

**APPROVED**

2/21/23

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
WALLINGFORD ELECTRIC DIVISION

100 JOHN STREET

WALLINGFORD, CT 06492

Tuesday, February 7, 2023

6:30 P.M.

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Beaumont; Commissioner Joel Rinebold; 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 – None*

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 January 17, 2023
- b. Consider and Approve Budget Appropriation - Electric - General Plant Communications Equipment
- c. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer - Electric - Distribution Plant - Street Lighting and Signal System
- d. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer - Electric - Distribution - Leased Property on Customer Premises
- e. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer - Electric - Distribution - Customer Installations Expense

**Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda**

**Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

**Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

43 **Votes: 2 ayes**  
44  
45

46  
47 **3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None**  
48

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50  
51 **4. Discussion and Possible Action: Customer Appeal – Piscitelli – Returned Check**  
52 **Fee and Interest**  
53

54 Mr. Amwake referenced Item No. 4-2 and stated that the Wallingford Water and Sewer  
55 Divisions instituted a returned check fee of \$35.00 effective October 1, 2020 as adopted by the  
56 PUC on July 21, 2020. The fee was adopted to compensate for labor expended to research and  
57 adjust a customer's account. The impetus for the returned check fee is to compensate the Water  
58 and Sewer Divisions for the additional labor, benefits and overhead expenses incurred by the  
59 Water and Sewer Divisions to address a payment that cannot be processed. The rationale is that  
60 the costs incurred by the Water and Sewer Divisions to perform the extra tasks required to  
61 manually adjust a customer's account should be borne by the specific customer and not by all  
62 water and sewer customers. Therefore, the Water and Sewer Divisions recommends that no  
63 action be taken.  
64

65 Mr. Rinebold stated that he appreciated the staff report and believes the correct protocols have  
66 been followed.  
67

68 Mr. Beaumont stated that if Mr. Piscitelli had advised the Water and Sewer Division that he put a  
69 stop payment on the first check he wrote this would not have been an issue.  
70

71 **No Action Taken**  
72  
73  
74

75 **Public Question and Answer Period**  
76

77 **No Members Present**  
78

79 **Public Question and Answer Period Closed**  
80  
81  
82

83 **5. Discussion and Possible Action: Budget Appropriation – FY 22-23 – Distribution**  
84 **Plant – Line Transformers**  
85

86 Mr. Buccheri stated that the Wallingford Electric Division went out to bid several times for  
87 distribution transformers, single phase pad mounted transformers, three phase pad mounted  
88 transformers and single phase pole mounted transformers. Part of the RFP was to receive firm

89 pricing and a delivery schedule. The transformers have been re-bid because the bidders have  
90 taken exception to WED not allowing cost escalators due to volatile economic condition  
91 specifically metals pricing. Market conditions continue to be a cause of immediate concern.  
92 Based on the bid results, transformer costs increased an average of 316% from last year. Lead  
93 times have continued to extend and manufacturers are not holding prices based on raw material  
94 cost escalators and market pricing. As prescribed in Section 15 of the Town's Purchasing  
95 Ordinance, the Mayor provided authorization for the emergency purchase of transformers. The  
96 additional \$220,000.00 is to cover the increased cost of single phase and three phase pad  
97 mounted transformers provided by the vendor. The vendor has stated that a purchase order  
98 covering the increased amount is necessary by February 16, 2023 in order to hold the production  
99 slot.

100  
101 Mr. Rinebold questioned what does the future look like in regards to the supply chain and  
102 inflation?

103  
104 Mr. Buccheri stated that he has not seen any indication that this will flatten off.

105  
106 Mr. Rinebold questioned what is done with all of the leaking transformers?

107  
108 Mr. Buccheri stated if the leaking transformers are rotted they get scrapped. The WED will test  
109 the transformer and will harvest whatever transformers they can.

110  
111 **Motion to Approve the Budget Appropriation – FY 22-23 – Distribution Plant – Line**  
112 **Transformers**

113  
114 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

115 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

116 **Votes: 2 ayes**  
117  
118  
119

120 **6. Discussion and Possible Action: Additional Support to Public Utilities by**  
121 **Wallingford Department of Human Resources**  
122

123 Mr. Hendershot stated that as the PUC will recall, the Commission had directed Mr. Hendershot  
124 to work within the Town to develop and fill a new position within the Department of Public  
125 Utilities to provide human resources type support to the Department of Public Utilities.  
126 Specifically, it was envisioned that a proposed HR-type position within the Department of Public  
127 Utilities would perform and/or assist the General Managers with recruiting, hiring and on-  
128 boarding new employees to fill vacant positions; interface with Department of Public Utilities  
129 employees with questions or concerns about Town-provided benefits; and coordinate, schedule  
130 and track Division-wide, or Department of Public Utilities wide training and certifications.

131  
132 Mr. Hendershot had the initial discussion regarding this matter with the Director of Human  
133 Resources, and the Human Resources Director pointed out that the Town's Charter very  
134 explicitly describes the Human Resources Department (Chapter XVII, Section 1) and the system

135 of Classified Service (Chapter XX, Sections 1 and 2) within the Town. As such, the creation of  
136 an HR-type position as described above would most certainly run afoul of these provisions of the  
137 Charter. The HR Director has also acknowledged to Mr. Hendershot that the HR Department is  
138 understaffed, and they would not oppose the Department of Public Utilities providing funding for  
139 additional staff within HR to enable increased support for the Department of Public Utilities.  
140

141 Mr. Hendershot stated that in the discussion with the HR Director, Mr. Hendershot offered to  
142 have the position physically sit in the HR department and the HR Director commented that there  
143 [currently] is no space. Mr. Hendershot noted that there is space across the hall in the Finance  
144 Department. The HR Director suggested the use of outside recruiters and Mr. Hendershot  
145 initially offered to fund that effort. After speaking this matter over with Mr. Buccheri and Mr.  
146 Amwake it was decided that this was an option that none of the three divisions of the Department  
147 of Public Utilities were in favor of. Mr. Hendershot also offered to modify the Employment  
148 Application document (removing identification of applicant so that the two subject matter  
149 experts could review the applicants to determine who is qualified and who is not qualified) and  
150 to assist with proctoring exams. Both these offers were declined.  
151

152 Mr. Buccheri stated that there are applications that are sent to the Divisions from Human  
153 Resources that shouldn't have even have been considered and conversely there are some  
154 applications from qualified applicants that never make it to the Division to be reviewed. Mr.  
155 Buccheri noted that the last time his Division was fully staffed with System Operators was  
156 December 2018.  
157

158 Mr. Amwake noted that the Water and Sewer Divisions are down 8 to 10 staff members on an  
159 ongoing basis, and as such it is not a function of what the staff wants to do each day but a  
160 function of what can be done for the day. More than 50% of the staff has only been with the  
161 Division less than five years or in their current position less than five years, and therefore the full  
162 skills and knowledge of the position has not been learned.  
163

164 Mr. Rinebold suggested to type a brief one-page report pointing out the facts along with a  
165 strawman list of solutions. The 7 month hiring process needs to be moved to a smaller window  
166 of time.  
167

168 **No Action Taken**  
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171

172 **Correspondence**  
173  
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175

176 **ADJOURNMENT**  
177

178 **Motion to Adjourn**  
179  
180

181 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**  
182 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**  
183 **Votes: 2 ayes**

184  
185 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:21 p.m.

186  
187 Respectfully submitted,

188  
189 *Michelle Sorbo for*

190 Bernadette Sorbo

191  
192  
193 Recording Secretary

194

Respectfully submitted,

*Joel Rinebold/mb*

Joel Rinebold

Secretary