage disposal rate from nine and one-half cents to ten cents per gallon. K. Honan seconded. All members voted “aye” and the motion carried.

8. STATUS: RE: FST TANK COVER / UPDATE ON REMOVAL OF FST COVER.

T. Donoghue reported that the FST tank cover repair project has been completed and the tank is back online. Total incurred expenses submitted to CIRMA for reimbursement are approximately \$181,000 for the current fiscal year. R. Alexe noted that the WPCA will retain 10% of the recovered amount (approximately \$18,000) as the adjuster’s fee. The frac tank rental will continue through June; T. Donoghue will arrange pickup next week. The submersible mixer was removed during the project and its power cable was found to have a nick in the insulation, likely caused by contact with the guide rail system during raising and lowering. The cable will be replaced; the mixer itself is expected to remain serviceable and will be redeployed to the BST tank.

All outstanding invoices have been paid except for the final month of frac tank rental (June). Remaining expenses will be submitted to CIRMA upon completion. The commission expressed appreciation to the project team and to the CIRMA adjuster for facilitating the repair and reimbursement process.

9. INSURANCE/ENFORCEMENT UPDATE.

No separate update provided. See Item 8 above. Reimbursement request totaling approximately \$181,000 has been submitted to CIRMA. Recovery of 90% of documented expenses is anticipated.

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

T. Donoghue reported on plant operations. Key items included:

Plant Performance: Current average daily flows are approximately 320,000 GPD, reflecting dry weather conditions and a mild drought. SVIs are in the 150 range, indicating excellent sludge settling — the best the plant has achieved. Phosphorus removal has experienced some modest reduction; T. Donoghue is evaluating whether pulling less from the primary settling tanks to preserve an anaerobic zone would improve biological phosphorus removal. The current seasonal phosphorus loading is 9.8 lbs./day against a 9.97 lb./day limit.

Nitrogen: Year-to-date nitrogen loading is approximately 29 lbs./day against a calendar-year permit limit of 25 lbs./day. T. Donoghue noted that summer flows are expected to reduce the annual average below the permit threshold, consistent with 2025 performance (17 lbs./day annual average). No nitrogen credits purchases have been required in recent years.

Discussion – Wet Weather vs. Dry Weather Performance: The commission reviewed T. Donoghue’s comparison report showing influent loading data across varying flow conditions. Discussion noted that while influent concentrations are higher during dry weather (due to reduced dilution), daily pollutant loads (in pounds) remain relatively

stable. The commission noted that the plant treats domestic sewage more efficiently during dry weather and that the primary operational challenge historically has been high-flow wet weather events causing solids washout. T. Donoghue confirmed that the reduction in solids inventory and improved sludge management have materially reduced filament-related SVI issues, and that no non-compliance events related to solids washout have occurred in approximately 18 months. T. Donoghue will add an SVI column to the comparison report to better illustrate the correlation between settling performance and compliance risk.

DEEP / Regulatory Context: The commission discussed a letter received from the CT DEEP and C. Levesque's response. K. Shortsleeve noted the letter referenced the Town's 2021 obligation to evaluate capacity-sharing options with Woodridge Lake, and raised the question of whether the WPCA is under any regulatory obligation to upgrade the plant. T. Donoghue and C. Levesque confirmed there is no current notice of violation or consent order. The WPCA is not in violation of any permit limits. The primary basis for the SSES/I&I study is to address historical wet-weather non-compliance events, reduce inflow and infiltration, and position the Authority appropriately in any future regional discussions. W. Buckley noted that the plant has been operated well and in compliance for the past seven years and affirmed that the collection system I&I study — rather than wholesale plant upgrade — is the correct priority. C. Levesque confirmed that he has communicated the SSES approach to DEEP and received acknowledgment that it is a sensible path. The commission discussed background on the Woodridge Lake evaluation and reaffirmed that no financial or legal commitment was made to Woodridge Lake, and that the WPCA appropriately notified DEEP of the change in direction.

11. UPDATE ON PLANT OPERATOR POSITION.

T. Donoghue reported that there is one candidate for the open operator-in-training (OIT) position who holds a CDL. Nikky will schedule interviews. T. Donoghue noted that staffing is currently running with two hourly employees, which is generating a savings against the labor budget of approximately \$32,000 year-to-date. Overtime has also come in below budget. T. Donoghue will discuss operator position details and next steps with R. Alexe.

12. AERATION BLOWER PROPOSALS.

T. Donoghue reported that he has received pricing for aeration blower replacement and will confer with R. Alexe before the next meeting to determine the appropriate procurement path. C. Levesque noted that the Eversource program should be explored for potential rebates, particularly given that variable frequency drives (VFDs) may qualify for significant incentives. An update will be provided at the next meeting.

13. NEW VEHICLE.

T. Donoghue noted that the plant currently operates with only one vehicle, and that a second vehicle — not necessarily new — would improve operational flexibility. The commission noted the capital outlay procedures adopted at this meeting provide the appropriate framework for this request. Item to be carried to the next meeting.

14. REPORT RE: FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY.

T. Donoghue presented the financial report. Key items included:

- Current-year outstanding receivables are approximately \$141,330, representing approximately 10% of the annual operating budget. T. Donoghue noted that Arethusa Farm has not paid its surcharge, and that C. Levesque has been notified; payment is expected promptly. The new collection and enforcement policy adopted at this meeting will apply to current and historical receivables going forward.
- Year-to-date operating expenditures, including encumbrances, represent approximately 87% of the operating budget with approximately two weeks remaining in FY26. T. Donoghue projected that approximately 5% of the remaining budget will be expended, leaving an estimated 7% or more unspent at fiscal year-end. W. Buckley noted this demonstrates the board did not need to raise EDU rates for FY27.
- Professional services line item has been overspent due to FST-related expenses (Spectrum invoices, frac tank rental, and crane rental); these costs are expected to be substantially reimbursed by CIRMA.
- The sewer capital replacement fund currently stands at approximately \$181,400. Insurance reimbursement from CIRMA is expected to partially restore this balance.
- The solar array generated approximately 43,000 kWh in May. With the new UV disinfection system (480V) now online since May 1, power consumption has increased modestly compared to the prior 209V system; the net effect on overall electricity cost is still being evaluated as Eversource bills are reviewed. The WPCA purchases electricity from Eversource at approximately \$0.19/kWh and sells net generation to the town at approximately \$0.11/kWh through FY2027.
- Electricity budget is approximately \$61,000 for FY26; year-to-date expenditure is approximately \$47,000, with one additional Eversource and Verogy bill expected. Budget is tracking favorably.

C. Levesque confirmed that the FY27 operating budget was approved at the May 13 meeting and does not require further action.

15. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

C. Levesque introduced discussion of the SSES/I&I study procurement process for the next meeting. Key items:

- The commission will review the full scope of services at the next meeting, then proceed with issuing a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). C. Levesque noted the estimated total project cost is approximately \$800,000, with a 55% DEEP grant and 45% state loan, resulting in a net loan obligation of approximately \$350,000.
- The scope includes GIS work, manhole inspections, CMOM plan, standard operating procedures, records assembly, and preliminary design as a base task. Final design and construction management are included as optional tasks that may be authorized separately; firms will be required to provide hourly rates for optional tasks without building them into the base proposal price.

- W. Buckley outlined a proposed selection process: advertise the RFQ, request multiple copies of submittals (one per member), shortlist to the top five firms, conduct individual scoring by each member, consolidate into a weighted average, and interview the top three finalists.
- The study will need to span a wet season (spring/fall) to capture high-flow and overflow events; a final report is not expected within calendar year 2026.
- The commission discussed additional plant-related items to be addressed in the next phase, including evaluation of headworks improvements, mechanical bar screening, tank rehabilitation (mortar/epoxy lining), structural assessment of aging tanks, and energy efficiency upgrades. The selected consultant will be asked to perform a peer review of Woodard & Curran's prior work and evaluate the full plant scope, not solely the process areas previously assessed. Woodard & Curran is completing its final electrical report; delivery is anticipated soon.
- Blower replacement proposals — Raz Alexe and Ted Donoghue to review pricing and present procurement recommendation at the next meeting.
- Operator wage rate analysis and CDL requirement discussion — to be carried forward pending interview results.
- New vehicle — to be addressed at the next meeting under the newly adopted capital outlay procedures.

16. ADJOURNMENT.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 pm K. Shortsleeve seconded. All members voted "aye." The meeting was adjourned.

Terrence Donoghue, Interim Recording Secretary