

LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
Remote Meeting by Live Internet Video Stream and by Telephone
May 13, 2021 ~ 7:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman David R. Wilson called the remote meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: William Buckley, Christian Bratina, Thomas Waterhouse, David R. Wilson, David Geiger and 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: James Koser

SEATING ALTERNATE: Chairman Wilson appointed Sky Post to be seated for J. Koser as a regular voting member.

MINUTES

a) 3/11/21 Regular Meeting: W. Buckley moved the approval and filing of the 3/11/21 minutes, and T. Waterhouse seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

b) 4/8/21 Regular Meeting: W. Buckley moved the approval and filing of the 4/8/21 minutes, and T. Waterhouse seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

BUSINESS

1. Public Request and/or Comment: None

2. Update of Torrington Inter-Municipal Agreement: D. Wilson said the Torrington attorney made changes to the draft IMA, but he has not had a chance to review it yet. After reviewing, he will distribute them to the Board. Then there will be a meeting to discuss details regarding testing and limits on flow. The agreement states we are reserving 50,000 gallons. Part of our annual fee will be our actual flows to the plant for the usage charge, the additional charge will be our percentage of the plant flows that will be used to pay our share on the new plant upgrade cost sharing, the new plant upgrade is, currently being performed in Torrington, it will be our reserve capacity percentage of their plant design.

3. Discussion on Engineering Interviews for On-Call Services: D. Wilson said C. Bratina, W. Buckley, R. Alexe, S. Post, and T. Donoghue interviewed five firms on 4/22/21. They asked the same questions of each firm. There were people they liked from each firm, and all but one firm were very well prepared. There were some good ideas presented by all firms that were helpful. They chose Woodard & Curran with which to proceed to begin negotiation to discuss the scope of work and a contract for services. D. Wilson thought he, C. Bratina, W. Buckley and Ted would meet with Woodard & Curran (hopefully the same three who were interviewed). Anyone else is welcome to come along. If the cost or anything else is not satisfactory, the WPCA will formally end negotiations with Wood & Curran and will move on to begin discussions with the next chosen firm. which was Kleinfelder.

Motion: W. Buckley moved to authorize the Chairman to begin the negotiation process between the WPCA team and Woodard & Curran for the purpose of bringing a negotiated agreement back to the Board, if possible, for review and approval. C. Bratina seconded. Upon voting all voted aye and the motion carried.

T. Donoghue will draft a letter informing the other firms of the decision, noting that unsuccessful negotiations may result in invitation of one of the other firms.

4. Sewer Rate Study: D. Wilson said the study shows that somewhat less than 70% of the users have meters. He reviewed the possible ways to proceed and asked for direction. C. Bratina said it makes sense to meter the restaurants, but they may not be receptive. D. Wilson said they should have a public meeting and explain costs. T. Donoghue said the restaurants are billed on how many seats they have. We should compare the water usage of those without meters to those who do to get an idea of cost comparison. W. Buckley said that billing should be fair to all residents, based on usage. Since he only uses 1,000 gallons/month, he subsidizes the businesses. They need to standardize the meters, whether they cost \$200 or \$500, and he offered to get meter price information from Aquarion, CT Water and Kent. Meters can be read from a vehicle driving by on the street.

5. 2021 Flow Monitoring Study: D. Wilson said the report has been received from DPC, with results similar to our other study. We will have to work our way through the Bantam system from Route 209 down to the plant to locate I&I. T. Donoghue analyzed the meter data on a spreadsheet and compared base flow to flow after rain events. Results show they need to focus in on Meters #3 and #4 to CCTV over the next couple weeks.

6. Co-Mingling of Sludge Draw-Down Project: D. Wilson said the feeling is that the co-settling of sludge in the first tank has a stronger loading from thickening than when it first entered the tank due to aging. They are trying to find a way to keep the age of the sludge minimal by keeping up with the thickening. Ted said they are trying to draw down the level of the FST tank to reduce the BST tank, but will overspend the line item. C. Bratina thought it would cost more in the beginning, but less the following month in polymer, and will be worth it. There is money to cover it, and it will result in a savings next year, so they encouraged Ted to continue.

7. Collection System Work: T. Donoghue said they inspected manholes and cleaned lines, with just over 7% done year to date, almost halfway to 20%. They have completed the basic preventative work and will work on flow monitoring and manhole grouting.

8. Plant Equipment Updates: T. Donoghue said the UV system and mechanical bar screen depend on the scope of work for the engineering firm, so he had no update at this time.

9. Safety: There has been no training, but with the lifting of the mask restriction they may be able to do more. They are encouraging employees to get vaccines, but do not have all vaccinated at this time. C. Bratina said if not all are vaccinated, then all need to continue wearing masks. Ted said there is no Town policy that mandates mask wearing inside if not vaccinated. C. Bratina said it does apply to the WPCF – he is not concerned about the Town. Ted said they are employees of the Town, but C. Bratina said he reports to the Board of Directors who has the responsibility and risk. He maintained that CDC guidelines say that unvaccinated employees should wear masks inside. He suggested offering employees an incentive of two hours per vaccination to get them done. R. Alexe clarified that fully vaccinated people do not have to wear masks inside. D. Wilson said they would keep pushing to get the employee vaccinated but added they will follow the CDC and Town's advice.

10. Commissioner's Request: C. Bratina asked to get a company in to investigate the problem with the generator and recommend a solution. Ted said the generator is burning a gallon of oil per day. The seals are not seated on the cylinders correctly, causing the problem. He felt the motor should be rebuilt and any other preventative maintenance done to increase the life of the generator. D. Wilson asked why they can't just add a gallon of oil per day. He also said the generator is five times the size needed. Ted said this problem was brought up by him and talked about numerous times, along with the ATS transfer switch in the main

power feed panel as things that should be looked at for remedy. If we can't do anything about it, we'll just keep putting in the oil. C. Bratina said Ted never made this clear. Ted emphasized that this is something that needs to be looked at if they are doing a facility plan. W. Buckley asked him to get someone in who works with generators to look at it. R. Alexe said he would help with that, as he had connections, but also felt the generator can be taken out of the scope. Ted added that Dave Leary did the preventative maintenance as in 2019 and found the ATS switch is running normally. He will look for replacement parts for Ted since this switch is no longer manufactured. The company recommended by C. Bratina was not responsive to his calls.

W. Buckley asked when they should discuss the scope of the facility upgrade. D. Wilson said the three should go over the scope before negotiating with Woodard & Curran. W. Buckley felt the whole WPCA should be on board before going to Woodard & Curran. C. Bratina said they should fine-line it and ask the Board for input. Since they will meet before the next Board meeting, they decided to talk about the scope now. Ted felt D. Wilson should follow up with Director Perry at DEEP to clarify DEEP's guidance on details in order to know what should and should not be included in the facility plan. He pointed out his edits to C. Bratina's draft of the scope. D. Wilson mentioned checklists from DEEP. He also said he got the impression from the DEEP meeting and letter that if we are doing a facilities plan, we should consider Woodridge Lake at the same time, although they did not order us to do anything. For the scope, he said the WPCA needs to abide by the Board of Selectmen's request to see what the plant needs first, and then add onto it what Woodridge Lake needs in the end, if necessary. W. Buckley said we need to find out what Litchfield needs first, totally independent, to be in a position to negotiate with anyone else. R. Alexe cautioned to make sure to evaluate potential percentage and a cap for WLSL add-on work after Woodard & Curran has completed the Litchfield work so that percentage could be charged to WLSL. The Board agreed the four key people should go over the scope and should let the others know how it went.

S. Post asked about the Intern position, and D. Wilson said they will defer further consideration until next year. Ted said he emailed out a potential job description for a candidate. D. Wilson said they have a full crew on right now, but someone for data entry could be useful. Ted suggested holding tours for STEM students, continuing as they have done for Taft students in the summer.

11. Public Works / Treatment Plant Report: Permit compliance has been maintained, with the exception of the monthly phosphorus lbs. /day limit of 9.97 lbs. /day being exceed, due to running of the thickener. Routine operations and maintenance work continues. For the month of April the total flow was 16.593 MG and the daily average flow was 0.553 MGD. We removed 91,000 gallons of sludge for final disposal during the month of April.

- We processed a total of 112,300 gallons of septage during the month of April, a 1% decrease over last April. YTD we are down 25%.
- For April effluent BOD removal was 96% and TSS removal was 96%. The minimal removal rates per our NPDES permit is 85%.
- The daily average of Total Nitrogen discharged into the Bantam River was 3.6 mg/ or 17 lbs. /day, best so far this season. Our daily limit is 24 lbs. /day.
- The daily average for Total Phosphorous discharged in the Bantam River was 2.6 mg/l or 12 lbs. /day. The monthly seasonal average, between April and October, cannot exceed 3.7 mg/l or 9.97 lbs. /day.
- On 4/5/21 we began preventive jetting of sewer lines. Continued throughout the month. See additional report summary.
- On 4/13/21 we installed a new DCS power supply on the UV banks and prepped and cleaned the system for startup.
- On 4/14/21 we finally isolated the plant water leak, which was at the northern most yard hydrant. It is now turned off.

- On 4/21/21 at 12:31 AM the plant generator activated the run alarm. There was an issue with Win 911 not detailing the alarms on the phone notification. It was just a brown out, and I rebooted the SCADA computer and then Win 911 dialed out all the alarms properly.
- On 4/22/21 the five engineering firms were interviewed at the Litchfield Firehouse. Dave, Christian, Bill, Sky, Raz and Ted attended.
- On 4/23/21 at 9:25 AM a brief power outage occurred at the treatment plant. There were no issues with the transfer switch.
- On 4/28/21 we discovered a partial blockage on the line in front of Forman School during preventative maintenance jetting.

a) Easements: No report

b) Operations: see above

c) Internal Posting of Class I Plant Operator: T. Donoghue said Joe has received his Class I license, so he would like to post internally for a Class I Plant Operator. As a result of last month's indecision when he recommended to post internally for the Chief Plant Operator, Denise, Raz and Liz made a decision to post that position for 5 days. Jim Hill applied for it and is now our Chief Plant Operator. Ted said he had made this recommendation to the Board to post the position. Although some of the members opposed it, there was no clear decision made, so Denise, Raz and Liz supported his recommendation and the position was posted. D. Wilson was asked to be part of the interview committee and he declined. W. Buckley took exception to Ted saying they were indecisive. D. Wilson said he got an invitation to participate in a meeting about the Chief Plant Operator only a few hours ahead and information that it would be to interview a candidate only one hour ahead of the meeting. R. Alexe clarified that he was sent the interview questions the day before and the meeting was set for Thursday. The time was the only part not set. There was a legal obligation, as days had passed since he had applied to offer either an interview, decision or response. C. Bratina's understanding was that they had discussed the need for interviewing the candidate and that Dave Wilson would be part of that. Dave should have been notified when the interview would take place with more notice than was given. R. Alexe said there was a discussion at the last meeting that the questions had to be of a technical nature, which was unacceptable since he passed the Class II wastewater exam. So it was agreed that the questions would have to do with his level of confidence, his view of the plant, what he sees as areas to focus on in the plant, and an overall management approach to see the ability of the individual to perform a management function in addition to his technical knowledge that was already tested. This was another point of divergence that triggered this interview to be pushed by time. Ted said he had mentored Jim for five years, and he has earned his position and will prove that it was the right decision for the team and the plant. Ted stressed that we updated all the job descriptions for the plant operators back in 2014, which all the WPCA Board members signed off on, to ensure that we were developing talent in house and that we had a contingency plan in place for any issues, staffing changes, and/or challenges. The pandemic over the last 15 months was a perfect example of how things can change dramatically and suddenly. C. Bratina still felt it was not handled properly. Then there was a disagreement as to whom Ted and his staff report to as the employer. W. Buckley said Ted acted without the Board's okay and they should agree to disagree and move on.

R. Alexe then asked about Operator I. Since Joe has met the timeline and passed his exam, Ted said he has experience and great potential. When operators are motivated to better themselves, it only strengthens the organization and reduces attrition, saving money in the long run. We should develop our talent or we will lose it. With a transition plan and strength in the team we will weather any storm, including a pandemic. W. Buckley said the Board has a job to do, and said T. Donoghue constantly challenges the Board and doesn't like to listen to them unless he agrees with them. C. Bratina said he is not doing his job as well as he should be and said the Board of Directors is trying to give him guidance. He asked that Ted listen to the

Board. He also said he is trying to mentor Ted, and Ted responded by stating that Christian is trying to micro-manage him and for years prior never paid as much attention to his work as he has done for the last 16 months. Ted said he is a professional, and the licensed Class IV operator in charge of running the treatment plant, who has earned his position and needs the professional respect and trust from all Board members to properly perform his job. He added everyone will share in his and team's success and the board has always been very supportive. C. Bratina said he is trying to help him improve the plant, and Ted said he has improved the plant, as the numbers speak for themselves, and he did appreciate the Board giving him credit for that. He also said that he does listen to recommendations, but when it takes such a long time to come to consensus or even make a simple decision in regards to an investment in the plant, based on Ted's professional recommendations, it is frustrating for both him and his team. D Wilson told Ted to go ahead and post internally for Class I Plant Operator and be sure to tell them when it has happened.

12. Financial Report: T. Donoghue said they have paid the final invoice for DPC, the Thomaston assessment charge and for Town services, so they are over on 3201-52111 Professional Services by \$70,000. They also had to buy another batch of polymer to get through the rest of the year. They also had other expenses. The cash flow report is slightly higher for April compared to last year in overall expenses, but in a good shape for the two remaining months. They will make a fund transfer from the Operating Fund to Capital Nonrecurring next month.

13. Old Business

a) **Second Vehicle:** No report

14. Adjournment: Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjourn at 9:21 p.m. and C. Bratina seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.



Ann Combs, Recording Secretary