



**Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting**

**Monday, July 17, 2023**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Meeting held via teleconference**

**Full Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees**

Ed Kelly	Chairman, WPCA Board Member
Merritt Nesin	WPCA Board Member/Technical Committee Chair
Matthew Quinones	WPCA Board Member/ Director of Operations
Amiel Goldberg (Absent)	WPCA Board Member/Board of Reps
J.R. McMullen	WPCA Board Member/Board of Finance
Robert Barocas	WPCA Board Member/Finance Committee Chair
Steven Bagwin	WPCA Board Member / WFD Committee Chair
Frank Salem	WPCA Board Member
William Brink	Executive Director, WPCA
Rhudean Bull	Administration Manager, WPCA
Ann Brown	Supervising Engineer, WPCA
Vernessa DeCausey	Financial Manager, WPCA
Robert Pudelka	Plant Supervisor
Steve Pietrzyk	Collections System Supervisor
Crystal Blair	Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA
Abigail Logrono	Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA
David Yanik	City Comptroller
William Ward	Collection Attorney (Pilicy Ryan & Ward, P.C.)
Lynda Roca	CompUtil

**Call to Order, Pledge and Roll Call**

E. Kelly, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm with roll call; there was no pledge of allegiance. A quorum was present seven (7 Board Members).

**Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

**Minutes Approval of the Full Board Meeting of June 26, 2023**

S. Bagwin motion to approve the June 26, 2023, minutes; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion.

**Vote 7-0-0.**

**Administrative/Budget Report**

R. Bull reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies
- IUOE retro pay issues
- There were (3) Injuries reported
- Staffing issues
- No positive Covid cases
- City's Oracle Cloud Financials system update
- Expense report review
- WPCA Annual Cookout

## **Sub-Committee Reports**

### **Finance Committee**

R. Barocas stated that the Finance Committee was held before the Board meeting and the following occurred:

- WPCA demonstrated strong financial management according to budget versus actual
- V. DeCausey new financial spreadsheet presentation
- Recommendation to the full Board to approve the user charge rate proposal
- Elected the Vice Chairman, Jr. McMullen

### **Technical Committee**

M. Nesin reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, and the following was discussed:

- Plant operations
- Discussion on a property owner extending to the sewer to connect to the system
- Approval of a Bid Waiver to upgrade the communication systems and controllers at (4) four pump stations
- A Bid Waiver for electric actuators for the underflow gates at the aeration basin train, which he will discuss later in the meeting, as he has some ideas that may solve the issue.

### **Workforce Development Committee**

S. Bagwin stated that there was a meeting held on Wednesday, July 12, 2023, and R. Bull covered the discussion in the Administration Report. There is nothing further to discuss.

## **Financial Update**

### **CompUtil Report**

L. Roca reported that CompUtil is prepared to bill the FY'24 cycle bills and that consumption information was sent out for the new rates. She reported that the staff is working diligently to find any consumption with anomalies that may exist from Aquarion Water data. She said that out of 19,806 accounts, there are 501 accounts that have open liens that amounts to just over 2.5%, which means people are paying their bills. She explained that most of the accounts are over 99%, (3) of them are over 98%, and (1) is just over 97%. She stated that she feels like billing is in good shape. She ended her report saying that 1,884 Intent to Lien letters were sent out that R. Bull reviewed and approved and that calls have already started coming in from those lien letters; that her staff has been making collection calls trying to warn people before the lien fee is applied to their account and; that Foreclosures, unfortunately, have started to increase, and as a result, payoffs are coming in.

### **Receivables & Arrears**

V. DeCausey reported for the month of June

- \$3,303 million received verses \$3,385 million previous year sewer use fees
- Average collection rate 99.03% vs 98.31% last month's
- 92.13% of the April bill collected
- At 106.32% over budget from sewer use collection

### **Pilicy Ryan & Ward, P.C. Collections Report & Update**

W. Ward reported the following:

- 256 active files
- 63 accounts with balances above (\$5,000) Foreclosure Threshold
- 26 In Payment Plans, 1 stayed due to bankruptcy filings
- 24 active foreclosures
- 187 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- 8 Files referred
- 43 Files in payment plans referred bac to SWPCA
- 12 Files referred back to A&W because of breach of payment plan
- 16 Files closed since last meeting
- Collected \$26,083.25 for July as of today
- Total collected for 2023 \$244,469.51

### **Executive Director's Top Ten**

B. Brink briefly went over his monthly report; the report will be made a part of these minutes.

### **Discussion FY'23 Year End Report**

R. Bull revealed during her presentation the electric and gas expenses for FY'23. She explained that the fiscal year concluded with a surplus in electrical costs for the Plant, but there were deficits in pump station and hurricane barrier electrical expenses. R. Bull provided a comprehensive overview of the cost fluctuations over the past four years and compared them to the previous year. Additionally, she highlighted the persistently high gas costs across the Plant and Collection System, and again showcased the changes over a four-year period and compared them to the current year's figures.

Next, she revealed the FY'23 Yearend budget as of July 14, emphasizing that the presented numbers were not yet final. She clarified that the figures were subject to change as purchase orders were being closed out and some drawdowns still needed to be processed. Nevertheless, she assured the Board that the report provided a comprehensive representation of the current financial status and that the \$273K salary surplus included the Assistant Plant Supervisor position, portions of the Shift Foreman and two Plant Operator I positions, as well as the surplus from overtime, stand-by and differential. She concluded saying that the surplus for non-labor is at \$2.49 million for an overall surplus of \$3.214 million.

### **Discussion & Vote: Minimum Charge Increase**

R. Bull presented a handout containing the current accounts (657) with a minimum bill of \$30. She clarified that this charge covered accounts with ccfs ranging from zero to five (0-5) and resulted in generating revenue of nearly \$20k. She explained that the handout demonstrated the potential revenue the WPCA would receive if the minimum charge were increased to \$50. R. Bull informed the Board that the request before them was twofold: to raise the minimum charge to \$50 and to extend the ccfs coverage from zero to five (0-5) to zero to nine (0-9). She said that his change would impact an additional 537 accounts. As a result, the Board engaged in a debate over the increasing amount of the WPCA's fixed costs over the years and deliberated whether a \$50 increase would suffice compared to the residential average cost. R. Bull explained that the residential average is based on a family of four.

After a lengthy discussion, R. Barocas made a motion to increase the minimum change from \$30.00 to \$50.00 and to increase the consumption used for the minimum bill from 5 ccfs to 9 ccfs; seconded by J. R. McMullen. There was no further discussion. **Vote 7-0-0**

### **Discussion and Vote: FY23/24 Proposed User Charge Rate for Publication**

B. Brink explained that the calculations for the rate setting model include the approved total operating budget, the debt service, the revenue required to reach the debt service ratio, the reduction in interest income, the allowance for MAA and UAW settlement and a reduction in expected Nitrogen Credit from \$256K to \$56K. He went on to explain that the projected collection rate remains at 97.5% and using the billed sewer use fees, the annual consumption, which increased over the last three (3) years, along with the adjusted consumption, the rate setting model will keep the calculated user rate at the current rate of \$5.33 per CCF, a 0% increase. After a brief discussion R. Barocas made a motion to approve the FY23/24 Proposed User Charge Rate for Publication of \$5.33 per CCF; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote 7-0-0**

### **Discussion & Vote: Approval of Bid Waiver for Fleet Pump and Service in the amount of \$65,324.00 to Upgrade the Communication Systems and Controllers at (4) Four Pump Stations**

A. Brown requested approval for a bid waiver to fund the upgrade of the communication systems and controllers at (4) pump stations. She reported that the WPCA has had issues communicating with several pump stations in the past. She said that Fleet has installed this system at the Carriage Drive pump station and the Mechanic's staff has found it to be reliable and user friendly. E. Kelly asked if we would be replacing systems at the other pump stations over time. A. Brown replied depending on the budget, the plan is to incorporate a few each year to standardize the communication system at all the pump stations. M. Nesin made a motion to approve the Bid Waiver for Fleet Pump and Service in the amount of \$65,324.00 to Upgrade the Communication Systems and Controllers at (4) Four Pump Stations; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote 7-0-0**

### **Discussion & Vote: Approval of a Bid Waiver for Aquilla & Neptune LLC in the amount of \$63,092.72 for (2) Electric Actuators for the Underflow Gates at Aeration Basin Train One**

A. Brown requested approval for a bid waiver to purchase (2) two electrical actuators for the aeration basin in train One. Currently they're manual, the shafts are undersized and as they try to draw down the gates, sometimes they get jammed if they're not perfectly level. Train 2 was replaced a year ago with larger shafts, and the manual actuators were replaced with electrical actuators, and it worked very well. She said again, we're trying to standardize the equipment. E. Kelly stated that this agenda item was previously voted on and approved a year ago by the Board. Due to the change in Procurement Coordinators, this item did not go to contract and the quotation has expired. He said the Board is voting on a new dollar amount because of the amount of time has passed. A.

Brown agreed. Kelly made a motion to approve the Bid Waiver for Aquilla & Neptune LLC in the amount of \$63,092.72 for (2) Electric Actuators for the Underflow Gates at Aeration Basin Train One; seconded by M. Quinones. A lengthy discussion ensued, after which the vote was taken. **Vote 6-1-0.** M. Nesin Abstained

**Old Business:**

No old business discussed.

**New Business:**

M. Nesin stated that the Plant has not had any exceedances, and he complimented the staff for their efforts. He went on to say that there was a problem with the Plant generator and that R. Pudelka got a temporary generator to restore power. He stated that if he was in charge of the Plant, he would have had the Mechanics take apart the fuel pump to see what the issue was. He explained that the diesel fuel deteriorated. He researched and found a company that sells a product to stick into the tank and it will go through a series of filters and purify the fuel. He suggested this product for all the generators on the Plant, so they will always be ready to operate when they are needed. He also voiced his concerns with Wright Pierce design of the five (5) Raw Sewage Pumps Stations. He stated that he feels the design was incorrect, and they should be held responsible for all the failures and issues with their design and pay for the repairs.

After no other new business, at 6:56 pm, E. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the July meeting; seconded by M. Nesin. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 7-0-0.**

### Stamford WPCA Top Issues (7/17/23)

No.	Issue	Action Description	Impact	Status	Schedule
1	Service Contract with Synagro to Operate and Maintain Sludge Dryer and Dispose of Sludge Solids expires on March 3, 2024	Evaluate options for operating the sludge dryer and sludge disposal.	Operations and Financial	SWPCA staff to evaluate options for operating the sludge dryer and sludge disposal.	Requested proposal from Synagro for renewal of the service contract for another 5 years.
2	Primary sludge pumping and dewatering equipment is aged and in need of replacement. Equipment in primary clarifier No. 1 is severely corroded and needs to be replaced.	Upgrade the primary sludge pumping and dewatering system with new equipment to improve primary sludge pumping and grit removal. Replace the equipment in Primary Clarifier No. 1	Increase system reliability and improve grit removal to protect downstream equipment.	C H Nickerson is relocating large FRP odor control duct to prepare site for deep excavation to replace primary sludge piping between primary settling tanks and primary sludge pump building.	Will be replacing primary sludge piping this summer and primary settling tank No. 1 equipment in February. Construction expected to take up to 2 years.
3	Providing sanitary sewers to Perna Lane Area	Evaluate cost effective options for providing sanitary sewers to the Perna Lane Area.	Operations	Tighe & Bond has completed re-design of the sanitary sewers in Phase I. Currently designing the Perna Lane pump station and changes to the Turn of River Pump Station.	Bid the project for construction this fall to begin construction in early 2024.
4	Extreme wet weather - high flow discharge and permit exceedance on 5/1/14. Record rainfall on 7/9/21 and 9/1/21 caused plant flows that approached or exceeded plant capacity.	Perform an Infiltration and Inflow (I/I) Study to identify and remove extraneous flows caused by rainfall and high groundwater	Regulatory and Operations	National Water Main to perform sewer rehabilitation in Phase II subareas next on priority list for I/I removal.	National Water Main to start sewer rehabilitation work this week.
5	Hurricane barrier gate on East Branch of Stamford Harbor needs repair. Gate may need to be removed for at least 4 to 6 months to do the repair.	Need to evaluate impact of an extreme weather event and storm surge occurring during the gate repair on the treatment plant and three (3) storm water pump stations.	Operations	Army Corps of Engineers currently evaluating the extent of the repair and duration it will be out of service.	
6	Personnel Safety	Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.	Operations	Need to coordinate data collection on electrical switchgear by Siemens required by Tighe & Bond to complete Arc Flash analysis.	Data collected by Siemens from the EPM will be used to complete the arc flash analyses and MCC panel labeling.

7	Sludge dryer is operating close to its capacity and there are limited options for disposal of sludge cake due to incinerators operating at their capacity and landfills that are closing, or won't accept sludge cake.	SWPCA needs to evaluate its future options for sludge processing and disposal and develop a long term Sludge Management Plan.	Operations	Hazen has finalized the study report and the "road map" to guide our future course of action.	Will continue to monitor the development of sludge treatment technologies, especially pyrolysis and gasification.
8	WPCF evaluations and improvements	Study, design, and construct new plant water and return activated sludge (RAS) and waste activated sludge (WAS) pumps to replace aged equipment and increase operations and energy efficiency.	Regulatory and Operations	Gannett Fleming Engineers has completed the Basis of Design Report and submitted a budgeted cost for final design currently being reviewed by staff.	Gannett Fleming to complete final design by the end of 2023. Plan to bid the project for construction in the spring of 2024.
9	Facilities Building 6A which houses SWPCA Collection System, Electricians and Regulatory Compliance staff is deteriorated and has a leaking roof.	Evaluate options for relocating SWPCA staff that currently work in Building 6A	Operations	Leasing two (2) temporary portable buildings fitted with office space to house the Collection System staff. Water and sanitary facilities have been installed. Waiting for connection of electrical power and IT.	City is planning to replace the roofs on the Facilities Buildings, including Building 6A, by the end of this year.
10	Upgrade Alvord Lane, Commerce Drive and Saddle Rock Pump Stations	Pump Stations are aged and in need of upgrade or replacement	Operations	Selected Tighe & Bond Engineers to provide the study, design, and engineering during construction services for upgrading the three (3) pump stations.	Tighe & Bond has completed their evaluation and is preparing their draft report of recommendations for the pump stations upgrade/replacement.