LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
Town Hall Annex, 80 Doyle Road, Bantam, CT 06770
And Remote Via Live Internet Video Stream and by Telephone
Thursday, February 10, 2022~7:30 PM

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

ROLL CALL
Present: Members present were David R. Wilson, William Buckley, David Geiger, Sky Post, James Koser, Christian Bratina, and Christine Harding (Zoom). Also present were Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent, Ann Combs, Recording Secretary, Raz Alexe, Public Works Director (Zoom), Denise Raap and Jeff Zullo.
Absent: None

SEATING ALTERNATES: None

MINUTES
a) 12/9/21 Regular: Motion: W. Buckley moved to table the approval of these minutes until next month in order to address C. Bratina’s suggested edits. C. Bratina seconded, all voted aye and the motion carried.

BUSINESS

1) Public Request and or Comment: Cate Honan asked if we’ve been added to the clean water priority list, and D. Wilson said there were some comments on our submission that he will forward to the engineering consultant. They are working on the priority list. Ms Honan asked about a deadline, and D. Wilson replied that we made the 12/10/21 deadline.

Jeff Zullo then said the ZREC for the WPCA solar project is still in place and valid and offsets the cost of the project. This will go to the Board of Selectmen and then go out to bid for approval by the Selectmen. His handout showed the preliminary scope of the system. The cost estimation is 9.75 – 11.05 cents per KWH. We are now paying just under 8 cents for generation. Distribution is a little under 8 cents as well. The proposed system would use the ground screw process in anticipation of ledge. D. Wilson said he had trouble reading the drawing and asked for full-size sheets from Ken Hrica. R. Alexe said he has the PDF he can blow up. The Town holds the ZREC and assigns it to the developer. They would like to start the project in July. Motion: W. Buckley moved and C. Bratina seconded a motion to endorse the use of solar. All voted aye and the motion carried.

2) Update on Torrington Inter-Municipal Agreement: D. Wilson said that the Thomaston IMA is based on their user fee, so it pays for more than we use. They do, however, remove the debt service for us. W. Buckley said perhaps we could adjust Thomaston, but there are more non-sewage treatment line items in the Torrington budget than in Thomaston. We just want to pay for what we use.

3) Scope of Work & Contract Negotiations with Woodard & Curran: D. Wilson said he email them regarding issues we’re trying to resolve. If successful tonight, we’ll have them produce their work. He has given draft language to Attorney Rybak to look at. Woodard & Curran will then give us the formal proposal for our review.

4) Sewer Rate Study: D. Wilson said Sandy got half the information on historical water usage done and said she can only get the water numbers in a workable form back to the time Aquarion took over the water system. She will get the gross numbers together for the year and we’ll go from there for next month. W. Buckley explained this is an attempt to compare an EDU to finding out the last water usage per home, and bill the next year accordingly. Now, 70% of food service businesses have meters.
5) **Staffing Discussion:** D. Wilson noted that one employee resigned and asked if we should fill the position now or wait until spring. A recruitment has been done, but there are no applicants yet. Another employee was out for a year, so do we need someone now? Ted said he has to work as part of the crew to get jobs done. He mentioned vacations in the nice weather also causing short staffing. R. Alexe said it will take a while to recruit, so the process should proceed. The position is funded. Ted said we’ve talked about this before. Things can happen and he won’t put his guys in a position of running the plant. D. Raap said the job market is very tight right now in all industries, so the recruitment should continue. C. Bratina asked if this position needs a CDL. Raz said it is a mandatory requirement for a CDL license. This is also about the whole town per Raz, as CDL operators were also needed to plow snow recently. D. Wilson agreed to keep the search open.

6) **American Rescue Plan Funds – Sewer Infrastructure:** We are just waiting now, and D. Raap said she is hoping for a March 3rd Town Meeting date if we can get all the documentation together in time.

S. Post asked about the Litchfield Country Club and D. Wilson explained that the language was changed to clarify that they will remove the walkway at their own expense if we need access to our right of way.

7) **Bio-solids Disposal Bid Decision:** D. Wilson said the RFQ was sent out. We’ve been going to Mattabassett in the meantime without a contract. We received only one bid from Synagro with price slightly cheaper than one they gave us preliminarily. Ted referred to the work sheet and gave the cost comparisons between the bid and the preliminary figures. We will save over $100/truck if we go with Synagro, and we will lock in the price for two years. **Motion:** C. Bratina moved to approve signing the contract with Synagro. W. Buckley seconded. T. Donoghue said Mike Rybak will review the contract, and they agreed to go with any recommendations he may have. C. Bratina noted on the CPI increase, that it is either CPI or 2%, whichever is greater, which he thought was sleazy. Upon voting all voted aye, and the motion carried.

8) **FY 23 Budget Draft:** Ted said he sent out the FY 2023 budget. The audit is online. C. Bratina said we should use their revenues. Ted said the liability insurance went up, but D. Raap said the budget is a flat LAP insurance for the Town. There was a significant increase in sludge processing. There is no debt service to Thomaston, as we paid off the bonds. Ted continued to go over remaining line items. The Housing Trust will have 8 connection fees, but he doesn’t know if it will be before July. He will get credits for nitrogen before the next meeting, and as a result, the budget is balanced. D. Wilson asked Ted to talk to Stacey about anything she gives us a percentage of and also if they are only spending the money over the entire year, can they refrain from charging all of it in one month. Ted noted they do not charge the WPCA consistently on debt service. A consistent trend would be helpful.

9) **Collection System Work – Jetting and CCTV Work:** Ted said there was not a lot of collection system work in January. He bought a new jetter hose that they need to put on. The flows have been higher since July with no problems with blockages.

10) **Plant Equipment Updates**
    a) **UV system** – no report – will be waiting for the Town Meeting
    b) **Mechanical Bar Screen** – no report

11) **Safety:** T. Donoghue reported no issues or injuries.

12) **Commissioner’s Requests:** D. Geiger asked about 28 Russell Street that the Land Trust has acquired. He wanted to confirm that they need to continue to pay the sewer EDU if the sinks and toilets are still in. D. Wilson noted that they can disconnect, but upon reconnection, it will cost $3,500.
13) Public Works / Treatment Plant Report

a) Easements: None

b) Operations: Permit compliance has been maintained since the last report. Routine operations and maintenance work continues. For the month of January the total flow was 15.856 MG and the daily average flow was 0.511 MGD. We removed 26,000 gallons of biosolids for final disposal during the month of January.

- We processed a total of 9,500 gallons of septage during the month of January a 38% decrease over last January. YTD we are up 22%. They will not mix sewage with raw influent for sampling.
- For January effluent BOD removal percent was 99% and TSS removal percent was 99%. The minimal removal rates per our NPDES permit is 85%. He is doing sampling at Arethusa and getting data from them.
- The daily average of Total Nitrogen lbs./day discharged into the Bantam River was 1.9 mg/ or 8 lbs. /day. Our daily limit is 24 lbs. /day.
- The daily average for Total Phosphorous discharged in the Bantam River was 1.9 mg/l. The monthly average cannot exceed 3.7 mg/l and our daily maximum cannot exceed 7.43 mg/l.
- On 1/11/22 biosolids bid opening was held at Town Hall - we only had one bidder which was Synagro.
- On 1/12/22 we discovered that pumps set #1 in Northfield could not prime. We had to replace the solenoid and a relay on 1/20/21. He would like to paint the inside of the station this next year.
- On 1/25/22 we installed two refurbished scum pumps - one at the primary tank and one at the secondary tanks.
- On 1/26/22 we discovered a young deer stranding in the secondary settling tank, it was badly injured as it has been attacked by coyotes. Joe had startled it and it then jumped into the tank and we spent 40 minutes trying to get it out. We had called the DEEP and we had just got it out safe and sound, but sadly due to the exposure to the bitter cold and its injuries they had to put it down.
- On 1/27/22 Jim and Joe did an EPA on line training for 1.5 CEU’s.
- Comparison report shows we have to check with distillery and bakery to see where BOD is coming from. Should be a normal transition into spring. There was a minor burping incident because the trough was frozen, so the bottom of it melted and the solids went found their way into the center tank. This resulted in three hours of burping. The SVI’s have been so low, it makes things different, but we should be able to mitigate high flow occurrences.

14) Financial Report: T. Donoghue said we are slightly higher than we were last year. Revenue is slightly lower, but we will see an improvement next month. Spending is tight as 74% of the budget is used. If they can stay on one truck through March, they can save money.

Sky Post then asked about employee reporting issues as a follow-up to the last meeting. D. Wilson said D. Raap has a few items to be clarified by Mike Rybak, but in general, Raz Alexe will be responsible for the labor employees, and the WPCA is responsible for operations of the plant. We should draft a document...
with our decisions. D. Raap said the Town owns the assets, and D. Wilson disagreed and referred her to CGS Section 7-246. He maintained that the WPCA purchases assets, even though the Town owns it in the end. D. Raap said that D. Wilson should advise Ted of things that benefit plant, but he holds the license, operates the plant, and reports to Raz. T. Donoghue said the Superintendent is in charge of the plant operation. He noted that in 2009 the WPCA approved a motion to have Jack Healy (Public Works Director) oversee the staff. W. Buckley said the interpretation of that intent is not the same between the WPCA and the others. D. Raap said that the Town is in a better position to oversee the employees on a daily basis, as the WPCA only meets once a month. W. Buckley said that because of the WPCA’s engineering expertise, they should direct Ted in plant operations. They would work together so that if they made a recommendation regarding Ted’s performance, they would assume Raz would back it up. Raz agreed that if the performance of the Superintendent is not adequate, the Commission could make a recommendation that the Town and whoever is in charge of the collective bargaining agreement should discuss and take appropriate action. Regarding the collaboration aspect, the WPCA oversees the operation by monitoring the operation from a technical and budgetary viewpoint, and they can make recommendations of the Superintendent to adjust and better the workings of the plant. This should be the role of the Commission.

S. Post thought only one person should direct the Superintendent, but Raz said this is a unique situation where that cannot happen. C. Bratina said either the Public Works Director or the Commission should be in charge, and that Ted should not report to two people. D. Raap said the WPCA and Raz/D. Raap should work together, and she compared it to the Park and Recreation Commission, where the Park and Recreation Coordinator works with the Commission but reports to the Town. W. Buckley then said he felt the WPCA was left out of the DEEP call where it would have been beneficial to understand what Roland Denney was saying regarding a reporting issue. Ted said the one with the license reports the MOR, and is responsible. W. Buckley said he had incorrect reporting. Ted said the data speaks for itself. The SVI’s have dropped dramatically. D. Wilson pointed out a letter in September where Ted felt the Commission wasn’t paying enough attention to the waste stream. Raz then summarized that the Chairman is initiating a conversation, after they had several meetings, where he is not willing to conclude that the administration can act administratively and together with the WPCA to oversee the operation. We’ve wasted the last three months. D. Wilson responded that in a meeting, D. Raap summarized the proposed language with a list of clarifications to be reviewed by Mike Rybak. D. Geiger hopes the WPCA can direct and advise Ted for plant operations without having to defer to Raz. C. Bratina said they would like to provide more direction to Ted, as sometimes he does not follow through with recommendations. A discussion ensued on Ted’s monthly reporting and Hach Wims data between Christian and Ted.

S. Post then said it is very difficult to have 5 bosses. Here are very talented people on the WPCA, and he doesn’t want to see the talent wasted. Commissioners should go through Dave or Raz when giving direction. Ted said we are hiring an expert consultant to give us the advice. W. Buckley disagreed. D. Raap said Roland Denney said we have talented people in greater numbers than most WPCAs. D. Wilson asked D. Raap to get the checklist items from Mike Rybak. The description should be documented in a way that it works. He agreed that the WPCA needs to be involved in talks with the DEEP.

16) Adjournment: Motion: W. Buckley moved to adjourn at 10:12 p.m. and C. Bratina seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Ann D. Combs
Recording Secretary