

**LITCHFIELD WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Town Hall Annex, 80 Doyle Road, Bantam, CT 06750  
Thursday, January 12, 2023 ~ 7:30 p.m.**

**CALL TO ORDER:** David Wilson called the regular January meeting of the Litchfield WPCA to order at 7:30 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Members present were William Buckley, Sky Post (alternate), Christian Bratina, Christine Harding via Zoom, and James Koser. Also present was Ted Donoghue, Plant Superintendent.

Absent: David Geiger. Mr. Donoghue noted that he will be recording the motions today.

**SEATING ALTERNATES:** Mr. Wilson seated Sky Post as a voting member.

Bill Buckley noted that the 1st Selectman had sent an email asking for the letter from Goshen to be on the agenda, and the First Selectmen of Goshen is present.

**Motion:** W. Buckley moved to add to the Agenda the BOS letter from the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman of Goshen. C. Bratina seconded. Mr. Donoghue noted that the board members had received an email copy of the letter. All voted “aye” and the motion carried.

**MINUTES:** D. Wilson asked if everyone had reviewed the redlined December 2022 minutes.

**Motion:** S. Post moved to accept the 12/28/22 WPCA meeting minutes with the redline revisions. W. Buckley seconded. Mr. Wilson said he went through it and felt it reflected the record of the meeting. C. Harding advised that she had not been sworn in after her time expired, so would abstain from voting tonight. All voted aye and the motion carried.

D. Wilson noted that T. Donoghue would be recording the motions tonight so they can be reported within the FOI required timeline.

**BUSINESS**

**1) Public Request and/or Comment:** Kate Honan, Beach Street, asked Mr. Buckley about the DEEP reference to “Old Country Road”, where is it. Both Mr. Wilson and Buckley advised that they had no idea what road DEEP was referring to, it was not Rt. 63.

**2) Update on Torrington Intermunicipal Agreement:** D. Wilson reported no progress since last month. W. Buckley asked if there is there a time for us? Are we paying too much money? D. Wilson advised that it's about the same amount of money if we agreed to their conditions. When he discussed it with DEEP, they advised him to look at our IMA with Thomaston, which doesn't help us at all. What they're putting in there to charge us is the maintenance portion of their user fee. W. Buckley suggested that we should only be paying for the facilities that Litchfield uses. DEEP had said that the reason Woodridge Lake stepped back from negotiating with Torrington, was that Torrington's connection fee was too much. However Woodridge Lake had said that it was because USDA would not fund the Torrington line. He had also heard that DEEP would not interfere with any IMA negotiations, which was a change from Bill Hogan. D. Wilson said he had heard that to. W. Buckley suggested that we should put our next payment in escrow to facilitate the negotiations, and asked how we settle a dispute. D. Wilson advised that he believes we would go to mediation. C. Bratina suggested outlining a comparison for the board showing what the disagreements to the draft

agreement are, and their impact. T. Donoghue reported that Torrington uses a cumbersome equation to calculate our fee. C. Bratina suggested that we go through their calculations to ensure they are correct. He asked if the Board had not set up a committee to negotiate with Torrington. W. Buckley advised that it was he and D. Wilson. C. Bratina suggested they go through the status to clarify and present the different positions. D. Wilson said he would dig out the old contract.

- 3) **Scope of Work & Contract Negotiations with Woodard & Curran:** D. Wilson apologized, he had contacted them right after the December meeting, they had emailed it back to him to an email address that he does not use, and it came in as spam. He found it yesterday, reviewed it with Attorney Rybak, and confirmed that it complied with his revisions. But the only other question was Task 2 which had a 20% increase which we believe was based on their original estimate for energy efficiency that we had had them revise downwards in light of the energy efficiency efforts we have made. He tried to contact W&C today but the project manager was out. W. Buckley asked when he can send out a copy of the draft contract. D. Wilson said he can send out the draft contract immediately, and the task estimates when resolved with W&C, hopefully next week.

**Motion:** W. Buckley moved to invite Woodard & Curran to the next WPCA meeting to answer any final questions, before the WPCA Commission approves the draft contract for the engineering study. S, Post seconded, there was no discussion and all voted “aye” and the motion carried.

- 3a) **Goshen Letter to Litchfield 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman.** D. Wilson reported that Ray Turi, president of Woodridge Lake, approached the 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman to discuss moving along the idea of an Inter Municipal Agreement. She advised that it is a little premature, but that it will involve a committee, action by the town, and the WPCA. Before we can entertain an IMA, we have to know what we would have to do to our plant to handle our needs, and then to accept Goshen, and then we start talking about how much it would cost.

Todd Carusillo, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman of Goshen, stated that he had asked D. Rapp, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman of Litchfield, whether we could get both boards together so Woodridge Lake can explain what they can offer through USDA loans and she replied that it was premature because the WPCA had not signed a contract yet with an engineering firm. D. Wilson agreed and advised that we do not like USDA’s 40 year terms, we would prefer DEEP or the Clean Water Fund with a 2% loan for 20 years. But we first have to figure out whether our plant can even take the flow and load. A report was developed which indicated that the Woodridge Lake plant’s effluent is contaminating Bantam Lake, which is very questionable. W. Buckley noted that if this is true, Woodridge Lake could pump to Torrington. It is up to Woodridge Lake to defend the conclusion that they are contaminating Bantam Lake. He noted that it is important for us to establish what the rules will be for a negotiating committee, which means we need to request a legal opinion from the town attorney.

**Motion:** W. Buckley moved to request through D. Rapp, 1<sup>st</sup> Selectman for the Town of Litchfield, a legal opinion on how an Inter Municipal Agreement (IMA) with another community is properly negotiated. J. Koser seconded. He noted that we need to be clear if we or an individual can talk to people or have discussions. C. Bratina noted that it needs to be clear who sits on the negotiating committee. D. Wilson reported that he had starting looking into it but did not find any guidance. All voted “aye” and the motion carried.

C. Bratina noted that there is an economy of scale if the Litchfield WPCA could take the Woodridge Lake flow, as it would reduce the cost to our rate payers. However, when we reviewed the additional flows, we realized that they would surcharge our sewer system. They responded that they could install an equalization tank and additional pumps, but if you look at the climate change flooding happening now in California, it is hard to be say that their equalization tank would not be

overwhelmed and thus also our system. So there are issues that we have yet to consider. Our town has asked us to first consider what our needs are to handle Litchfield for the next twenty years, and after that to look at the impact of Woodridge Lake. This would provide a direct comparison. D. Wilson noted that this is how the draft Woodard and Curran contract is laid out, the last task is to determine what would need to be done to accommodate Woodridge Lake. C. Bratina explained that this would then provide an estimate of both the capital and operating costs for both options, which we can then present to the public. If Litchfield and Goshen then want to proceed, we can then negotiate an IMA.

W. Buckley thanked T. Carusillo for coming, noting that he would not want to negotiate with a taxing district. If Goshen wants to add another part of their town, it would be easy to accommodate if the IMA is with Goshen.

T. Carusillo said he wanted to invite the board to Woodridge Lake to discuss the option. They are producing about 90,000 gallons per day and could install an equalization tank.

- 4) **Recording Secretary:** D. Wilson reported that the last meeting was Ann Combs' last. For now T. Donoghue is going to record the meetings and submit the record of the motions within the required time period. C. Bratina has offered to transcribe the minutes as an interim until a new recording secretary is arranged. S. Post asked how the PNZ and Finance committees do it. D. Wilson said he was not sure. Most commissions don't want detailed minutes. (The motions have to be recorded with the town within 48 hours and the minutes within 7 days). D. Wilson recommended utilizing C. Bratina to transcribe the minutes and pay him the same we were paying A. Combs, \$24/hr.

**Motion:** W. Buckley moved to pay C. Bratina \$24 an hour to be the interim recording secretary. S. Post seconded, there was no discussion and all voted "aye: and the motion carried.

- 5) **NPDES Permit:** D. Wilson reported that he had met with T. Donoghue and C. Bratina to go through the suggestions to submit to DEEP for revisions to their draft permit. We want to move towards 24/7 monitoring of our performance and reduce our labor. C. Bratina reported that it would also improve our performance. For some reason, when the plant was built, they installed ORP (Oxidation Reduction Potential) probes in the oxic section of the aeration tank, which is meaningless because you want to maintain a good DO there, and DO probes in the anoxic zone which is meaningless because they are not accurate in anoxic, nearly 0 mg/l DO, conditions. So we want to relocate the ORP probes to the anoxic zone and use them to try to maintain the optimal level between +/-100 mV. When we upgrade our UV system, instead of the standard minimum 30 mWs/cm<sup>2</sup> dose, testing at other wastewater treatment plants has shown that they can successfully treat at 20 to 25 mWs/cm<sup>2</sup>. It may not be approved, but we would like to demonstrate that it can during testing. The draft also requires turbidity testing which indicates how opaque the water is. But with a UV system, we really should be measuring the transmittance of the water, the percentage of light that gets through, to determine the needed dose. If you have poor transmittance, you have to increase the dose. We could have an automatic transmittance analyzer which could adjust the dose, but we would still want to have a lab transmittance analyzer. Our lab spectrophotometer may not be able to measure transmittance, but we can buy one. When we bid for a new UV system, we would include it in the bid if we have not procured one. He suggested that D. Wilson, T. Donoghue, and himself meet with DEEP to go over this with them to modify the permit. T. Donoghue advised that DEEP is waiting for our comments. After negotiations they would put the draft permit out for public comment. W. Buckley asked who we would meet with. T. Donoghue advised it would be Chris Falk. C. Bratina advised that this is not uncommon, he has negotiated permits with DEEP for effluent discharges, air permits, and ash landfills. W. Buckley advised that the public comment period is normally 30 days, and it then takes them 60 days to issue it.

**Motion:** W. Buckley moved to forward the draft NPDES Permit renewal comments and you guys are authorized to meet with the CT DEEP and bring this to a resolution.. S. Post seconded and there was no discussion and all voted “aye” and the motion carried.

- 6) **JDV Drum Thickener:** T. Donoghue reported that five years ago they had replaced the filter belt on the rotary drum thickener, the recommended interval. Since then we have seen better performance from it. JDV doesn’t make the belts, but they quoted us a price of \$3,547 for one with four new polyurethane wheels. He is checking with other belt manufacturers that C. Bratina had given him.

**Motion:** M. Buckley moved to authorize T. Donoghue to get another two prices and purchase a replacement filter belt from the lowest price vendor to not exceed \$3,547. S. Post seconded. C. Bratina noted that it is important to get one since the plant does not have a spare and it could take months to get one. If the new one is installed, the old one should be kept as a spare. He also noted that there is a myriad variety of belts with different weights, air porosity, and water porosity, so you have to compare those parameters with your existing belt. All voted “aye” and the motion carried.

- 7) **Manhole Rehab Work:** T. Donoghue reported that he had met with Ray Bahr with Green Mountain Pipe, who does pipe and manhole relining. We have three or four manholes that are gushers that we would like to try injection grouting. Normally they do not do day rates, but they gave us a quote for 8 hours. C. Bratina asked if they are drilling holes from the inside to inject through. D. Wilson said yes, they inject a hydrophilic grout through the holes. T. Donoghue showed photos of manholes which need repairs. He will install manhole inserts in some of the manholes he was not able to reach earlier due to the water level. T. Donoghue advised that the cost is \$3,800 for the eight hours plus the cost of the chemical grout and liner if done on circle drive. C. Bratina noted that he likes the concept but he wants to be sure that the vendor drills holes beyond the cracks that he sees leaking since once it is sealed, the water pressure can be forced through neighboring weak areas.

**Motion:** C. Bratina moved to authorize the expenditure, not to exceed \$4,500, to accept Green Mountain Pipeline Services’ quote to grout 3-4 manholes. J. Koser seconded and there was no discussion, and all voted “aye” and the motion carried.

S. Post asked if this needs to be voted on, is it not part of your normal maintenance. T. Donoghue reported that any purchase over \$3,000 requires board approval, but in emergencies the chairman can authorize it. C. Bratina noted that the board approved a purchasing policy years ago, which should be forwarded to all the board members as some many not have it. He suggested putting together a packet of information for new board members.

- 8) **RFQ for Jetting and CCTR work on Torrington Road:** D. Wilson noted that our manholes are right on the edge of the travel lane, and he would like to find out what it would cost to have that section CCTV’d. If we tried to do it ourselves, we would end up with state police for traffic control. T. Donoghue agreed that it is a hard place to work due to the vehicle speed and the staff required. W. Buckley suggested defining the work to be done and getting a couple prices. They would be responsible for permits and police.
- 9) **Staff Requirements:** D. Wilson reported that we have a staff of three, down one. C. Bratina suggested that it would be good to note vacancies on the monthly report. T. Donoghue reported that we only had one or two applicants since we posted the position in July, and it is a statewide problem. We require the operator to have a CDL which we had put into the job descriptions. It has been very helpful for Public Works to use our staff for snow plowing, which Public Works pays for. It is harder to find someone with a CDL. C. Bratina noted that it is risky requiring a CDL, if we lose another

operator, we may not be able to find the needed person. He suggested revising the job descriptions to eliminate the CDL and instead pay a bonus for those obtaining a CDL, which would have to be negotiated with the Union. It is an issue now, if we wait until we lose another person it will then become a crisis. D. Wilson asked T. Donoghue to set up a meeting to discuss this when R. Alexi is back from vacation. We did buy the jettie so it would not require a CDL. C. Bratina asked where we advertise vacancies. T. Donoghue advised that it is advertised on Indeed website. C. Bratina recommended advertising in each of the wastewater association websites in New England, which are free, so that plant operators can see them easily. Connecticut is a high salary state. There is also a community college in Minnesota which has a two year degree program for wastewater operators, and there may be additional ones, to which you can send job postings.

**10) Gagarin Place Collection System:** D. Wilson noted that this is the affordable housing on Torrington Road, which are nearly finished. We had told them that we would maintain the sewer main in the road if installed to our spec. They will need to provide the as-built plans with elevations and inverts, and a legal description of the easement. We would CCTV it to ensure it is acceptable. After which we would be willing to take it over. T. Donoghue reported that he has been inspecting the work. They did have one snafu when they paved over a manhole, so they installed a paving ring. W. Buckley advised that we should have had them cut it out and raise the frame instead of using the paving ring, as that would hold up better.

**11) Safety:** T. Donoghue said there are no incidents to report.

**11) Commissioners Requests:** C. Bratina reported that D. Wilson had given him a copy of the audit which was signed December 5<sup>th</sup>, and it is not on the town's website yet. A quick look revealed that the audit's Budget Revenue does not agree with our approved Budget Revenue and the Actual Revenue does not agree with Munis. He said he does not understand how an auditor does not use the approved budget numbers; it makes you wonder how good the audit is. Once he gets more information from T. Donoghue, he will look more closely at it.

## **12) Public Works/Treatment Plant Report**

**a) Easements:** No report

**b) Operations:** T. Donoghue reported that we had a very good month.

- On the 23<sup>rd</sup> we had serious issues due to the storm. He had gotten Covid the Monday before but came in after testing negative two days in a row. He responded to a plant alarm and found the generator not running, which took an hour to overcome. We had a sewer bypass. The flows increased due to the rain and the ground being frozen.
- We only had one sludge truck a week which will save money.
- Septage was normal, we are up 41% over last year to date.
- BOD and TSS removal was good. Due to the power outage, solids accumulated in the UV channel.
- The daily average of Total Nitrogen was only 16 lbs/day, slightly higher than normal, but our annual average to date was our lowest ever, 10 lbs/day.
- Total Phosphorous removal was very good, 0.8 mg/l or 4.4 lb./day.
- Ray Bahr from Green Mountain pipe came by to inspect some leaking manholes.
- On the 8<sup>th</sup> we used the diversion tank to shave off some peak flow from a rain event. No issues to report.

- On the 23<sup>rd</sup> the return sludge system was offline due to the power outage for two hours and the flow was high, so the sludge started burping so we had an effluent non-compliance.
- On 12/30/22 H.O. Pen arrived for a service call to diagnosis possible issues with the generator failing to start. We are still waiting for a cost for the repairs. The likely culprit was the old fuel lines. D. Wilson asked how it started this week, to which T. Donoghue responded it started fine. The rep did say that the gallon of oil it burns a day is not unusual for this generator. We are going to exercise it weekly and under full load monthly. C. Bratina noted that it is important to run it under load for at least a half hour so it gets hot. His report indicated that there is a supply and return line from the tank and he recommended a check valve which does not exist. D. Wilson advised that oil burner guys do not like check valves. T. Donoghue wondered whether we should get a maintenance service contract from HO Penn. C. Bratina said the first thing to do is to get their preventive maintenance recommendations and make sure we are up to date. D. Wilson said it sounded like the hoses were so old they were leaking air.
- On the 24th we received an alarm from Wells Run pump station, both pumps had frozen due to the extreme cold. He had to put heaters in the housing for close to 3 hours before one of the pumps was back on line. C. Bratina advised that it sounds like the heater is failing or not adequately sized or the housing needs to be insulated. He noted that this pump station is not ours, so we are charging them for the maintenance, right? T. Donoghue did not know he should charge for maintenance, they pay for parts but not our labor. W. Buckley suggested he charge for his time and get an estimate for insulation or another heater. D. Wilson suggested getting a “milk house” heater from Agway. T. Donoghue asked where the billing is noted, he does not charge for their weekly checks. D. Wilson will check to see if we have a written agreement. We want to treat their collection system for roots. T. Donoghue said we jetted it last week after they had a blockage. They had a lot of solids.

S. Post asked if we have dates for the mechanical bar screen and UV system projects. T. Donoghue said it will be contingent on the engineering firm. We have till 2026 to spend the money. C. Bratina noted that we had put together a bid contract for the UV system, but the concern is we had to estimate the maximum flow and we did not know if we would be taking Woodridge Lake. So it would be nice if we can wait until these issues are settled so we don’t oversize it. T. Donoghue said the estimates were \$250,000 for the UV and \$150,000 for the bar rack.

W. Buckley asked if there was an update on the solar panels. D. Wilson advised that the public hearing for wetlands was postponed, PNZ denied the 824. T. Donoghue explained it was due to the variety of eastern pines, one reportedly has the largest girth in the state of Connecticut. So now they are looking at the right side of the plant entrance.

**c) Collection System Work:** T. Donoghue pointed out the CMOM graph report, which shows we missed our mark as far as what we want to do. We have to get back on it.

**9) Financial Report:** T. Donoghue reported we are doing well financially. D. Wilson asked if he can shade some of the descriptions lighter so they are more legible. D. Wilson mentioned that we have received some large outstanding receivables. Once a bill is past due 30 days, it automatically becomes a lien. At the end of the year we will file a lien on the land records. They can’t get a land use or building permit if they are delinquent. Sarah Pierce, Toll Gate Inn, and Litchfield Inn just paid up.

## **10) Old Business**

**a) Second Vehicle:** No report

**11) Adjournment:**

**Motion:** W. Buckley moved to adjourn at 9:41 p.m. and C. Bratina seconded. All voted aye and the motion carried.

Christian Bratina  
Interim Recording Secretary