



Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting

Monday, May 20, 2024

5:30 p.m.

Meeting held via teleconference

Full Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Ed Kelly	Chairman, WPCA Board Member
Amiel Goldberg	Vice Chair, WPCA Board Member/Board of Reps
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 (Absent)	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	Procurement Coordinator, WPCA
Maria LoDolce	Seasonal, WPCA
Steve Pietrzyk	Collections System Supervisor, WPCA
Tom McKirdy	Collection Attorney Ackerly & Ward
Lynda Roca	CompUtil

Call to Order, Pledge and Roll Call

E. Kelly, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm with roll call; there was no pledge of allegiance. A quorum was present eight (8 Board Members).

Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

Minutes Approval of the Full Board Meeting of April 15, 2024

E. Kelly made a motion to approve the April 15, 2024, minutes; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote 8-0-0.**

Update: FY 2023 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

E. Kelly asked the Board to consider suspending the rules regarding notice so that the Board can make a small change to the agenda to allow Ben Barnes to provide a summary of the audit report to the full board out of order. He made a motion to modify the agenda for Ben Barnes to provide a summary of the audit report; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote 8-0-0**

B. Barnes began by noting that the Audit Report was released on Saturday, albeit later than initially anticipated due to complications with the city's finances. He mentioned that this was their first time closing a fiscal period and reporting in Oracle, expressing his satisfaction with the process and optimism that future reports would be even smoother. He extended his gratitude to V. DeCausey, R. Bull, and the team at the WPCA for completing the audit under challenging conditions.

Barnes proceeded to summarize the report, directing attention to the abbreviated Net Position table on page 7. He clarified that while the report contains more detailed information, the table provides a three-year history of net positions. He highlighted that the WPCA ended fiscal 2023 with a net position of \$118 million, up from \$111 million at the end of fiscal 2022. He emphasized that this increase is significant, with operating revenues exceeding expenses by \$4.5 million, aligning with the WPCA's financial performance in recent years.

He then pointed out the Authority's long-term obligations on page 25, noting the transition from \$113 million in long-term liabilities at the beginning of the fiscal year to just over \$100 million by the end, marking a 10% reduction. He expressed that this reduction is particularly impressive given the usual lengthy timeframe required to pay off long-term debts. Additionally, he mentioned that the WPCA's beginning balances of over \$5 million dollars in Pension and OPEB had been reduced to a net position of zero. He explained that the liability of the City's OPEB and Pension plans did well in fiscal 2023 and ended with the OPEB plan essentially fully funded.

B. Barnes also highlighted a table on page 47 showing detailed operating results over the past 10 years. He affirmed that the WPCA's financial position is not only strong currently but has been consistently improving. He referenced an earlier discussion on the potential use of revenue bonds to meet capital needs, attributing the organization's strong financial performance and the robust economy as factors that should facilitate a favorable credit rating. He said that he anticipates no difficulties in renewing or potentially increasing the WPCA's rating in the coming year.

In conclusion, B. Barnes offered to answer any specific questions and asserted that the WPCA has had another year of strong performance. There was a brief discussion following the summary, in which B. Barnes answered questions to the Board's satisfaction.

Administrative/Budget Report

R. Bull briefly reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies
- Staffing issues
- No COVID19 case reported
- Two (2) Injuries reported
- Two grievances pending since last meeting
- No vehicle accidents reported
- Next Quarterly Staff Meeting scheduled for June 6th
- FY'24 Budget breakdown

Sub-Committee Reports

Finance Committee

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

- Approval of April 15, 2024, Meeting Minutes
- Reviewed April Financials
- Old Business discussion regarding the Stamford Housing Authority will be carried forward to the full Board
- The WPCA is in a good financial position.

Technical Committee

E. Kelly reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, May 15, 2024, and the following was discussed:

- Discussed Synagro letter regarding USEPA's recent ruling and requirements regarding PFAS hazardous chemicals, and how it may affect the contract.
- A. Brown gave an update on Barry Place Pump Station. Because of the sale of property and agreements that date back to 1940, power will have to be rerouted.
- Discussed Konecranes bid waiver to replace the hoist at Dyke Lane Pump Station
- S. Pietrzyk gave an update on the Collection System.
- B. Brink provided an update on Plant operations.
- A. Brown provided an update on engineering studies, capital, and construction projects, specifically mentioning the progress of the Perna Lane sewer extension, which is currently underway and scheduled to commence the week of June 3rd. She also informed the committee that the contractor for the Edice Road sewer repair project will start during the same week.

Workforce Development Committee

S. Bagwin stated that the Workforce Development Committee meeting was held on May 15, 2024, and the following was discussed:

- Plant Supervisor resignation.
- Plant Supervisor position.
- Electrician position.

Financial Update

CompUtil Report

L. Roca reported that the WPCA is in a strong position with the billing process. She noted that more money has been collected this fiscal year to date compared to last year, with an increase of approximately \$800,000. She mentioned that the team is working diligently, making calls, and consistently sending out bills. She reported that currently, there are 19,813 active accounts, of which 518 have open liens and that Ackerly and Ward are managing 252 accounts, while WPCA's Customer Service Specialist is managing 53 accounts. She explained that liens are not released until accounts are no longer managed and or resolved. She said that to alleviate the workload of the Customer Service Specialist, they have been walking customers through the online payment process and that they are also working with the City on the Oracle system, exchanging data to match the two systems; that meetings are underway to discuss moving forward with Kubra bill pay. She concluded her report say that CompUtil is preparing to bill interest on June 1st and apply penalty interest on any outstanding balance, followed by sending out reminder bills.

Receivables & Arrears

V. DeCausey reported for the month of April

- \$6.247 million total Sewer Usage collection for the month of April
- \$20.529 million sewer use & assessment fees collected
- \$23.8 million total Sewer Usage & Assessment & Connection collection for FY' 2023-2024
- 86% of the budget revenues collected YTD
- 97.30% October billing collection rate
- 76.52% of the April 2024 bill collected
- Average collection rate is 98.51% vs.95.46% last month's

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

T. McKirdy informed the Board that Pilicy Ryan & Ward has changed back to Ackerly & Ward.

- 255 active files
- 36 accounts with balances above (\$5,000) Foreclosure Threshold
- 2 accounts with payment plans that are not in foreclosure, but are over the threshold
- 0 stayed due to bankruptcy filing
- 23 active foreclosures
- 10 accounts foreclosure eligible
- 214 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- 4 files referred
- 15 Files closed since last meeting
- Collected \$32,674.10 for May
- Total collected for 2024 \$213,939.89

Executive Director's Top Ten

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

Discussion and vote: Approval of Bid Waiver for Konecranes to replace hoist at Dyke Lane Pump Station in an amount not to exceed \$62,465.11.

A. Brown explained that the WPCA is seeking to replace the hoist at the Dyke Lane Pump Station with an electric hoist. She stated that this pump station is the largest stormwater pump station and is part of the hurricane barrier. She said that currently, there is a ten-ton manual hoist at the Dyke Lane Pump Station, which is very labor-intensive and time-consuming to operate; that an electric hoist would be more efficient. She went on to say that three quotes were obtained and that a request for approval of the bid waiver is required to proceed. E. Kelly noted that the Technical Committee reviewed this item in detail and recommended proceeding with the approval of the bid waiver. E. Kelly made a motion to approve the bid waiver for Konecranes to replace the hoist at Dyke Lane Pump Station in an amount not to exceed \$62,465.11; seconded by R. Barocas. **Vote: 8-0-0**

Update: Perna Lane Sewer Extension

A. Brown explained that the current contractor for the project is Grasso Construction. She reported that the pre-construction meeting has been completed, and they have received the necessary permits from the State DOT for High Ridge Road and from the City for all the local roads. She also reported that a temporary construction easement required for work on the Perna Lane Pump Station has been signed. She mentioned the timeline for the work to be completed and that a representative will be onsite daily to inspect the work, address questions from residents, and provide updates; that the project is scheduled to start on June 3rd. She concluded saying that the updates are regularly posted on WPCA's website and that email notifications are sent out to keep interested parties informed about the project's progress and next steps.

Old Business:

No old business discussed.

New Business:

No new business discussed.

At 6:28pm, S. Bagwin made a motion to adjourn the May meeting; seconded by R. Barocas. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 8-0-0.**

Stamford WPCA Top Issues (5/17/24)

No.	Issue	Action Description	Impact	Status	Schedule
1	The Plant Supervisor position will be open at the end of March. This position requires a Class IV Operator license to meet the Plant's permit.	Advertise and interview qualified candidates for Plant Supervisor and fill the position as soon as possible.	Regulatory and Operations	Shift foremen have Class III license and will direct the operation and maintenance of the plant.	Position has been posted and widely advertised.
2	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	Proposals were opened on 3/28/24 and only Synagro submitted. We began negotiations with Synagro on May 17 th .	Our existing contract with Synagro was extended to September 3, 2024. We plan is to have a new contract in place by then.
3	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 completed the installation of the new primary sludge piping and scum lines from both primary clarifiers to the Primary Sludge Pump Building and placed two (2) primary sludge pumps.	Install electrical duct bank from Primary Sludge Pump Building to Sludge Degritting Building this week. Install equipment in PC No. 1 in June. Construction is on schedule to be substantially completed by end of 2024.
4	Providing sanitary sewers to Perna Lane Area	Evaluate cost effective options for providing sanitary sewers to the Perna Lane Area.	Operations	Construction contract has been executed with Grasso Construction for the lowest bid price of \$8,263,194.	Pre-construction meeting was held on March 27 th . Grasso expects to start construction the week of June 3 rd . Complete installation of the pump stations and sewers by end of summer 2024.
5	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 completing the sewer rehabilitation in Phase II subareas.	SWPCA staff reviewing a proposal by CDM-Smith Engineers for the next phase of a sewer system evaluation survey (SSES) of those sewer subareas next on the I/I removal priority list.
6	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.

7	Personnel Safety	Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.	Operations	Siemens has been retained to perform the arc flash hazard analysis and label electrical switchgear for proper PPE.	Siemens has completed checking the field data that was previously collected. Arc flash hazard analysis will then take 20 days to model.
8	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.
9	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 has completed the basis of design report and started final design of the Plant Water, RAS and WAS pumps and piping.	Gannett Fleming to complete final design by late summer of 2024.
10	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 from Building 6A to leased trailers. The trailers have been connected to the water and sewer lines from the adjacent building at Facilities.	City has issued a contract to replace the roofs on the Facilities Buildings, including Building 6A, and remediate the building interior.
11	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 report and presented their recommendations for needed upgrades to the three (3) pump stations to the Technical Committee.	Tighe & Bond's Agreement for the final design and bidding of the upgrade of the Saddle Rock Road PS has been executed. Design of Alvord Lane and Commerce Drive PS's to be done in FY25.