

**LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
Remote Meeting by Live Internet Video Stream and by Telephone
November 12, 2020 ~ 7:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman David R. Wilson called the remote meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: David R. Wilson, Christian Bratina, Thomas Waterhouse, and William “Sky” Post. Also present were Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent, Ann Combs, Recording Secretary, Raz Alexe, Public Works Director and First Selectman Denise Raap, who hosted the Zoom meeting. Members of the public were also present.

Absent: David Geiger, William Buckley and James Koser

SEATING ALTERNATES: Chairman Wilson seated Sky Post as a regular voting member.

MINUTES

a) 9/10/20 Regular Meeting: Approval of these minutes was postponed until next month.

b) 10/8/20 Regular Meeting: Motion: C. Bratina moved to adopt his redlined revision of the October 8th minutes and T. Waterhouse seconded. Wilson added it is useful to have the most accurate minutes with more detail when we need to go back to review years from now. All voted aye and the motion carried.

BUSINESS

1. Discussion about Woodridge Lake Sewer District: D. Wilson reported no ongoing activity with WLS D, although the Concerned Litchfield Citizens have opposed any interaction by the WPCA with the WLS D. The WPCA, upon request by the Board of Selectmen, has been asked to conduct an independent facility study solely on the future needs and potential cost of the Litchfield treatment plant. A source of funding is the Clean Water Fund of the EPA, administered by the CT DEEP. DEEP has laid out the process that needs to be followed to be eligible for Clean Water Funds, either for the study or for plant improvements. Their package offers roughly 20% grant and 2% loan over 20 years. Our contact person with DEEP is an intern working with Rowland Denny. D. Wilson said we are ready to go out with our Request for Qualifications. Hopefully we can get the responses in by December and find a suitable company. Then we can develop a scope of work for an upgrade of our plant.

Upon request for public comment by Keith Shortsleeve, a member of the Concerned Litchfield Citizens, Chairman Wilson noted their attorney has been lobbying the Selectmen and members of the Commission relative to this issue. They feel they were not successful in just lobbying for an independent evaluation, as now they are trying to determine who can be considered dependent or independent, and do not want the WPCA to pursue any potential funding through the Clean Water Fund, which the CT DEEP administers. They hold this opinion due to what they believe is a “clear conflict of interest” if the CT DEEP is involved. since they are also working with WLS D. We have received a letter, dated 11/9/20, from Attorney Perley Grimes, Cramer and Anderson, asking that we do not involve the CT DEEP in preparing our RFQ selection process.

Mr. Shortsleeve then spoke, saying that the CT DEEP has other interests and objectives while they are working with Litchfield; namely, working with WLS D. We will be better served to have an evaluation of only the Litchfield plan where only Litchfield speaks before we go down the path to develop a facilities plan. Once we go down that path, it does make sense to consider using the Clean Water Act Fund. This will help in the end because the WPCA will have to go to the public for approval or any plant upgrade

work, or the Inter-municipal Agreement with WLSL. Right now the Concerned Litchfield Citizens do not have faith in this process because it is not an independent evaluation. Even in the RFQ, there is mention of evaluation of Woodridge Lake's connection to the process as well as Litchfield's upgrades. They are asking for the independent evaluation of Litchfield's standalone plan first before development of the facilities plan. They are requesting that this evaluation be completely funded by the WPCA's Capital Fund 66.

Motion: S. Post moved to add Public Comment to the agenda, and C. Bratina seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Public Comment

Denise Raap commented that she does not remember the Board of Selectmen asking the Concerned Citizens to ask the WPCA to not use DEEP for funding. C. Bratina noted for public knowledge that in proceeding with an engineering study without the DEEP RFQ authorization, we would not be eligible to receive funding for that effort. This means the taxpayers would pay for all the engineering costs. With DEEP approval, we have a chance of getting the funding, and the amount coming from our Capital Nonrecurring Fund will be a lot less. If the Concerned Citizens would make up the difference, he would be happy to entertain it. However, for the rate payers, they should take advantage of any State or Federal monies available. D. Wilson said that the share for the Study is typically about 40% – 50% of the cost. C. Bratina said that any engineering firm we hire would be working for us – the CT DEEP would not be involved, so he does not understand their concerns. He then explained the TR-16 Guidelines as a manual that the State has accepted that lists all the technical standards of design for a wastewater treatment plant. Our plant does not meet the current TR-16 standards. We are also due for a new permit from the CT DEEP, as our permit expires in June of 2021, and we may be required to upgrade several items for this permit renewal. He said that cost to the ratepayers is important, so if the cost of working with WLSL does not lower the cost to the ratepayers, he sees no reason to consider it. S. Post mentioned the Concerned Citizens' feeling of conflict of interest with DEEP involved, and C. Bratina said there is no conflict, as the DEEP does not sit in on the hiring of the engineering firm or participate in the engineering study, so it is an independent study. By working with DEEP, they cannot push us to accept Woodridge Lake. Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent, added that they file their monthly operating reports every month with DEEP, so they understand the plant's performance. We have been proactive and have a good working relationship with the CT DEEP. Raz Alexe agreed with Mr. Bratina's comment that any collusion or interference from CT DEEP is not supported. This firm selection and the study is solely in the control of the WPCA and per its discretion. The plant should be the main focus, and any discussion of WLSL would occur after the baseline is established. He saw no conflict.

Kate Hellman, Beach Street, questioned why the WPCA minutes show discrepancy in the capacity of the plant. Mr. Wilson explained that the hydraulic capacity of the permit is 800,000 gallons/day. They have been trying to determine feasibility, and some of the processing has changed which could affect the capacity. Therefore they are always talking about flow data, and the average flow showed 600,000 gallons/day in the facility plan for the 2003 upgrade.

Perley Grimes referred to his letter of 11/9/20 representing opposition to the RFQ and asked that the letter be added to the minutes of the meeting so it would appear online. D. Wilson argued that his letter requested that it be posted on the website, and Mr. Grimes agreed. D. Wilson felt the WPCA should also post an update detailing its position, including the RFQ for a standalone plant study. Mr. Grimes noted his letter was not posted on the website despite calls to the Town Hall office staff to have it posted. He therefore requested adding the letter in its entirety to the minutes of this meeting. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations did an update on 10/21/20 that said public meetings can be used to engage a wide audience and increase awareness of an issue, and when done well, can help build a feeling of community. He then reiterated the importance of an independent evaluation; however, the RFQ

is not limited to a standalone upgrade of the plant. It has in it, "...the consideration of flow and load from Woodridge Lake Sewer District." He objects to that RFQ and asks that that reference to the flow and load from WLSLD be deleted. Secondly, the CT DEEP is on record as supporting WLSLD bringing its sewerage to Litchfield. The CT DEEP has a "conflict of interest" in that regard. He reminded the group that at some time the whole Town will have to vote its approval, so it is in the best interest of the public for you to be as transparent as possible so there is no taint on the recommendation of the standalone review. He asked that the motion be amended to request that the process be transparent and not involve communications with the CT DEEP or any reference to Woodridge Lake flows. The funding is available in the capital account and would be \$70,000, a small price to pay for the Town's confidence in a truly independent review. He ended by asking again for his letter of 11/9/20 be appended to these minutes.

2. Update of Torrington Inter-Municipal Agreement: D. Wilson said the draft IMA has been submitted to Torrington, and we are waiting for the submission of Harwinton's draft so we can meet with the Torrington people to go over the various items in their original proposal for the IMA.

3. Commercial Industry Discharge to WWCF: D. Wilson said more extensive sampling data from Arethusa has been submitted. Ted Donoghue showed a chart that indicated testing for BOD, TSS, FOG, and they have purchased equipment for COD testing. They also started doing nutrient testing in mid-October. The rolling average flow is 4,400 gallons/day with production six days/week. There are, however, many outliers on the flow. The BOD can be 15-20% of our loading right now, and TSS is about half of that. FOG is slightly high. C. Bratina has imported all this data into the new Hach WIMS. This data gives us a clearer picture of what Arethusa's flows are like and how the loading changes. There are outliers, but the data is consistent and gives us a good picture. S. Post asked if Arethusa would be amendable to higher fees if their system puts more pressure on us. Ted said the BOD numbers from the composite sampler have actually been lower than those from the grab samples, about 1500 mg/l lower than what they have been paying for their surcharge. So they actually could pay less unless we change the format for how we bill the surcharge. T. Donoghue said Arethusa is reapplying for the miscellaneous user permit with the CT DEEP. Once they get it approved, the WPCA will be the governing authority to insure that it is implemented and followed, in addition to other stipulations enforced by the Commission for its rules and regulations. C. Bratina noted that we will work on developing a discharge permit together with Arethusa and we will work out sampling and discuss the pricing structure to treat their waste product.

4. 2021 WPCA Regular Meeting Dates: Motion: D. Wilson moved to accept the dates shown on the draft with the exception of November 11 (Veterans Day) being changed to November 18, 2021, and his signature be listed as David R. Wilson instead of Dave R. Wilson. S. Post seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

5. Hach WIMS Project Update: C. Bratina explained this as a database likened to a massive spreadsheet. All data can be entered, trended and exported to Excel for good data management. It can protect past data from being inadvertently changed and has many positive features. He set up the database with over 700 variables, probably more than we need, but they can be eliminated. He loaded 23 years of data into it, so all data is in one place. He is almost done with data entry and will meet with Ted next week for training and will verify final calculations, expecting to be done by the end of the month. D. Wilson thanked him for all his efforts. T. Donoghue said the engineering firm selected for the standalone study will be able to utilize this data.

6. Collection System Work: Ted Donoghue said they are working with New England Geosystems, who is working to get the information he needs. He expects to have the specs for it next month. He spent most of his time in October rebuilding manholes, a couple that needed work but most that were damaged by a milling machine on Torrington Road.

a) Jetting/Cleaning: None

b) CCTV Work: They did some TV work on private building connectors under repair when the pipe was open. They found a water leak on Woodruff St. that will be discussed in the plant report.

7. Plant Equipment Updates

a) UV System: T. Donoghue said they are anxiously awaiting the design number, but C. Bratina explained they've had peak flows that were instantaneous without knowing how long they were sustained. Ted tried to pull out the peak hour flows from the Excel reporter, but a couple of the days don't make sense, so C. Bratina said he will go to the plant and review that data with Ted before they make a final decision.

b) Mechanical Bar Screen: Ted said this is still on the back burner. There have been no issues with the bar rack, as the flows have been up slightly with the recent precipitation.

c) Sludge Mixers/Sludge Recirculation Pumps: T. Donoghue said he is still waiting for the electrician to help reset the panel, and he will follow up tomorrow. The BST mixer is working.

8. Safety: Ted said there have been no accidents and no training. The DEEP says there is a new State Statute that mandates operators must have 6 contact training hours/year, even in the midst of COVID-19. It is all online, and they are doing training tomorrow and another in December.

9. Commissioner's Requests: D. Wilson spoke about the RFQ, saying the reference to Woodridge Lake should be taken out of the RFQ. We want to be clear that we are independent of the CT DEEP and only listening to them to make sure our language conforms to their language to be eligible for the Clean Water funding. He moved that once we get relevant questions answered by Rowland Denny at the CT DEEP, we publish the RFQ without the reference to Woodridge Lake, hoping to get returns back in by December. S. Post asked if this required a motion, and C. Bratina said it did not, as the motion made at the last meeting gives him authority to make changes to DEEP's requirements. Mr. Wilson said he will do that and develop an update to be posted on our website, including Mr. Grimes' 11/9/20 letter from the Concerned Litchfield Citizens.

10. Public Works / Treatment Plant Report: Permit compliance has been maintained since the last report. Routine operations and maintenance work continues. The average daily flow for the month of October was slightly higher at 0.295 MGD and the total flow was 9.153 MG. We removed 58,500 gallons of sludge for final disposal during the month of October.

- We processed a total of 141,700 gallons of septage during the month of October a 12% increase over last October. YTD we are down 28%.
- For October effluent BOD removal percent was 99% and TSS removal percent was 97%. The minimal removal rates per our NPDES permit is 85%.
- The daily average of Total Nitrogen lbs. /day discharged into the Bantam River was exceptional at 2.9 mg/ or 8 lbs. /day. Our daily limit is 24 lbs. /day.
- The daily average for Total Phosphorous lbs. /day discharged in the Bantam River was 3.7 mg/l. or 9.4 lbs. /day. The monthly average cannot exceed 3.7 mg/l or 9.97 lbs. /day.
- On 10/1/20 rebuilt manhole located in the driveway of 119 Circle Drive.

- On 10/5/20 customer replaced 5 ft. section of broken VCT pipe at 179 North St. We were able to CCTV the rest of the line as well, which was in good shape, just a mild built up.
- On 10/6/20 replaced manhole cover and frame that was hit by the milling machine on Torrington Rd. They will keep an eye on it for trouble.
- On 10/9/20 replace two manhole frame that were damaged by the milling machine on Torrington Rd.
- On 10/14/20 RAR Construction began connection to manhole for Gagarin Place development.
- On 10/16/20 102 Woodruff St. replaced a majority of the building connector that connects 3 homes. We also CCTV'ed the line under Woodruff St. The clay tile line is in very bad shape, under a town road with four houses connected. It is technically a private line. There are potentially four other homes on Woodruff St. that have the same situation. They did dye tests on three and plan to do the fourth on 48 Woodruff Lane next Friday to confirm when it connects (see 10/27/20 action below). Next they will have to discuss a plan of action.
- On 10/17/20 generator run alarm at the plant at 3:38 AM. Ted responded and it was only a brown out.
- On 10/21/20 we CCTV the lower section of Woodruff St. by Russell St.
- On 10/22/20 we replaced 5 manhole covers, after paving was completed on Russell St. We also grouted manhole on the south side of PW yard, which was a gusher.
- On 10/27/20 CCTV'ed building connector at 46 Woodruff Lane and performed dye test, and confirmed it connects with two other properties on Woodruff Street.

a) Easements: No report

b) Operations: discussed above

11. Financial Report: T. Donoghue reported getting the bill from Torrington WPCA that revised our Capital costs at \$33,600. D. Wilson thought we would pay one third of our share up front, but they charged more up front. That's why our monthly expenses were higher. Revenue was down \$164,000 from last year. Ted helped develop a questionnaire for the CT Assn. of WPCAs that showed most other WPCAs were "slightly concerned" about revenue collection during COVID-19, as were we. However, now we are more concerned than anticipated. There were a couple necessary outlier expenses, but he does not anticipate any large expenses from now until January.

12. Old Business

a) Second Vehicle: postponed

b) FY 19 Audit: T. Donoghue said he is checking into accounting firms used by other WPCAs and found that Torrington uses Blum Shapiro. He will have a better update next month.

13. Adjournment: Motion: C. Bratina moved to adjourn at 8:56 p.m. and T. Waterhouse seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Ann D. Combs, Recording Secretary