



**Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting  
Monday, November 20, 2023**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Meeting held via teleconference**

**Full Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees**

|                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Ed Kelly                 | Chairman, WPCA Board Member                     |
| Amiel Goldberg           | WPCA Board Member/Board of Reps / Vice Chair    |
| Benjamin Barnes          | WPCA Board Member/ Director of Administration   |
| Matthew Quinones         | WPCA Board Member/ Director of Operations       |
| J.R. McMullen            | WPCA Board Member/Board of Finance              |
| Robert Barocas           | WPCA Board Member/Finance Committee Chair       |
| Steven Bagwin            | WPCA Board Member / Workforce Development Chair |
| Merritt Nesin            | WPCA Board Member                               |
| Frank Salem              | WPCA Board Member                               |
| William Brink            | Executive Director, WPCA                        |
| Rhudean Bull             | Administration Manager, WPCA                    |
| Ann Brown                | Supervising Engineer, WPCA                      |
| Vernesa DeCausey         | Financial Manager, WPCA                         |
| Crystal Blair            | Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA          |
| Abigail Logrono (Absent) | Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA          |
| Robert Pudelka           | Plant Supervisor                                |
| Steve Pietrzyk           | Collections System Supervisor                   |
| David Yanik (Absent)     | City Comptroller                                |
| Tom McKirdy              | 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 5:32 pm with roll call; there was no pledge of allegiance. A quorum was present eight (8 Board Members).

**Public Participation**

No member of the public was present.

**Minutes Approval of the Full Board Meeting of September 18, 2023**

E. Kelly made a motion to approve the October 16, 2023 minutes; seconded by B. Barnes. There was no further discussion. **Vote 6-0-2.** S. Bagwin and A. Goldberg abstained.

**Note:**

At 5:37pm, Board member M. Quinones joined the meeting. Nine (9) Board Members were present.

**Safety Report**

R. Pudelka reported the following:

- Plant monthly safety equipment inspections completed
- Quarterly Sprinkler Inspection completed September 11<sup>th</sup>
- Annual Fire Alarm testing scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup>
- SWPCA Team Safety Committee Meeting was held on November 15<sup>th</sup>

- Flagger Safety Training provided by COS Safety training Officers for SWPCA Mechanic was completed in November
- Hazard Communication Refresher was held at the WPCA Quarterly Staff Meeting on November 9<sup>th</sup>, presented by COS Safety Training Officer Nancy Barton

He reported that the SWPCA is participating in two different studies in the early detection of viruses affecting human health. He stated that they're participating in a one-year study by National Institutes of Health to evaluate substance use and substance use treatment drugs like fentanyl and naloxone.

### **Administrative/Budget Report**

R. Bull briefly reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies
- Staffing
- IUOE Retiree payout
- Budget Breakdown
- Quarterly utilities standing

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Finance Committee**

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

- Received the current financials report
- Reviewed Capital expenditures for the next (5) years
- No old business discussed; topics were carried forward for future discussion

#### **Technical Committee**

E. Kelly reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, and the following was discussed:

- Tighe & Bond presentation on their basis of design report for Alvord Lane, Commerce Road, and Saddle Rock Road Pump Station Upgrades
- Review of the Capital Improvement Plan through FY'28-29
- Review of the Capital Projects request
- Chose a selection committee to review the RFQ responses for maintaining the Sludge Dryer facility
- Collection System update
- Plant Operations update
- Engineering Studies and Designs update
- Construction Projects update

#### **Workforce Development Committee**

S. Bagwin stated that there was a meeting held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, and the following was discussed:

- Position vacancies and strategies for filling positions
- IUOE contract settlement retro payout
- Update on City Facilities Building 6A and the working conditions for SWPCA employees

### **Financial Update**

#### **CompUtil Report**

L. Roca reported that the collection rate continues to rise, with a total billing of almost 11,450,000. Currently the overall collection is just over 98%, slightly below the typical rate of 99%. Out of the twenty-six (26) times they billed there are twenty (20) bills over 99%, four (4) over 98%, the April 2023 bill is over 97%, and the October bill is over 82%. She stated that they're pushing collection efforts, making collection calls, and contacting management companies with outstanding balances, reminding them about interest and the penalty interest. These efforts have resulted in substantial payments being received. As of now, out of the 19,809 active accounts there are 537 open liens, which is less than 3% of the total. As payments come in, liens continue to be removed. She went on to say that reminder bills are scheduled to go out around December 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>. These bills will include the interest and the penalty interest from the October bill, serving as a motivating factor for payment.

### **Receivables & Arrears**

V. DeCausey reported for the month of October

- \$7,117,933 million sewer use & assessment fees collected
- \$8,308,135 million total collection for FY' 2023-2024
- 35% of the budget revenues collected YTD
- The October billing was \$11,452,111 million
- 82.50% October billing collection rate
- 97.13% of the April bill collected
- Average collection rate 98.72% vs. 95.22% last month's

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

T. McKirdy reported the following:

- 255 active files
- 48 accounts with balances above (\$5,000) Foreclosure Threshold
- 8 accounts with Payment Plans, 1 stayed due to bankruptcy filing
- 43 active foreclosures
- 196 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- No referrals due to billing for the October 2023 bill
- 11 Files closed since last meeting
- Collected \$16,977.68 for November as of today
- Total collected for 2023 \$624,378.30

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

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

M. Nesin stated that concerning the Sludge Dryer, he had questions regarding the Sludge Dryer Report. He commented that he does not understand from the report in which direction the Plant is heading in the next twenty (20) years and that he found many potential avenues that were not addressed. He mentioned several other considerations and asked the Director in which direction we are headed in the future.

B. Brink responded saying that what he took from the report was that Hazen and Sawyer looked at viable options, that were identified, as well as the options the WPCA reviewed; the ones that had a legitimate chance of success. He stated that for right now the sludge dryer is adequate to serve WPCA needs and that certainly within the next 10 years, or the next 5 years, we'll have to look at some major replacement for the dryer, as well as any new technology. After more comments, B. Brink concluded stating that the report provided the WPCA with a roadmap that the WPCA could follow with allowances for differing conditions over time and he feels comfortable with that assessment. After some additional discussion, the Chairman moved to the next addenda item.

### **Note:**

At 6:19 pm, it was noticed that Board member M. Quinones had left the meeting. Eight (8) Board Members were present.

### **Discussion and vote: Update of Capital Improvement Plan**

B. Brink explained that this updated plan carries from prior years; that this is the method by which the Plan is done each year. He stated most of the projects remain the same except for Commerce Drive Pump Station and the \$650k addition for a jet and vacuum truck to replace the current vehicles, which date back to the 1980s. He explained some of the other pump station repairs and updates, and Plant construction and equipment replacement. He explained that the WPCA has revenue bonds that were issued but not yet spent and that this request, as well as the cash reserve puts the WPCA in a good place financially. B. Barnes made a motion to approve the updated Capital Improvement Plan; seconded by S. Bagwin. R. Barocas inquired about the deadline for putting the Plan through, to which B. Brink replied that there is no deadline and that the rating agencies would like to see if the WPCA planning fits with its cash flow. Since there was no further discussion, the Chairman called for the vote. **VOTE: 8-0-0.**

### **Discussion and vote: FY 24-25 Capital Projects Requests**

#### **a. C71196 CMOM-Sewer Capacity Management, Operation & Maintenance (additional \$600,000)**

A. Brown explained that this request is for the assessment of the sewers that are in need of repairs. After a brief discussion E. Kelly made a motion to approve Capital Project C71196 CMOM-Sewer Capacity

Management, Operation & Maintenance for an additional \$600,000; seconded by B. Barnes. There was no further discussion. **VOTE: 8-0-0**

**b. CP9270 Sanitary Pumping Station Upgrades (additional \$ 2,100,000)**

A. Brown explained that this request is for the sanitary pump station upgrade. She stated the stations in need of upgrades based on a report from consultants Tighe & Bond. After a brief discussion E. Kelly made a motion to approve Capital Project CP9270 Sanitary Pumping Station Upgrades for an additional \$ 2,100,000; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **VOTE: 8-0-0**

**c. C71282 Vehicle Replacement and Repair (additional \$700,000)**

A. Brown explained that this request is for the vehicle and repairs and that normally \$50k is requested each year for vehicle replacement. She stated that this year the additional \$650k is for a new Jet Vac truck. After a brief discussion E. Kelly made a motion to approve Capital Project C71282 Vehicle Replacement and Repair for an additional \$700,000; seconded by J.R. McMullin. There was no further discussion. **VOTE: 8-0-0.**

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

R. Bull stated that the handout is the final year-end FY 23 budget. She said that the only posting not hitting this final report is the depreciation posting from January thru June. She reported that the City has agreed to complete the WPCA's depreciation position for FY'23 and the Finance Manager will complete them for FY'24. She mentioned that with for the highlighted line item #33, Bonds Principal, the surplus will most likely have a zero balance once the depreciation postings occur.

**Old Business:**

The Chairman stated that Board Members with expired terms has become an issue in Stamford and that the Mayor's Office will be reaching out to those WPCA Board members whose term has expired.

**New Business:**

No old business discussed.

At 6:33 pm, E. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the November meeting; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 8-0-0.**

**Stamford WPCA Top Issues (11/17/23)**

| 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  | Received qualifications in response to RFQ from two firms interested in operating the sludge dryer on 11/9/23.  | Selection Committee will review the qualifications to determine if the firms are qualified to respond to a Request for Proposal.  |
| 2   | Primary sludge pumping and degritting 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 degritting 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 has prepared the jacking pit for installing new primary sludge piping between primary settling tank No. 1 and the primary sludge pump building. Began excavation for jacking pit for tank No. 2 | Primary sludge piping to primary clarifier No. 1 is scheduled to be installed in December. Construction is on schedule for project to be substantially completed by January 2025.             |
| 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 and is finalizing plans for the two pump stations.   | Plan to advertise for bids for construction in December. Start construction in the spring of 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 performing sewer rehabilitation in Phase II subareas next on priority list for I/I removal. Have lined 4,500 feet of sanitary sewer so far.   | Work to continue this fall.   |
| 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.   | Hurricane barrier gate is expected to be inoperable starting January 2025 for 3 to 6 months. SWPCA needs to evaluate impact of storm event on treatment plant without protection of the gate. |
| 6   | Personnel Safety   | Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.   | Operations  | Received proposal from Siemens to complete data collection and perform the arc flash study and labeling of MCC panels.  | Will evaluate proposal and present recommendation to Board.   |

|    |  |  |                           |  |   |
|----|--|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| 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 | Had kick-off meeting with Gannett Fleming Engineers on 10/19 to start the final design of RAS/WAS and plant water pumps.   | Gannett Fleming to complete final design by summer 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                | Collection System Staff have moved into their trailers. WPCA on call contractor will install potable water line to trailers and connect trailers to nearby building sewer lateral to eliminate need for bottled water and pumping of trailer belly tank. | 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                | Tighe & Bond has submitted their draft report and presented their recommendations for the upgrades to the three (3) pump stations to the Technical Committee.  | Tighe & Bond to submit a proposal for design of the upgrade of the Saddle Rock Pump Station to be done in FY24 with construction in FY25. Design of Alvord Lane and Commerce Drive PS's to be done in FY25. |