

1 **DRAFT**

2 **PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**
3 **WALLINGFORD ELECTRIC DIVISION**

4 100 JOHN STREET

5 WALLINGFORD, CT

6 Tuesday, January 19, 2021

7 6:30 P.M.

8 **MINUTES**

TOWN OF
WALLINGFORD

JAN 25 2021

DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC UTILITIES

9
10 **The meeting was held via teleconference. In attendance were:**

11 Chairman Robert Beaumont (TC); Commissioners Patrick Birney (TC) and Joel Rinebold (TC);
12 Director Richard Hendershot (TC); Electric Division General Manager Tony Buccheri (TC),
13 Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Neil Amwake (TC), Water and Sewer Divisions
14 Business Manager Brian Naples (TC), Recording Secretary Bernadette Sorbo (TC).

15 (TC-TELECONFERENCE)

16 *Members of the public – Adelheid Koepfer and Steve Gale*

17 Mr. Beaumont called the Meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., and the pledge of Allegiance was
18 recited.

19 **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

20
21 **2. Consent Agenda**

- 22 a. Consider and Approve Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2020
23 b. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer – Water – O/S Services Employed
24 c. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer – Sewer- O/S Services Employed

25
26 **Motion to approve the Consent Agenda**

27 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

28 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

29 **Votes: 3 ayes**

30
31 **3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None**
32
33
34
35

36 **4. Discussion and Action: Approval of Director's Report for the Month of**
37 **December 2020.**
38

39 Mr. Birney requested that the General Managers walk thru the personnel components of the
40 Director's Report to get a better understanding of where the three divisions stand.
41

42 Mr. Amwake gave an update to Personnel for the Water Division. The Water Division is
43 currently in recruitment for a Maintainer II position on the Distribution Crew. Interviews for this
44 position were completed last week. The Water Division expects to make an appointment for this
45 position within the next five to ten business days.
46

47 Mr. Awake stated that Brian Naples began with the Electric Division as the Assistant Business
48 Manager and he was recently promoted to the Water and Sewer Divisions as the Office Manager
49 on December 14, 2020. The promotion to the Water and Sewer Division caused a vacancy in the
50 Electric Division therefore Brian Naples is splitting his time working in the mornings at the
51 Electric Division and then working in the afternoons at the Water and Sewer Division. Brian
52 Naples is now the lead person for the budgets in all three divisions.
53

54 Mr. Amwake spoke on the personnel elsewhere. Mr. Amwake stated that there is a vacancy at
55 the Pistapaug Pond Water Treatment Plant for a Senior Operator position. The vacancy for this
56 position will not be posted as there are not a lot of people with certifications. There is also
57 another vacancy for a Maintainer II position on the Distribution Crew. Once the Water Division
58 fills the first position they will then hire for the second position as the Division is deciding where
59 to go with the other position.
60

61 Mr. Birney requested an update and status of the Pistapaug Pond Water Treatment Plant crew.
62

63 Mr. Amwake stated that from 2016 to 2018 the Water Division was running two formal shifts.
64 The first shift was from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM and the second shift was from 3:30 PM to 11:30
65 PM. Because of staffing, or more specifically lack of qualified Senior Operators, the Water
66 Division is now primarily running the first shift 8:00 am to 4:30 PM with two recent retirees
67 filling in for the evening shifts, four nights of the week.
68

69 Mr. Birney questioned if the Division is not looking to fill anymore spots and if the Division is
70 comfortable with using the staffing model that is being utilized now?
71

72 Mr. Amwake stated that the Pistapaug facility was designed to be run by eight Senior Operators.
73 As of now Pistapaug has two Senior Operators, four Junior Operators and two Senior Part Time
74 Staffers. The Division is making it work but would like another full time Senior Staffer to help
75 with coverage when an employee is sick or is on vacation. Mr. Amwake advised that there is
76 staff on the premises seven days a week to evaluate the equipment.
77

78 Mr. Birney noted the issue on the consent agenda regarding the budget appropriation for William
79 Phelan and questioned what is the expected time frame to have Brian Naples up and running?
80

81 Mr. Amwake stated that Brian Naples will be ready to transition when the Electric Division
82 brings on a Business Manager as well as an Assistant Business Manager. As for the budget
83 process, the financing which was approved in the consent order is to bring the Water and Sewer
84 Divisions thru May 2021 concurrent with the FY 21-22 budget review and approval process.
85 Mr. Phelan is working roughly 4-8 hours per week for the Water and Sewer Division therefore
86 the Divisions are projecting this funding to allow Mr. Phelan to work with the Division through
87 mid-March.

88
89 Mr. Amwake gave an update to the Personnel for the Sewer Division. Mr. Amwake advised that
90 the Maintenance Repair Technicians take care of the sewer pump stations, large pumps at the
91 wastewater treatment plant, and staff a garage that includes 130 fleet vehicles for all three
92 Divisions. The vacant MRT II position was filled by an internal promotion, which has resulted
93 in a vacant MRT I position. Efforts to fill that vacancy are underway, with the job posting
94 closing on January 26. In addition to the vacancy for the MRT I position there is a vacancy for
95 an Attendant I position.

96
97 Mr. Buccheri gave an update to the Personnel for the Electric Division. Mr. Buccheri advised
98 that the internal candidate vacancy position for the Meter Technician Apprentice has been filled
99 and the candidate started January 19, 2021. The vacant Chief Engineer position has been re-
100 posted and re-advertised. Human Resources conducted interviews last week and the Electric
101 Division has received the list of qualified candidates. There is one candidate on the list that will
102 be contacted for an interview in the next week. The Chief Meter Technician has been posted a
103 few times but has recently been filled through an internal promotion. This caused a vacancy in
104 the position for a Meter Apprentice. The vacant Energy Efficiency and Conservation Specialist
105 position has been posted and closed. Human Resources has reviewed the candidates and the
106 Electric Division is waiting on the list of qualified candidates. There is one vacancy for the
107 System Operator which is being worked on. The Electric Division is working with Human
108 Resources to hire on a Trainee for this position as well. The Business Office Manager position
109 has closed and Human Resources has conducted the oral screening exam. The Electric Division
110 is waiting on the list of qualified candidates from Human Resources. The Assistant Office
111 Manager position has closed and Human Resources will soon conduct the oral screening exam.
112 The exam has not been completed and the Electric Division is waiting on the schedule for when
113 this will be completed. Authorization for meter reader has been posted. Received candidate list
114 and scheduled for interviews and selection and offer to be made. Distribution Technician has
115 been posted and not yet received. Human Resources will have to conduct interviews.

116
117 Mr. Birney questioned when do you foresee being at full employment in the system operator
118 category?

119
120 Mr. Buccheri stated that the job description for a trainee is underway and Mr. Buccheri has a
121 draft of what that will look like. However, there is a process that needs to be followed as this
122 goes through Human Resources, the union for approval and then on to the Town Council. As far
123 as filling the role it typically takes six months to get someone qualified on the desk. Mr. Birney
124 voiced his concerns.

125

126 Mr. Beaumont referenced Item #4-21, Addressing Internal Market Monitor Concerns Regarding
127 Behind-the-Meter Generation. Mr. Beaumont questioned if there will be any sort of reach back
128 if this is done?

129
130 Mr. Hendershot was asked a question by the Chairman with regard to follow-up, reach-back if
131 we do this? Thinking of 50 'n 5, etc. Rick – do you have comments? I know what the answer is
132 but I would like the other 2 Commissioners to hear.

133
134 As Mr. Hendershot could not be heard, Chairman Beaumont answered his own question. It
135 appears that it would be on a going forward basis for installations under 5MW. Doesn't appear
136 to be of concern for the WED.

137
138 Mr. Birney raised another issue; the report indicated that Pierce operated at a loss in November.
139 Thoughts as to whether or not another Pierce loss will be seen somewhere in the foreseeable
140 future due to decreasing capacity costs?

141
142 Mr. Hendershot had reported to the Commission some time ago and shared a projection that Mr.
143 Craig Kieny had prepared. The projection indicated that the Pierce project will run in the red for
144 the foreseeable future largely because of the lower capacity revenues. At the time the discussion
145 had was, should the PUC give notice or not? The Law Department advised that this would not be
146 necessary as the contract states that a notice would need to be given in order to remain beyond
147 the calendar year of 2021.

148
149 Mr. Rinebold stated that his notes are fairly similar. The Pierce facility was not dispatched due
150 to economic reasons; the high bidding requirements making it incapable to reach bidding below
151 bids coming in. Mr. Rinebold stated that it would appear, based on some of the new generation
152 coming online from solar facilities and other potential facilities prices will remain low and the
153 Pierce facility will be challenged to achieve successful bid acceptance.

154
155 Mr. Hendershot responded that this is correct. Mr. Hendershot noted that it is not an energy
156 resource and it never has been. Mr. Hendershot stated that it has never been competitive as an
157 energy resource and on a monthly basis it is rarely dispatched only for necessary test run. The
158 prime source of revenue is its mere existence through capacity revenues. Those softened and
159 look to continue to do so in the short term.

160
161 Mr. Rinebold stated that he does not see reversal of the trend at least for the short and mid-term
162 future.

163
164 Mr. Birney stated that this is probably something that the PUC should continue to talk about as
165 the PUC gets through the first and second quarter of 2021. Chairman Beaumont agreed.

166
167 Mr. Hendershot made a note to ask Mr. Craig Kieny to refresh his projections.

168
169 **Motion to approve the Director's Report for the Month of December 2020**

170
171 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

172 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

173 **Votes: 3 ayes**

174

175 **Public Question and Answer Period**

176

177 Ms. Koepfer inquired if the PUC would cooperate with a school district to hire for laborers and
178 apprentices?

179

180 Ms. Koepfer referenced the December 15th meeting in regards to the Voluntary Residential
181 Green Program. Ms. Koepfer quoted Mr. Hendershot's statement "All the information, the good
182 information I guess I should say that I have on this about the potential Green Energy option."
183 In regards to this quote Ms. Koepfer asked if Mr. Hendershot would share the "Good
184 information" with the public?

185

186 Mr. Hendershot stated that he is not prepared to share an update on the Green Energy Program
187 tonight.

188

189 Mr. Hendershot advised that the conversation in regards to the RECS vs. Real Energy was to
190 better understand what the PUC wanted from the program. Mr. Hendershot stated that he now
191 understands that RECS are an acceptable means to accomplish this and will be his focus moving
192 forward.

193

194 Mr. Birney spoke on the concept of RECS vs renewable energy. In his perspective Mr. Birney
195 does not believe it is feasible to increase that number to 30% based on purchasing renewable
196 energy as it is generated. Mr. Birney is not in favor to move our renewable energy purchases up
197 via RECS (pieces of paper) that are being sold on the market by those who are producing Green
198 Energy. Mr. Birney stated that Green Energy is not going to heat other Wallingford Rate Payers
199 homes.

200

201 Mr. Hendershot stated that there are now two topics in front of the PUC. The topics are: How to
202 achieve a voluntary residential Green Energy Program if the Commissions wishes to pursue one?
203 And a separate concept of a renewable energy portfolio of more than 13% of total. Mr.
204 Hendershot commented that the Commissions made it clear that the cost of our service is
205 paramount and is best done through traditional purchases via the regional market and not
206 throwing in the consideration that it needs to be so much renewable. Mr. Hendershot stated that
207 his idea of RECS is merely a means to possibly structure and produce a voluntary program for
208 individual customers.

209

210 Ms. Koepfer questioned on Mr. Hendershot's quote of "good information."

211

212 Mr. Hendershot stated that he was clarifying the information from Energy New England. The
213 "Good Information" that he referred to in the meeting was a very informative and illustrative
214 email from Energy New England. Mr. Hendershot advised that he now views the preference of
215 the PUC to be that the Voluntary Green Energy Program may be merely based on RECS just for
216 the purpose of that program and that the costs generated by the program should be borne only by
217 the participants.

218
219 There was further discussion held on voluntary the Green Energy Program.
220

221 **Public Question and Answer Period Closed**
222

223
224 **5. Discussion and Action: Electric Division – Remove Item from Table – Toyota**
225 **Oakdale**
226

227 **Item Withdrawn**
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230 **6. Discussion and Possible Action: Late Charges – Toyota Oakdale**
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232 **Item Withdrawn**
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234
235 **7. Discussion: WPCF Upgrades Project Update**
236

237 Mr. Amwake updated the Commission on the focus of construction. The Contractor continues to
238 progress with the excavation and sheeting installation for the two additional secondary settling
239 tanks.
240

241 At the Secondary Pump Station, all of the lower level concrete walls have been poured. The
242 Contractor has begun installation of the 30-inch discharge piping.
243

244 At the Tertiary Phosphorous Building, the Contractor continues to rub (finish) the concrete. The
245 installation of piping in the lower level of the TPB has begun, including the 36-inch influent
246 pipe, the 30-inch bypass pipe, and the 42-inch effluent pipe. The Contractor has begun
247 installation of the 14-inch plant water pipe in the TPB. The Construction of the parapet wall is
248 ongoing. The slide gates and stop log frames are being installed at the TPB influent box.
249

250 At the UV Disinfection/Post Aeration Building, the contractor is in the process of installing the
251 UV equipment. The installation of the motor control center for the UV and PA operations has
252 begun.
253

254 At the Emergency Generator Building, the roofing trusses and deck are complete. The masonry
255 subcontractor is installing the brickwork for the EGB.
256

257 At the Existing Personnel Electrical Building, the contractor, AECOM and WSD staff are
258 making final preparations for connecting the temporary standby generators prior to removal of
259 the existing standby generator.
260

261 **Construction Contract Payment Applications – C. H. Nickerson**

262 **Original Contract Sum \$45,507,000.00**

263 **Net Change by Change Orders \$105,869.36**

264 Contract Sum to Date \$45,612,869.36 As of December 15, 2020
265
266 Construction Contract Schedule
267 Original Completion Date February 10, 2022
268 Net Change Schedule Days 0
269 Contract Completion Date February 10, 2022
270
271

272 **No Correspondence/Committee Reports**
273
274

275 **ADJOURNMENT**
276

277 **Motion to Adjourn**

278 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

279 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

280 **Votes: 3 ayes**
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287 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:35 P.M.
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289 Respectfully submitted,
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292

293 Bernadette Sorbo
294 Recording Secretary
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297
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300
301
302

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Rinebold
Secretary