

APPROVED

2/7/23

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

WALLINGFORD TOWN HALL

ROOM 315

45 SOUTH MAIN STREET

WALLINGFORD, CT 06492

Tuesday, January 17, 2023

6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Beaumont; Commissioner Joel Rinebold (via teleconference); Director Richard Hendershot; Electric Division General Manager Tony Buccheri; Electric Division Business Office Manager Marianne Dill; Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Neil Amwake; Water and Sewer Divisions Business Manager Donald Langenauer and Recording Secretary Bernadette Sorbo

Absent – None

Members of the public – Maxwell Sirois, Larry Zabrowski

Mr. Beaumont 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 Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2022
- b. Consider and Approve Correction from November 2022 Director's Report (Item 4-13) "DAM spot market prices ranged from \$3300/MWh" - should read \$33.00/MWh
- c. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer - Electric - Distribution - Misc. Distribution Expenses
- d. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer - Electric - Distribution - Maintenance Station Equipment

Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda

Made by: Mr. Rinebold

Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont

42 **Votes: 2 ayes**

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

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50 **4. Discussion and Action: Approval of the Director's Report for the Month of**
51 **December 2022**

52

53 Mr. Rinebold requested a brief assessment on the power purchase costs coming up.

54

55 Mr. Hendershot stated that the last set of forward curves in the Energy New England (ENE)
56 Weekly Report were trending down at the far end. Most recently, European gas has gotten less
57 expensive. The whole Northern Hemisphere is experiencing a warmer than average winter in the
58 developed parts therefore, the use and demand for gas is less and storage is good worldwide.

59

60 Mr. Rinebold requested a brief assessment on the budget and where it is going in the current
61 fiscal year.

62

63 Ms. Dill stated that in the current fiscal year, the operating expenses in total will be within
64 budget. The questions that the Electric Division may have will be shifting funds from one area to
65 another depending on the need from labor as to what is more important and what labor projects
66 are directed towards.

67

68 Mr. Beaumont referenced Item No. 4-101 in regards to the water main break on Maple Wood
69 Drive and commended the Water Division staff for the great work.

70

71 Mr. Beaumont referenced Item No. 4-103, Statics and Metrics and questioned if the 6,243 days
72 of supply remaining at 2.94 MG average per day is correct?

73

74 Mr. Amwake stated that this was a typo. It should read 643 days and will be corrected.

75

76 **Motion to Approve the Director's Report for the Month of December 2022**

77

78 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

79 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

80 **Votes: 2 ayes**

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84 **5. Discussion and Possible Action: Customer Appeal - Sirois - High Consumption**
85 **and Billing**

86

87

88 Mr. Sirois stated that he has nothing beyond the main story itself which is stated in the
 89 memorandum. Mr. and Mrs. Sirois work second shifts and have awful sleep schedules. To the
 90 Sirois' knowledge, their roommates moved in around mid-August and the toilet had started to
 91 leak a couple weeks prior to them moving in. At that point, the toilets started to make a hissing
 92 sound. Mr. Sirois did not know that this was a problem. The roommates worked with the Water
 93 and Sewer Division to have the toilet looked at and the meterman who inspected the toilet
 94 questioned how long the toilet was doing this? The roommates responded "since we moved in".
 95 This caused confusion as the home was purchased in February but the roommates did not move
 96 in until late summer.

97
 98 Mr. Amwake referenced the memorandum dated January 11, 2023 from Lawrence C. Regan,
 99 Assistant Business Manager and stated on February 23, 2022, the home was purchased by the
 100 Sirois'. On April 20, 2022 the water meter was read for the June billing cycle and the meter
 101 showed no consumption used. A re-read was obtained on May 31, 2022 and the meter still
 102 showed no consumption used. On June 1, 2022, a voicemail message was left for the customer
 103 stating there was no consumption being recorded on the meter. A meter reading was obtained on
 104 July 22, 2022 for the September bill and the water meter still showed no consumption used.

105
 106 On August 18, 2022 the Water and Sewer Divisions Business Office sent the customer a possible
 107 stopped meter letter. There was no response from the customer, so the Business Office sent a
 108 second possible stopped meter letter on August 31, 2022. The customer responded to that letter
 109 and made an appointment for September 9, 2022. At the September 9, 2022 appointment, the
 110 water meter was found to be stopped and was replaced with a new meter by Water Division staff.

111
 112 Immediately after the meter was replaced, the Water and Sewer Divisions observed high
 113 consumption readings at the premises. On November 18, 2022, the Water and Sewer Division
 114 sent a high consumption notice to the customer. On November 21, 2022, Water Division staff
 115 obtained data from the water meter which showed continuous 24 hour a day consumption from
 116 October 13, 2022 to November 21, 2022. Business Office staff then telephoned the customer
 117 and twice left voice messages on November 21, 2022 to call the Water and Sewer Divisions
 118 Business Office regarding the high consumption. After no response to the voice messages, a
 119 Water Division meterman went to the house on November 22, 2022 and knocked on the door.
 120 The customer let the meterman into the house where he found the toilet running continuously.
 121 The customer stated that they would fix the toilet.

122
 123 Subsequent water meter rereads on November 28, 2022 confirmed that the leak had been fixed.
 124 Since the Water and Sewer Divisions cannot precisely identify the date between February 23,
 125 2022 (the move in date) and September 9, 2022 (the date the new water meter was installed)
 126 when the stopped meter occurred, it is recommended that the customer be back billed at the
 127 median daily usage of 17.58 cubic feet per day, equal to 1,600 cubic feet per quarter, which is the
 128 median consumption for 5/8-inch meter single-family residential customers. The amount of this
 129 revised retroactive bill is \$1,417.27. The calculation for this billing is below.

130

# of Days	X	Average Daily Usage	=	Retroactive Usage	X	Rate	=	Amount to Bill
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2/23/22 to 4/20/22								
56	X	17.58	=	984	X	.0877	=	\$86.30
4/20/22 to 7/22/22								
93	X	17.58	=	1,635	X	.09355	=	\$152.95
Retro Active Bill								\$239.25
Current Quarter 7/22/22 to 9/9/22								
49	X	17.58	=	861	X	.09355	=	\$80.55
9/9/22 to 10/26/22 (usage on new meter)								
				11,299	X	.09355	=	\$1,057.02
Water and Sewer Basic Service Fees								\$40.45
Total Bill								\$1,417.27

131
132 The majority of the bill is for the high consumption. It is recommended that the Sirois' enter into
133 a payment plan with the Water and Sewer Divisions concerning their December 1, 2022 water
134 and sewer bill of \$1,417.27. The payment plan shall be a minimum monthly payment of \$125.00
135 with no interest for 12 months for the balance of the December 1, 2022 bill amount provided that
136 the full amount of \$1,417.27 is paid by January 31, 2024; and the Sirois' remain current with
137 future water and sewer bills. Mr. and Mrs. Sirois' shall contact the Water and Sewer Divisions
138 Business Office within seven calendar days to enter into the payment plan.

139
140 Mr. Rinebold stated that he appreciates the diligence from Mr. Amwake and his staff as
141 everything was done proper and correct. Mr. Rinebold stated that this is unusual and he considers
142 this to be an extraordinary circumstance in that there was some confusion on the no data from
143 meter reads for several months due to the stopped meter and when the new meter was installed
144 there was then very high usage rates for several months since there was no history on the use.
145 Mr. Rinebold felt the consumer did not get the feedback to make appropriate changes. Mr.
146 Rinebold does not believe this is the fault of the system but how the system works as the system
147 does not provide instantaneous reads.

148
149 Mr. Beaumont stated that leaking toilets can use a tremendous amount of water even if you do
150 not hear the toilet hissing. When the toilets leak, the usage has to be accounted for as the water
151 has to be treated for all of the water that is distributed to the town and then the water goes to the
152 sewer and has to be treated again. Essentially the water is treated twice. The \$1,417.27 reflects
153 both the water and sewer usage.

154
155 Mr. Amwake stated that this is correct and pointed out that there are a lot of details in the
156 memorandum in regards to the issue. This was split into two parts. One was for the stopped
157 meter before the Water and Sewer Divisions gained access to the house to change the meter and
158 the other was for after the new meter was installed. Mr. Amwake noted that on April 20, 2022,
159 the first read was done which showed no consumption. On May 31, 2022, a re-read was
160 obtained and again showed no consumption. This did not raise a concern for the Divisions as
161 particularly with new homeowners not all homeowners move in right away. Some homeowners
162 may still be in a previous residency or maybe doing work or construction on the home. On June
163 1st a voicemail was left for the Sirois' with no response. On July 22nd, another reading was done
164 and again showed no consumption. On August 18th, the Division sent out a stopped meter letter
165 and again on August 31st. The customer did not respond until September 9th. All of June, all of

166 July and all of August (100 days) went by after the initial contact by the Water and Sewer
167 Divisions before the Division could get into the home to change the meter. The meter was
168 changed on September 9th and the Division started to conduct meter readings to established
169 average daily usage for this customer. When the new meter was installed, it instantaneously
170 showed a high consumption. From February 23rd to September 9th the meter went from typical
171 usage to high consumption in usage. The Divisions have given the benefit to the customer in that
172 sometime between February 23rd and September 9th the customer went into a high consumption
173 situation. The Divisions only charged the median consumption rate for this period as the
174 Divisions did not know the precise date when the high consumption began. The Divisions may
175 have been able to know if the Division was able to access the home sooner than the 100 days
176 after the initial response. The original bill was over \$5,000.00 based on a high consumption
177 status from February 23, 2022 when the customers purchased the house. Mr. Amwake had a
178 discussion with the Assistant Business Manager letting them know that the Division does not
179 know when the toilet began leaking and therefore go with the benefit of doubt and use the
180 Division's standard consumption rate. The customer admitted that the toilet began leaking
181 sometime in August. This is 30 +/- days of high consumption that the Divisions are not charging
182 for. The Division is just trying to be fair and reasonable.

183

184 Mr. Beaumont stated that we have a fiduciary responsibility to all of our customers.

185

186 Mr. Hendershot stated that he echoed Mr. Rinebold in that the Water and Sewer Divisions made
187 all reasonable efforts to contact the customer and to do the calculations based on real numbers
188 using median consumption since there were no meter readings to support the usage. The
189 Divisions' approach was measured, explainable, repeatable and reasonable.

190

191 Mr. Sirois stated that he believes the plan is fair and reasonable and he will get in touch with the
192 Water and Sewer Divisions tomorrow morning to set up the payment plan.

193

194 **Motion to Approve the Payment Plan of \$125.00 per Month with no Interest for 12 Months**
195 **for the balance of the December 1, 2022 bill amount; provided that the full amount of**
196 **\$1,417.27 is paid by January 31, 2024 on a timely basis**

197

198 **Made by: Mr. Beaumont**

199 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

200 **Votes: 2 ayes**

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204 **Public Question and Answer Period**

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206 Mr. Hendershot read the public questions from Adelheid Koepfer of Whiffle Tree Road to the
207 Wallingford PUC dated January 3, 2023.

208

209 1. School facilities update

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211 A study by SP+A was presented in October, a public comment session is scheduled for
212 1/11/2023. Information is available on the school district's website under BOE – Restructuring
213 Study.

214
215 The Board of Education, and eventually the town is faced with a comprehensive list of
216 recommended renovations and potentially new construction. Upcoming major decisions will
217 affect our school facilities for the next 20-30 years and beyond, including future energy use of
218 the buildings – which will affect both WED customers and taxpayers.

219 - How can the Wallingford Electric Division best support the effort to renovate/build new
220 in the most energy efficient way?

221
222 Mr. Hendershot responded by fairly and consistently applying the Wallingford Electric
223 Division's energy conservation policies.

224
225 - Can WED provide design and technical knowledge regarding high performing buildings
226 or net-zero energy buildings? Will the Energy Conservation Specialist be part of a future
227 building committee?

228
229 Mr. Hendershot responded perhaps and offered this anecdotally as the Energy Conservation
230 Efficiency Specialist has a degree in architecture and has a working background in efficient
231 building design and applications. Perhaps the Energy Conservation and Efficiency Specialist
232 would be able to provide assistance in this effort but Mr. Hendershot cannot commit the Electric
233 Division to do this nor can the Division say that this is something that they routinely do because
234 it is not.

235
236 To my understanding, there are some funds available for Renewable Energy Projects for
237 municipal rate 8 & 9 customers. Can these be used to make our school less dependent on
238 fluctuating gas and electricity prices?

239
240 Mr. Hendershot responded yes, if the schools propose eligible projects then the Electric Division
241 could make those limited funds available.

242
243 - Schools would be eligible, correct?

244
245 Mr. Hendershot responded yes, see response above.

246
247 - Who else do you anticipate applying for these funds?

248
249 Mr. Hendershot responded other town departments and the buildings that they control could
250 apply for those funds if they prepared a project.

251
252 - How much funding is available at this point?

253
254 Mr. Hendershot responded that the Division did not check this before the meeting therefore he
255 cannot provide an answer on record to this. However, Mr. Hendershot will follow up with Ms.
256 Koepfer on this matter.

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Subsequent to this meeting, Mr. Hendershot determined that the WED has approximately \$120,000 of funds available for renewable energy incentives at Municipal Buildings.

- 2. Any update on old questions?
 - Voluntary green rate?

Mr. Hendershot responded that there has not been any progress. The WED has not been able to identify a way to construct and offer a “voluntary green rate” other than through the purchase by the Electric Division of renewable energy credits. The PUC has made it clear to Mr. Hendershot that they are not in favor of such a process or a purchase. Therefore, the WED has not pursued this. The New England Power Pool, which is the stakeholder group that advises and makes proposals to ISO New England, has generated a proposal to ISO to prepare a forward green energy market. A place where both RECs and energy produced by renewable resources could be traded (sold by producers, purchased by users) in a transparent forward based market similar to how capacity is purchased now. This is an effort by New England Power Pool that has just gotten started.

- Accessibility of meeting recordings (or draft minutes, clearly marked as such) within a week? E.g. Meeting Owl (works with GoToMeeting, \$1,049 single purchase, can record the room) could provide a “real video” for residents to get informed about PUC meetings like we can about other meetings.

Mr. Hendershot responded no, this is collectively an opinion of the PUC and staff that the current process is adequate and Mr. Hendershot does not anticipate any changes.

Mr. Beaumont commented that as far as the Corporation Counsel is concerned the current process is adequate also.

Public Question and Answer Period Closed

6. Discussion and Possible Action: Budget Amendment - FY 2022-2023 - Sewer Division - Chemical Expenses for Wastewater Treatment

Mr. Amwake stated that this is the first full fiscal year that the Tertiary Phosphorus Treatment System has been online. When the Sewer Division operating budget was completed in February 2022, the projected chemical usage for the Tertiary Phosphorus Treatment System and the

303 additional chemical needs for sludge pressing operations were based on engineering calculations
304 versus actual, historical data. Additionally, the WSD estimated the chemical expenses on the
305 leaner side, pending actual chemical usage data once the Tertiary Phosphorus Treatment System
306 was operational. WSD is seeking additional funds for Aluminum Sulfate which is used in the
307 Tertiary Phosphorus Treatment System as well as additional funds for polymer. The polymer is
308 used in the Tertiary Phosphorus Treatment System and for sludge pressing. The Tertiary
309 Phosphorus process generates more sludge therefore more polymer is required there. The Sewer
310 Division has estimated the quantity of chemicals needed to carry the WSD through August 1,
311 2023. Then, based on the estimated quantities of chemicals, multiplied by the unit prices for the
312 affected chemicals, the WSD determined the estimated amount of additional funds needed to
313 purchase chemicals through August 1, 2023. This amount, including a ten percent contingency,
314 is estimated to be \$82,800.00.

315
316 **Motion to Approve the Budget Amendment - FY 2022-2023 - Sewer Division - Chemical**
317 **Expenses for Wastewater Treatment**

318
319 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**
320 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**
321 **Votes: 2 ayes**
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323

324
325 **7. Discussion and Action: Resolution - Thomas Esposito**
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327 Mr. Rinebold expressed his gratitude and thanks for the services provided by Mr. Esposito.
328

329 Mr. Amwake stated that Mr. Esposito worked for the Town of Wallingford Water and Sewer
330 Divisions for 35 years. Mr. Esposito started off as a chemist in the Wastewater Laboratory then
331 moved to be the Water Treatment and Pumping Supervisor and then eventually became the
332 Assistant Superintendent for Water Supply and Treatment. Mr. Esposito is an intelligent guy,
333 who understood chemistry and water treatment processes. Mr. Amwake stated that Mr. Esposito
334 is a great mentor and teacher to the Water and Sewer Divisions junior staff. Mr. Amwake
335 appreciated his calming presence and patience during stressful times. The Division will miss this
336 calm presence and smart approach to water treatment and water chemistry.

337
338 **Motion to Approve the Resolution for Thomas Esposito**
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340 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**
341 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**
342 **Votes: 2 ayes**
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346 **8. WPCF Upgrades Project**
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348 Mr. Amwake updated the Commission on the construction of the WPCF Project.

349
350 In regards to the General Building, the Town, the Contractor and the Engineer continue to review
351 and complete outstanding punch list items.

352
353 At the Tertiary Phosphorus Building, testing and proper scaling of the polymer pumps is in
354 process (happening this week and next week, as needed).

355
356 As of December 15, 2022 the net change orders approved by DEEP and reflected on the general
357 contractor's invoice is \$534,114.66 (no change from the previous month).

358
359 Net change orders as approved by DEEP is equal to \$772,463.60. Please note that DEEP
360 approved Change Order Nos. 17, 18, 19 and 20 for a combined value of \$238,348.94 on January
361 6, 2023. Thus, the WSD anticipates that the Contractor will invoice for these change orders on
362 their next invoice.

363
364 Net change orders as negotiated and signed by the Engineer (AECOM), the Contractor (C.H.
365 Nickerson) and the Town through January 17, 2023 are equal to \$849,062.60 (1.8658% of the
366 original contract sum); no change from the previous month.

367
368 Construction Contract Payment Applications – C. H. Nickerson

369 Original Contract Sum	\$45,507,000.00	
370 Net Change by Change Orders	<u>\$534,114.66</u>	<i>(No Change this Month)</i>
371 Contract Sum to Date	\$46,041,114.66	As of December 15, 2022

372
373 Construction Contract Schedule

374 Original Completion Date	February 10, 2022	
375 Net Change Schedule Days	<u>193</u>	<i>(No Change this Month)</i>
376 Contract Completion Date	August 22, 2022	As of December 15, 2022

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380 **9. Discussion and Possible Action: Attendance to APPA Legislative Rally for**
381 **Commissioner Rinebold**

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383 Mr. Beaumont stated that Mr. Rinebold was suggested to attend the APPA Legislative Rally
384 because he is on the Policy Management Counsel for the APPA. There are four representatives
385 from the North East Region and representatives from across the country. They will learn what
386 the various legislative issues are and lobbying the Senators and Congress people to support and
387 educate the APPA on the various items.

388
389 **Motion to Approve the Attendance to APPA Legislative Rally for Commissioner Rinebold**

390
391 **Made by: Mr. Beaumont**
392 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**
393 **Votes: 2 ayes**

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Correspondence

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn

Made by: Mr. Rinebold
Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont
Votes: 2 ayes

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Bracale for

Bernadette Sorbo

Recording Secretary

Respectfully submitted,

Joel Rinebold / mb

Joel Rinebold

Secretary