

Approved 5/14/20

**LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
Remote Meeting by Live Internet Video Stream and by Telephone
April 9, 2020 ~ 7:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: David R. Wilson called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Christian Bratina, David Geiger William Buckley, David R. Wilson, Thomas Waterhouse, and William “Sky” Post. First Selectman Denise Raap, Selectman Anne Dranginis, Selectman Jeffery Zullo, Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent, Raz Alexe, Public Works Director and Ann Combs, Recording Secretary, were also present.

Absent: James Koser

SEATING ALTERNATES: David Geiger was seated as a regular member.

Motion: D. Geiger moved to add to the agenda before Commissioners Requests, “WLSA USDA Scoring Agreement,” and also another item called “Tax Deferment/Low Interest Program.” T. Waterhouse seconded, all voted aye except W. Buckley, who voted no, and the motion carried.

MINUTES

a) 3/12/20 Regular Meeting: Motion: C. Bratina moved to adopt the meeting minutes of 3/12/20 as edited, and T. Waterhouse seconded. Bratina, Wilson and Post all voted aye; Geiger and Buckley abstained because of absence, and the motion carried.

BUSINESS

1. Discussion about Woodridge Lake Sewer District: D. Wilson reported they populated the USDA application that was uploaded to the meeting material. It needs to be signed by Denise Raap. The purpose is to determine a score that will correlate to the possible USDA funding for the project, which would include both grants and loans. The USDA correspondence explains the approvals necessary to get in line for funding. Dave then explained the process we have been going through so far with collecting and analyzing plant loading data and flows. To accommodate WLSA we would go from 800,000 gal/day (our plant permitting capacity) to 950,000 gal/day. Based on the anticipated flows from WLSA they would be about 15% of our flows and that could equate to an additional \$150,000 from WLSA each year in revenue. The cost break down for any upgrade work at the treatment plant would be 2/3 to Litchfield and 1/3 to WLSA for the capacity increase and other modifications. If the economics work would we want to then spend money on a consultant? D. Wilson and C. Bratina are sure their numbers on the upgrade will come in lower than \$10.3 million with would be Litchfield costs. An additional \$8.1 million would be paid by WLSA He is looking for a motion that states the WPCA supports Denise Raap signing the application so they can get it to the USDA. D. Raap wanted to make sure her signature does not commit the Town to the project. _

ASelectman Anne Dranginis said the BOSBoard of Selectmen voted to have her sign the letter, and the recent letter from USDA shows it does not bind the town to the project. She would like to proceed and get the information, as it is a data-driven decision. First Selectman D. Raap asked if the plant can operate at 600,000 gallons/day. D. Wilson said yes, but the clarifiers don’t operate well at peak flows. Ted Donohue echoed that there are operational challenges how the sludge settles in the clarifiers. These improvements to be made will benefit WLSA as well as us. W. Buckley is not happy that his rate increase is helping

another district. D. Wilson said we could spread some of our fixed costs throughout more users. J. Zullo asked if we should also analyze a stand-alone option of the Litchfield project for comparison. D. Wilson said we would have to look at our own funding sources. J. Zullo said that would be good so that we could have a strong negotiation for the rate payers. If we do it ourselves, it would be with different upgrade components. Ted Donoghue said he will create an asset management plan. D. Geiger said that all the concerns are exactly the questions the public will be interested in. They will want to know the cost to go from 600-800,000 gal/day by ourselves or as part of Goshen's cost of getting an additional 150,000 gal/day to us. Buckley was concerned about our improvements benefiting WLSD and our rate payer paying the majority of the costs to upgrade the treatment plant He suggested the cart is ahead of the horse if we borrow \$10 million when we don't know how it's being spent or for whose benefit. We do not know enough yet.

Raz Alexe was concerned about not having enough information for this deadline, but deadlines come every year or six months. Until it is clear for all and support W. Buckley's point; i.e., how much of the \$10 million is for us with or without WLSD, why would we rush? D. Wilson said we're rushing to be considered in this year's programs and get the process going so we can sell the project with all estimates and cost for design and build of the upgrade. Both applications (WLSD also) are going together. W. Buckley said maybe we can apply separately for our own needs so we can see what we need to spend in Litchfield. Ann Dranginis said that if we could answer W. Buckley's questions, we'd be closer to an answer and would get the data the people need to see. There may be a significant differential in the cost of borrowing for the upgrade. She reiterated that there is no harm in signing as there is no commitment and would help yield data needed. It does not bind the Town but is an opportunity to get critical information. D. Geiger agreed and thought they should proceed before money runs out. C. Bratina said that if we could get a grant for some of the construction costs, and if we bring in more flow, our user rates would go down. Therefore there is a possibility Litchfield could save money.

Motion: D. Geiger moved to ask the ~~BOS~~Board of Selectmen to support the study of the two portions of the sewer system upgrade and with them combined. C. Bratina seconded. Upon voting the ayes were Bratina, Geiger, and Waterhouse. Buckley was a nay. The Chairman did not vote. The motion carried.

2. Update of Torrington Inter-Municipal Agreement: D. Wilson said there has been no progress since the last meeting. They want us to pay the same debt service that they pay, so we want to know what's included in the debt service. Maybe we shouldn't be liable.

3. FY 21 Budget Draft: D. Wilson said the budget is the same as last month's with two changes. Ted Donoghue explained that the first change is to add under Revenue a commercial surcharge line item. He put in \$10,000. Then, he doubled the usage fee, to \$24,000, for flows that go to Torrington based on the average amount of flow. The budget increased by 1.79%, but we also increased revenue. He also adjusted the Morris user fee to over \$64,000. **Motion:** W. Buckley moved to approve the budget as presented and forward it to be published in the newspaper. T. Waterhouse seconded. C. Bratina said it is a good budget but we've not reconciled the audit with Town's financial records, so we don't know if last year's financial records are accurate. Because of this he said he would vote no until it's resolved. Upon voting Geiger, Buckley and Waterhouse all voted aye and C. Bratina voted no; motion carried.

4. Septage Tipping Free Rate Increase: D. Wilson said that it costs more to treat the septage than we gain in revenue. Our plant loading on some days is higher than ~~permits~~permitted. So if we can increase the septage fee for the next fiscal year by \$5 from \$75/1,000 gal. to \$80/1,000 gal., we could reduce the load coming into the plant and reduce operating costs, while bringing in more revenue which is needed to treat the septage. T. Donohue said if we raise the rate, without a meter, we could choose either 1100 or 1200 gallons for the amount pumped from a resident's tanks. C. Bratina did not agree as how can we verify what the hauler write down on the slip. C. Bratina explained that septage is about 25% of the

influent plant loading and we have had sporadic problems with non-compliance events, and we are not sure how much the septage is impacting it. Installing a septage flow meter and measuring what is going in the plant would keep the haulers honest and help us to determine the true loading from this revenue source. Sewage users shouldn't subsidize the septic users. **Motion:** W. Buckley moved to up the septage fee to \$80/1,000 gal. from \$75 effective at the end of the fiscal year and install a meter so they pay for what it is. C. Bratina seconded. Upon voting Geiger, Bratina, Buckley and Waterhouse all voted aye and the motion carried. Ted will work on getting a meter.

5. 2019 Annual Report: No report

6. Collection System Work: T. Donoghue said there is a section of pipe that is damaged between Doyle Road and Vanderpoel Ave. that needs to be fixed. Work on Circle Drive will involve fixing the bricks that have been undermined by drainage from roof leaders. They will suspended jetting due to COVID-19 because of the unavoidable spray that does put raw wastewater into an aerosol form. There is some evidence the virus can survive in fecal matter in a sanitary sewer. In an emergency he has the personal protective equipment to perform the work.

7. Plant Equipment Updates

a) UV System: No report

b) Raw Influent Composite Sampler: T. Donoghue proposed buying a 4th sampler to install after the bar rack before the septage is pumped into the system to discover the true loading. It will cost about \$7,421.92 ~~to buy a~~. A new, portable composite sampler is on order which will be used to monitor Arethusa and Litchfield Distillery. **Motion:** C. Bratina moved to purchase a permanent sampler for \$7,421.92, using funds from Capital Nonrecurring. D. Geiger seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

c) Anoxic Mixer: The new one is on order for the third aeration tank.

d) Sludge Mixers/Sludge Recirculation Pump: T. Donoghue said they are using the finished sludge thickener. It is the FST tank and is working, but is the short term solution. The long term solution is to have sludge circulation in both tanks. He will research it.

8. Safety: Ted said there were no instances but they have been doing a lot of disinfecting and everyone is social distancing and healthy. They are working in shifts of two with the others being on call in one hour if needed. Upon question by T. Waterhouse, Ted said the Tyvek suits cost \$100 for 20, and they have them on hand in case they have to jet. Ted bought new respirators that can have N95 filters attached. They will use them only when needed. C. Bratina said this COVID may take a long time, so he asked they think of a long-term plan. What other work can be done? Maybe GIS mapping? Rearrange the plant schedule? Ted said he will postpone interviews for the new operator, although they have 4 candidates. C. Bratina said he needs to move forward, as it's no time to be short-staffed. He sent Ted 3 websites in which to advertise. Raz suggested they could consider someone more experienced who would cost more money but would not have to be trained. C. Bratina agreed and said they could post for both positions, and Raz agreed. All agreed and Ted will talk to Liz about advertising for both Class I and Class II, as well as the assistant, using Christian's advice as to where to post.

8a) USDA Scoring Agreement: Not addressed

8b) Tax Deferral/Low Interest Program: D. Wilson explained the recent Governor's Executive Order which offers two options: ~~the~~ 90-day deferral on tax and sewer rate payments or ~~the~~ low

interest rate (3%) for late payments for 90 days. This would not affect the user fees. He said it was unclear in the Executive Order if it affects assessment (Project 15 is going out). T. Waterhouse moved to approve the reduction to Low Interest Rate option of 3% interest for 90 days for all so there is no need for applications and reviews.

D. Geiger seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

9. Commissioner's Requests: C. Bratina said that for the last six months we have been reviewing plant data to evaluate the WLSO option and have discovered a lot of issues with the plant design and operation, and the data. Analysis has been very difficult because the data is spread all over and out in numerous spreadsheets making it hard to find with WLSO. He suggested putting all data in one place on a spreadsheet in a database developed for wastewater treatment plants. The cost of the data base software is \$4,923. He offered to set it up and teach Ted how to use it. **Motion:** D. Geiger moved to spend up to \$5000 for this software for the database to be taken from Capital Nonrecurring. W. Buckley seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Surcharge: C. Bratina said we need to gather more data on that the DPC's analysis has revealed that the BOD discharged from Arethusa and get at the Litchfield Distillery are over 40% of the collection system's, which is overloading the plant. So we need to have regular sampling from of them. He would like to get data from the Distillery, too. Based on their actual flow and BOD discharged we need to review what their load surcharge should be and bill them for it. They are the two biggest commercial sources and amount to a very significant load on the plant.

10. Public Works / Treatment Plant Report

a) Easements: No report

b) Operational: Permit compliance has been maintained since the last report, with the following two exceptions, which were exceeding our daily maximum limit of 50 mg/l for TSS on 3/9/19 and 3/19/20. Routine operations and maintenance work continues. The average daily flow for the month of March was 0.585 MGD and the total flow was 18.148MG. We removed 65,000 gallons of sludge for final disposal during the month of March.

- For March effluent BOD removal percent was 96% and TSS removal percent was 93%. The minimal removal rates per our NPDES permit is 85%.
- The daily average of Total Nitrogen discharged into the Bantam River was 3.5mg/l or 18 lbs. /day. Our daily limit is 24 lbs. /day.
- The daily average for Total Phosphorous lbs. /day discharged in the Bantam River was 1.6 mg/l. The monthly average cannot exceed 3.7 mg/l.
- On 3/3/20 we conducted smoke testing of the main inceptor between the plant and CT RT. 209. No major issues discovered, except evidence of surcharging of manholes closer to the WWCF.
- On 3/4/20 Conducted smoke testing on Circle Drive and Highland Ave. No major issues discovered, except for one issue of drainage coming in under the frame of one manhole.
- On 3/5/20 we conducted smoke testing on Case Ave, Vanderpoel Ave. and Doyle Rd. One possible issue found with on line coming down from Doyle Rd.

- On 3/9/20 reported an effluent non-compliance event for exceeding our daily maximum of 50 mg/l for TSS.
- On 3/19/20 reported an effluent non-compliance event for exceeding our daily maximum of 50 mg/l for TSS.
- On 3/26/20 we began running two operators per shift due to the Covid 19 pandemic.
- On 3/26/20 Katz Pumps installed a new vacuum pump and a check valve, which we already had as they just added new seals, at the Northfield pump station. Joe Nestico grabbed samples to identify filaments in our process.
- Old Business. 1) Second vehicle. 2) Easements. 3) Electrical Training. 4) Influent/Septage study. 5) UV System. 6) Anoxic Mixer. 7) Mechanical Bar Screen.

c) Septic: They processed 97,650 gallons of septage in March, a 118% increase over last March. Year to date they are at a 22% increase.

d) Equipment: No report

11. Financial Report: Ted said they are spending a lot of money on additional sampling. For Torrington Road and Hart Drive they spent nearly \$2,300 on additional sampling and lab analysis. For the plant, it's closer to \$2,600, with more to come in. That is coming from professional services 3201-52111, and he is at 99.4%. Another item added in was a line replacement at 216 Circle Drive. There will also be a big payout to a retiree in May. ~~They will have to move some money~~ Mr. Bratina noted that the funding for one item should come from Capital Nonrecurring ~~into~~. Ted said the ~~operating~~ budget ~~at the next meeting~~. Ted is 82% spent, but will not have much more to come. He said the budget will be tight.

12. Old Business

a) Second Vehicle: No report

13. Adjournment: Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjourn at 9:39 p.m., and C. Bratina seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Ann D. Combs, Recording Secretary