

Approved
7/20/21

DRAFT

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

**TOWN OF
WALLINGFORD**

WALLINGFORD TOWN HALL

JUN 21 2021

ROOM 315

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC UTILITIES**

45 SOUTH MAIN STREET

WALLINGFORD, CT

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Beaumont; Commissioners Patrick Birney (arrived late, attended via teleconference) and Joel Rinebold; Director Richard Hendershot; Electric Division General Manager Tony Buccheri; Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Neil Amwake; Water and Sewer Divisions Business Manager Brian Naples; Electric Division Business Manager Marianne Dill; Recording Secretary Bernadette Sorbo

Members of the public – Anna Reynolds, Walter Spear, Jonathan Guillen

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Consider and approve Minutes of June 1, 2021
- b. Consider and approve Budget Transfer – Electric – A/C 397 – Communications Equipment
- c. Consider and approve Budget Transfer – Electric – A/C 932 – Admin. And General – Maintenance of General Plant

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda:

Made by: Mr. Rinebold

Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont

Votes: 2 ayes

37 **3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None**

38
39 **4. Discussion and Action: Approval of Director's Report for the Month of May**
40 **2021**

41
42 Mr. Rinebold referenced Item No. 4-6 and questioned if there was a particular reason that offers
43 were turned down for the Customer Service Representative position?

44
45 Mr. Buccheri stated that there were two offers made. The first offer the numbers did not work
46 out for the candidate. The second candidate was in a temporary position with another employer
47 and received an offer to stay in a full time position. The candidate accepted that offer rather than
48 accepting the position for the Wallingford Electric Division. The Electric Division has currently
49 interviewed new candidates and are now in the post interview process.

50
51 **Motion to approve the Director's Report for the Month of May 2021**

52
53 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

54 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

55 **Votes: 2 ayes**

56
57 **5. Discussion and Possible Action: Water and Sewer Divisions: Customer Appeal**
58 **– Reynolds – Billing Issue**

59
60 Mr. Naples stated that the property in question is 239 Center Street, which is a multi-family, non-
61 owner occupied residential dwelling, belonging to customer Anna Reynolds. Ms. Reynolds
62 purchased the property on September 22, 2005. On May 1, 2009 a Certificate of Foreclosure
63 was recorded on the Wallingford Land Records in the Town Clerk's Office. At this time the
64 water and sewer account was transferred to JP Morgan Chase Bank N.A. On November 24,
65 2009 a Motion to Dismiss was granted by the New Haven Superior Court and Ms. Reynolds
66 resumed ownership of the property. The water and sewer account remained in the name of JP
67 Morgan Chase Bank N.A. until February 2, 2021 when the Water and Sewer Divisions first
68 learned of the foreclosure dismissal. At this time Ms. Reynolds once again became the customer
69 of record in the Water and Sewer Divisions Customer Information System software, and the
70 outstanding balance of \$9,933.78 was transferred to her account. This balance was comprised of
71 \$4,993.99 in water charges and \$4,939.79 in sewer charges. The account balance was paid in
72 full as of July 30, 2018. Since July 2018 there have been 12 quarterly cycle water and sewer
73 bills issued totaling \$8,883.76 (\$740.31 average per quarter) plus \$2,171.40 of accrued interest
74 on the outstanding charges, and \$40.00 of lien fees. Only one payment has been made to the
75 account since July 2018. A payment of \$657.95 for the full amount of the bill issued May 1,
76 2021 was made on June 1, 2021. Ms. Reynolds entered into a payment arrangement with the
77 Divisions on February 26, 2021, agreeing to pay \$250.00 on the 15th of each month in addition to
78 the current charges on any new water and sewer bills issued. To date none of the \$250.00
79 monthly payments have been made per the signed payment arrangement. As of June 15, 2021,
80 the customer's current balance is \$10,437.21. Ms. Reynolds wrote to the Commissions seeking
81 relief of all outstanding water consumption and sewer usage charges, interest and lien fees.
82

83 Ms. Reynolds stated that she recently learned of the outstanding water and sewer charges. Ms.
84 Reynolds called over to the Division and discovered that the bills were not being sent to her
85 home address and that the bills were being sent to JP Morgan Chase Bank N.A. Ms. Reynolds
86 advised that if she received the bills she would have paid them as she always pays her bills on
87 time. Ms. Reynolds acknowledged that she owes the bills and is not disputing this. Ms.
88 Reynolds is requesting that the PUC waive all interest charges.

89
90 Mr. Rinebold questioned Mr. Amwake on the status of the account and if there is a payment plan
91 in place?

92
93 Mr. Amwake stated that there was a payment plan executed in February, 2021 with a condition
94 of \$250.00 per month including the accrued interest. Ms. Reynolds did not want to sign that
95 contract because of the accrued interest. This payment plan would take up to three years to pay
96 off which is generally outside of the standard structured payment plan of 12 months. Mr.
97 Amwake advised that given the size of the bill the Divisions extended the payment plan term.

98
99 Mr. Rinebold questioned if there is no action taken will you put a lien on the property?

100
101 Mr. Amwake advised that there are currently two liens on the property.

102
103 Mr. Beaumont stated that he does feel bad for Ms. Reynolds but that he also needs to keep in
104 mind the 14,000+ customers. Mr. Beaumont advised Ms. Reynolds that there is a cost for the
105 water that was consumed and for the water that was treated. Mr. Beaumont recommended that
106 the PUC keep the current payment plan of \$250.00 a month in addition to the current charges on
107 any new water or sewer bills issued.

108
109 **No Action Taken**

110
111 **Public Question and Answer**

112
113 No questions from the Public

114
115 **Public Question and Answer Closed**

116
117 **6. Discussion and Possible Action: Electric Division – Customer Appeal – Spear –**
118 **Deposit**

119
120 Mr. Spear referenced the two-page letter that he sent to the PUC and was received by the PUC
121 on April 29, 2021. Mr. Spear stated that he had broken his femur in December 2019 and has
122 been out of work. As a result, Mr. Spear filed for bankruptcy in October, 2020, leaving the
123 balance of \$1,574.07 unpaid. Due to complications, the bankruptcy had to be withdrawn, adding
124 the outstanding balance back to his current bill. In order to maintain electricity, Mr. Spear gave
125 the Electric Division a deposit of \$770.00 for a “new account”. Mr. Spear’s is requesting that the
126 \$770.00 deposit be applied to the outstanding balance and enter into a payment plan to pay
127 \$100.00 per month plus his current charges.

128

129 Mr. Buccheri stated that this customer filed bankruptcy on September 23, 2020 for the amount of
130 \$1,574.07. Mr. Spear was required to pay a deposit of \$770.00 for his post bankruptcy account.
131 He has been making on-time payments since November, in the hopes of getting his deposit back.
132 Mr. Spear's bankruptcy was dismissed on November 19, 2020 and the balance of \$1,574.07 has
133 now been added back to his regular electric account. He cannot pay that balance in full but can
134 pay \$100.00 per month plus his current charges. This is going to cause his account to go back
135 into a delinquent status and he won't be eligible to get his deposit back until 12 months after he
136 brings his account current. Mr. Spear is requesting the PUC accept this payment agreement and
137 consider him on-time as long as he is following the agreement, so that once his balance is
138 reduced to \$770.00 the Electric Division can apply the \$770.00 deposit to the remaining balance
139 to bring the balance to zero.

140

141 Mr. Rinebold questioned, if no action is taken when would the deposit be refunded if payments
142 were current and on time?

143

144 Mr. Spear stated that the Electric Division advised that the deposit would be returned once the
145 \$1,500.00 had been paid in full which would be 15 months from now.

146

147 Mr. Rinebold questioned if there was a way to move the amount up from \$100.00 a month to
148 \$200.00 a month to accelerate the payment plan?

149

150 Mr. Spear responded that unfortunately at this time he cannot.

151

152 **Motion to continue the current payment plan of \$100.00 per month, including payment of**
153 **all current charges to pay down the outstanding balance until the balance is less than or**
154 **equal to \$770.00 deposit, at which time the deposit will be used to bring the balance to zero**
155

156 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

157 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

158 **Votes: 2 ayes**

159

160 **7. Discussion and Possible Action: Electric Division – Customer Appeal – Murillo**
161 **– Deposit**

162

163 Mr. Buccheri referenced the letter from Edith Murillo to the PUC that was received on May 28,
164 2021. Ms. Murrillo's letter was requesting the return of the deposit. Ms. Murrillo stated in the
165 letter that she is aware of the Electric Divisions policy but would like consideration for the
166 following reasons:

167

- 168 a. Ms. Murrillo's office closed in December and is started a new job on May 25, 2021
- 169 b. Ms. Murrillo's annual income is \$32,720.00 and is the only income.
- 170 c. Ms. Murrillo pays \$1,125.00 for rent
- 171 d. Ms. Murrillo has qualified for utilities assistance thru the NOW program for the last
172 two years and the bills have been mostly paid thru NOW
- 173 e. Ms. Murrillo is on a limited income

174

175 Mr. Hendershot questioned what is the amount of the deposit?

176

177 Mr. Buccheri stated \$350.00.

178

179 Mr. Rinebold questioned what is the outstanding balance?

180

181 Mr. Buccheri stated that as June 4, 2021 it is paid down to a zero balance.

182

183 Mr. Beaumont stated that the customer will need to pay the Electric bill on time for 12
184 consecutive months in order to have the deposit returned.

185

186 **No Action Taken**

187

188 **8. Discussion and Possible Action: Electric Division – Customer Appeal – Guillen**
189 **– Private Light**

190

191 Mr. Buccheri referenced the letter dated June 9, 2021 to the PUC. Mr. Buccheri stated that on
192 March 20, 2021, the Wallingford Electric Division received two bills for private lights with a
193 billable address of 88 Woodhouse Avenue that were sent back by East Side LLC. East Side LLC
194 indicated that they do not own the property at 88 Woodhouse Avenue. WED staff located the
195 two contract documents for the services associated with each of the accounts and found that one
196 of the lights was for 821 East Center Street (Cousins Café parking lot) and the other was for 7
197 Allen Avenue. WED staff contacted and informed Mr. Guillen that the accounts were
198 established May of 2000 and have been paid for by East Side LLC for 21 years. Mr. Guillen
199 acknowledged that East Side LLC is responsible for the light in the Cousins Café parking lot.
200 Mr. Guillen is disputing the billing of the light located at 7 Allen Avenue which East Side LLC
201 does not own. WED staff contacted Allendale Associates (7 Allen Avenue) and transferred the
202 lighting account into their business name for future billing.

203

204 Mr. Buccheri stated that he looked into this matter and spoke with Mr. Michalowski, as Mr.
205 Guillen suggested. Mr. Michalowski was the former business partner of Mr. Guillen's father in
206 East Side LLC. Mr. Buccheri confirmed with Mr. Michalowski that his home address (3
207 Greenview Avenue) was the original billing address on the paperwork for the private area lights
208 that were ordered in May 2000. A representative of East Side LLC came in and ordered service
209 for 2 private area lights in May of 2000. Both of the service orders are under East Side LLC
210 with the 88 Woodhouse Avenue address listed and both are signed by a representative of East
211 Side LLC.

212

213 Mr. Guillen stated that he has been paying for a service that he has not owned for 21 years. Mr.
214 Guillen broke down the amount that he believed was owed to him. The estimate is as follows:

215

216 \$24.81/Month * 12 months = \$297.72/Year * 21 years = \$6252.12 (estimated amount owed to
217 Mr. Guillen)

218

219 Mr. Guillen advised that he is a great customer and has never been late on a bill. Mr. Guillen
220 stated that he is seeking a reimbursement for the service that he does not own and that he has
221 paid.

222

223 Mr. Beaumont suggested that the PUC table the item until the next PUC meeting, July 6, 2021,
224 so that the Electric Division can verify the ownership of both properties.

225

226 Mr. Guillen requested that the PUC keep him informed of the decision on July 6, 2021 via
227 telephone as he will be in Rhode Island and will not be available to attend the meeting.

228

229 **Motion to Table this item**

230

231 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

232 **Seconded by: Mr. Birney**

233 **Votes: 3 ayes**

234

235 **9. Executive Session pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f), §1-**
236 **200(6)(E), §1-210(b)(5)(B) and §7-232a regarding commercial and financial**
237 **information given in confidence regarding the Pierce Project.**

238

239 **Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:35 p.m. without further motions until a motion to**
240 **come out of Executive Session**

241

242 **Made by: Mr. Beaumont**

243 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

244 **Votes: 3 ayes**

245

246 **PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Beaumont, Commissioner Patrick Birney (via teleconference),
247 Commissioner Joel Rinebold, Director Richard Hendershot, Electric Division General Manager
248 Tony Buccheri and Electric Division Office Manager Marianne Dill

249

250 **Motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:21 p.m.**

251

252 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

253 **Seconded by: Mr. Birney**

254 **Votes: 3 ayes**

255 **ADJOURNMENT**

256

257

258 **Motion to adjourn**

259

260 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

261 **Seconded by: Mr. Birney**

262 **Votes: 3 ayes**

263

264 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:22 p.m.

265

266 Respectfully submitted,

267

268

269

270 Bernadette Sorbo

271 Recording Secretary



Respectfully submitted,



Joel Rinebold

Secretary