LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
Litchfield Fire House, 258 West Street, Litchfield, Connecticut 06759
Thursday, October 8, 2026, 7:00 PM

Members Present: Chris Levesque (Chairman), Bill Buckley, John Bongiorno, Keith Shortsleeve, PW Director Raz Alexe, and Ted Donoghue Plant Superintendent

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Peter Down, owner of 495-503 Bantam Road

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Levesque called the meeting to order at 6:57 PM.

2. ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken. Members present are listed above.

3. SEATING ALTERNATES (IF NECESSARY)

No alternates were needed.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS ONLY ON THE AGENDA

Peter Dowton, owner of 495-503 Bantam Road, spoke on Item 7. He said interest continues to accrue on his account and he has been denied building permits because of the outstanding balance. He asked whether the building official would be notified once the Authority acts. The Chairman said that if the resolution passes, the matter would be taken care of the next day.

5. APPROVAL OF REGULAR & CAPITAL PLANNING SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES FROM 9/17/26

Several members said they had not received the minutes and could not find them on the Town website. Staff said the minutes had been emailed and were posted with the special meeting materials.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to table the Special CIP Meeting and Special Meeting minutes from 9/17/26/26. J. Bongiorno seconded and there was no further discussion. All members voted "aye" and the motion was carried.

6. REPORT FROM CHAIRMAN

No separate report was given.

7. RESOLUTION: APPROVAL OF 495-503 BANTAM ROAD FY 26 & FY 27 BILLING CREDIT

The resolution was read into the record. It approves the following account adjustment for 495-503 Bantam Road, owned by Peter Dowton:

- The original FY 27 principal invoice of $17,460.58 is now reduced to $8,056.00.
- Total accrued interest of $1,308.62 is forgiven and waived in full.
- The Litchfield Tax Collector is authorized to update the account records immediately and issue a revised FY 27 bill for the corrected balance of $8,056.00.
- Added by amendment: if a lien is on file for outstanding WPCA sewer user charges, the lien shall be removed.

Mr. Dowton asked for a credit for FY 26, when he paid about $15,000 to $16,000 for water lost to a leak that never entered the sewer system. The adjustment above was based on a five-month average of his metered water use after the leak was repaired.

Members said FY 26 is a separate request. The Authority has no regulation for adjusting prior-year charges, and any method must be fair to other customers who have disputed past bills. Before the switch to metered billing, the property was billed a flat EDU rate.

The Chairman asked Mr. Dowton to get written confirmation from Aquarion of when the leak began. Mr. Dowton may return with a separate request for FY 26.

Action: Ted will circulate Mr. Dowton's water meter usage history from 2019 to the present.

Motion: W. Buckley put forth a motion to adopt the resolution adjusting the current usage invoice for the account at 495-503 Bantam Road, from $17,468.50 to $8,056, and the removal of all interest accrued on the account, $784.56 from FY 26 and $524.06 from FY 27, totaling $1,308.62. J. Bongiorno seconded, and there was no further discussion. All members voted "aye" and the motion was carried.

8. DISCUSSION: OPEN AND HISTORICAL ASSESSMENTS

Ted presented a summary from Sandy of the outstanding sewer assessments. An itemized customer balance report is still to come.

- Contracts 13, 17 and 18 began in about 2000 and run 30 years. Contract 14 began in 1997 and runs 30 years. Contract 15 has about four to five years remaining.
- Most of these were rehabilitation contracts for leaking sewer lines. The only new installation was Northfield and parts of Torrington Road in the mid-1990s.
- Properties directly connected to the rehabilitated lines were assessed, typically $20,000 to $30,000 each, payable over 20 to 30 years on a separate bill.
- About $124,361 remains outstanding, mostly on Contract 18. Two accounts are delinquent and accruing 18% interest.
- The Town has paid off the bonds for this work. It is unclear whether assessment payments still being collected go to the WPCA or the Town.

The Chairman and another member said they do not agree with assessing customers for rehabilitation of existing sewers and suggested reviewing the assessment ordinance for future projects.

Action: For the next meeting, staff will provide, for each contract, the streets served (with a map), the number of properties assessed, the original assessment amounts, current balances and delinquencies. The Chairman and a member will meet with Town finance staff about where collected assessment payments are deposited. Item tabled to the next meeting.

9. DISCUSSION: ACCOUNTS RECOMMENDED FOR STATE MARSHAL

The Tax Collector is still preparing the list of accounts. Ted drafted a notice for the Town website announcing that the Authority will begin collection through a State Marshal. Members asked that the notice be short, state that collection will begin, and link to the amended regulations rather than quoting them.

Action: Ted and Raz will shorten and finalize the notice and post it.

10. DISCUSSION: WOODARD & CURRAN REPORTS

The Authority reviewed the energy study, the final piece of the Woodard & Curran facilities report, prepared with an energy subconsultant. The study lists several energy conservation measures, including blower replacement, aeration controls and lower dissolved oxygen set points.

- Replacing the blowers with a new aeration control panel is estimated at $371,000, with savings of about 7,700 kWh and a payback of 238 months (about 19.8 years).
- The plant was built with three blowers (lead, lag and standby). One failed and cannot be repaired because the manufacturer no longer exists. The remaining two are about 50 years old.
- The plant normally runs on one blower and rarely needs the lag blower. If the second blower failed, the plant could not treat wastewater and would be out of compliance.
- Ted has four vendor quotes that vary widely. He recommends replacing the blowers and controls before another unit fails. New equipment would carry forward into any future plant upgrade.
- The Chairman noted that DEEP funding typically requires standby equipment, and that grant and loan funding may be available. Rental blowers are available in an emergency.

No action was taken. Ted and Raz will review the options with the Chairman and may bring a capital request to the Authority. The item carries to the next meeting.

11. 2027 REGULAR MEETING DATES

This item was added to the posted agenda. Members agreed to move regular meetings to the third Thursday of each month starting in January 2027.

Action: Ted will revise the 2027 schedule and place it on the next agenda for adoption.

12. DISCUSSION: CAPITAL OUTLAY

a. New Vehicle

Ted and Raz have one price so far. More quotes are needed, and specifications will be finalized after a staff member returns from vacation. Litchfield Ford has provided information, and the State surplus auction was suggested as another source.

b. New Building for Vehicles & Equipment

Vehicles and equipment, including the tractor, are now stored outside at the plant. The Chairman suggested a pre-engineered steel building from ClearSpan, available through a Sourcewell contract, with power and an outside hose bib. Members suggested sizing it for future needs and installing spare conduit for fiber.

Action: Staff will obtain quotes for both items.

13. DISCUSSION: REVIEW OF FY 26 EXPENSES & REVENUE

Ted reviewed the Tax Collector's summary.

- FY 27 sewer use billing totals about $1,086,000. About half was collected in the first month, and about 20% of payments were made online.
- As of June 30, FY 26 receivables were $124,435 and FY 25 receivables were $68,240. Older balances go back to 2009.
- Other FY 26 income included about $80,000 in usage charges from Morris, about $49,000 in interest and lien fees, and $11,000 in septage fees, together nearly $150,000.
- Sewer use charges rank below taxes and assessments in collection priority and are usually recovered when a property sells. The Town now withholds building permits for unpaid sewer bills, which has prompted some payments.

A member who paid online by credit card asked staff to confirm that interest is calculated automatically on late online payments, and to review the roughly $12 credit card convenience fee.

Action: Staff will request a report of small outstanding balances and confirm how online payments handle interest.

14. REPORT RE: PUBLIC WORKS / TREATMENT PLANT SUMMARY

Ted presented the plant report.

- The plant passed its aquatic toxicity test with 100% survival of fathead minnows and water fleas. The passing standard is 90%.
- Flows dropped to about 427,000 gallons per day with little rain. Morris flows were steady at about 23,000 to 26,000 gallons per day.
- The sludge pump hose was replaced at a cost of $5,800 and should last three to four years. More sludge will be removed in October to lower tank levels.
- Total nitrogen was 10 lb./day (2.99 mg/L) in September. Phosphorus was above 10.97 lb./day in two of the three seasonal months, which does not trigger a violation.

- The plant received about 97,000 gallons of septage in September and 481,000 gallons in the first three months of the fiscal year, about $48,000 in revenue at $0.10 per gallon. Septage has not caused settling problems. SVI averaged 133 for the quarter.
- Jason has begun lab training.

Sub-items 1 (New Vehicle) and 2 (Aeration Blowers) were covered under Items 10 and 12. Members discussed moving capital items such as the vehicle and blowers to the Capital Planning meeting agenda and funding them from the capital construction fund through the operating budget.

15. REPORT RE: FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY

Revenue was covered under Item 13. Expenses are below last year at this point, and spending typically slows in November and December.

16. OPPORTUNITY FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members of the public commented.

17. COMMISSIONER REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Aeration blowers, to be carried to the next meeting.
- A member reported that fiber internet service for the WPCA and Public Works has been approved by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance and needs only a town meeting. It will replace the current Optimum service at lower cost. The member also noted that the FCC is expected to approve retirement of copper phone lines in November, and offered additional phones for the plant and garage.

18. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:27pm. J. Bongiorno seconded. All members voted “aye.” The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Interim Recording Secretary

These minutes are subject to approval by the Authority at its next meeting.