



**Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting**

**Monday, February 28, 2023**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Meeting held via teleconference**

**Full Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees**

Ed Kelly	Chairman, WPCA Board Member
Merritt Nesin	WPCA Board Member/Technical Committee Chair
Matthew Quinones (Absent)	WPCA Board Member/ Director of Operations
Sandra Dennies	WPCA Board Member / Director of Administration
Amiel Goldberg	WPCA Board Member/Board of Reps
J.R. McMullen	WPCA Board Member/Board of Finance
Robert Barocas	WPCA Board Member/Finance Committee Chair
Steven Bagwin	WPCA Board Member
William Brink	Executive Director, WPCA
Rhudean Bull	Administration Manager, WPCA
Ann Brown	Supervising Engineer, WPCA
Mark Turndahl	Accountant, WPCA
Crystal Blair	Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA
Abigail Logrono	Account Clerk II, WPCA
Robert Pudelka (Absent)	Plant Supervisor
Steve Pietrzyk	Collections System Supervisor
David Yanik	City Comptroller
William Ward (Absent)	Collection Attorney (Pilicy Ryan & Ward, P.C.)
Lynda Roca	CompUtil

**Call to Order, Pledge and Roll Call**

E. Kelly, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm with roll call; there was no pledge of allegiance. A quorum was present seven (7 Board Members).

**Public Participation**

No members of the public were present

**Minutes Approval of the Full Board Meeting of January 30, 2023**

S. Dennies motion to approve the January 30, 2023 minutes; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote 7-0-0**

**Administrative/Budget Report**

R. Bull reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies – Mechanics position changes
- Finance Manager interviews underway
- Union negotiations update
- No Injuries to report
- COVID 19 update
- Kubra update
- FY 2023-2024 Budget

E. Kelly motioned to take agenda item 8 out of order; seconded by A. Goldberg. There was no further discussion. Vote 7-0-0

## **FY 2022 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report**

S. Dennies stated that she asked Barry Bernabe, the City's Financial Advisor, to speak about the importance of compliance regarding completing the audit on time and the implications if the audit report is not completed by the deadline. B. Bernabe explained that the Audit Report is due eight months after the end of the fiscal year—February 28th and explained the ramifications of the revenue bonds debt covenant violation if the deadlines for audit reporting are not met. He explained that it would be devastating and urged the WPCA to complete the audit report by the extension date because otherwise, it would lead to a Technical Default affecting the WPCA's current rating. He explained that other municipalities are facing the same issues but advised the WPCA to get through those issues to avoid problems. D. Yanik explained the difficulties that the City and WPCA face in meeting the deadlines; the Audit Industry is experiencing staff shortages. He said that the U.S. Bank had put the City and the WPCA on notice but that they provided a grace period. He concluded by saying that steps are being taken to get through the difficulties and stay on top of the completion of the audit.

## **Sub-Committee Reports**

### **Finance Committee**

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

- D. Yanik, City Controller gave an update on the audit
- M. Turndahl reported on the January Financials
- Update on FY 23-24 Operating Budget

### **Technical Committee**

M. Nesin reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, February 22, 2023, and the following was discussed:

- Toured Plant site on Tuesday, February 21, 2023
- Plant running great, some minor maintenance issues, but they are being taken care of
- Approved Tighe and Bond's Scope of Services for the Pump Stations upgrades
- Update on the 2023 NEWEA Annual Conference attendances

### **Workforce Development Committee**

S. Bagwin reported there was a committee meeting held on Thursday, February 23, 2023. But that R. Bull had reported on what would have been discussed at the meeting in her admin report.

## **Financial Update**

### **CompUtil Report**

L. Roca reported that they have been making a lot of collection calls. She said that the intent to lien letters went out, and liens will be placed tonight. She stated that out of almost 20,000 customers, just under 800 customers will have a lien placed on their account. She went on to say that the phones have been busy, and payments are coming in. She stated that the October bill is over 95% and that of the 20 times they've billed, 20 bills are over 99%. She also stated that the closings have definitely slowed down as result of the higher interest rates, but foreclosures and short sales unfortunately have increased and that CompUtil is tracking to ensure any debt owed is collects.

### **Receivables & Arrears**

M. Turndahl reported for the month of January

- \$2.863 million received verses \$2.672 million previous year sewer use fees
- Oldest receivables by year was paid down by \$11,091
- Average collection rate 99.29% vs 99.14% last month's
- Cash collection through January \$2,345K

### **January 2023 Financial Update**

M. Turndahl reported the following:

- \$472k net income loss January
- \$5.809 million available in Pool Cash
- \$24.227 million in Capital Reserve Account
- \$14.312 million in Bond Proceeds

### **A&W Collections Report & Update**

W. Ward was not present. His report states the following:

- 228 active files

- 54 accounts with balances above (\$5,000) Foreclosure Threshold
- 27 In Payment Plans, 1 stayed due to bankruptcy filings
- Eighteen (18) active foreclosures
- 159 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- 11 files referred
- 1 File closed since last meeting
- Collected \$26,497.20 for January
- Total collected for 2023 \$38,337.79

**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 Review: Final FY24 Operating Expense and Revenue Budget**

R. Bull explained that the OPEB and Central Services Cost Allocation numbers still need to be finalized. Still, the Board can approve the FY23-24 budget contingent upon the OPM providing the final numbers. She also mentioned that the WPCA created a Tier Series for the Mechanics, and several Cost Center changes were required during the budget process. Furthermore, she stated that no new positions were added, but staff needed to be moved to different cost centers to provide some equity.

B. Brink explained the line items with significant dollar increases. He explained that the expected increases in gas and electricity were based on projections from the City's Energy Advisor. He briefly discussed the salary increase for upgrades and the pending IOUE settlement agreement. He also provided information on the Revenue projections and offsets to the Operating and Revenue budget. In conclusion, he stated that the FY'23-24 Operating and Expense budget would increase by 2.5 percent compared to the FY'22-23 budget. In comparison, the Revenue budget would increase by 2.7 percent due to the amount required for the debt ratio.

After a brief discussion, S. Dennies made a motion to approve the FY '23-24 Operating & Expense and Revenue budgets with minor changes to the OPEB and Central Services Cost Allocation lines items after being finalized by OPM; seconded by R. Barocas. There was no further discussion. **Vote 7-0-0.**

**The presentation of the 2023 Alfred E. Peloquin Award to Bill Brink from the New England Water Environment Association (NEWEA) at their annual conference**

E. Kelly congratulated B. Brink on his recognition by the New England Water Environment Association for his outstanding contribution to plant operation and wastewater operations in the New England region in 2022. B. Brink thanked E. Kelly for the acknowledgement and contributed the award to the high esteem held by others of the Stamford WPCA, and the known quality of the staff and operations. He went on to say it was a joint award for everyone.

**Old Business:**

No old business discussed

**New Business:**

No new business discussed

At 6:42 pm, S. Dennies made a motion to adjourn the February meeting; seconded by R. Barocas. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 7-0-0.**

**Stamford WPCA Top Issues (2/24/23)**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action Description</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
1	COVID-19 Outbreak	Take action to reduce impact on SWPCA Operations and Finances	Operations and Financial	No COVID cases since last Board meeting. 91% of staff is fully vaccinated.	Unvaccinated staff no longer required to be tested weekly by City contractor.
2	Primary sludge pumping and dewatering 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 dewatering 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 in process of providing required submittals and planning to mobilize on-site in the spring.	Construction expected to take up to 2 years.
3	Providing sanitary sewers to Perna Lane Area	Evaluate cost effective options for providing sanitary sewers to the Perna Lane Area.	Operations	Conducted a Public Information Meeting via Webinar on 1/19/23 to update the property owners on the status of the project and estimated project costs. Contacted property owner who is agreeable to an easement for the pump station on Perna Lane.	Tighe & Bond will redesign the Phase I sanitary sewers and the additional pump station on Perna Lane this winter and spring to bid the project for construction in summer 2023 assuming the necessary permits from CTDOT and City EPB can be attained by then.
4	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	Completed sewer system evaluation surveys (SSES) in Phase II subareas and have awarded construction contract to National Water Main for sewer rehabilitation in Phase II subareas next on priority list for I/I removal.	Sewer rehabilitation expected to be completed in the spring and summer of 2023. SWPCA sewer crew using CCTV to locate large sources of I/I in sewers tributary to Saddle Rock Road and Carter Drive Pump Stations. Those sewers found to be contributing substantial I/I will be added to the contract for sewer rehabilitation.
5	BOR Resolution No. 4113 calls for planning for upgrading City drainage infrastructure and the WWTF to cope with extreme weather events.	Coordinate with City Engineering to evaluate impact of extreme weather events on the Hurricane Barrier and three (3) pump stations. Evaluate impact on SWPCA's pump stations and WWTF	Regulatory and Operations	Hazen completed a hydraulic evaluation of WPCF. Maximum raw sewage flow before overtopping mixed liquor channel to FST's is 69 mgd..	Will coordinate with Matt Quinones, Director of Operations and City Engineering to develop short and long term action plans for SWPCA.
6	Personnel Safety	Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.	Operations	Siemens has completed electrical preventive maintenance (EPM) on the electrical switchgear at the treatment plant.	Data collected by Siemens from the EPM will be used by Tighe & Bond to complete the arc flash analyses and MCC panel labeling.

7	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	Technical Committee visited Schenectady, NY WPCF to see new sludge pyrolysis process currently in development. W Brink, A Brown and R Pudelka visited the Mattabasset WPCF in Cromwell, CT to see a new sewage sludge incinerator that was installed in 2017.	Cancelled plan to see the anaerobic digesters at the Camden, NJ WPCF on February 10. Will reschedule.  These sludge treatment and disposal technologies were short listed in the Sludge Management Plan.
8	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	Selected Gannett Fleming Engineers to do the evaluation and design.	Gannett Fleming to complete the basis of design by the end of the month and final design by the end of summer 2023. Plan to bid the project for construction in the fall of 2023.
9	Facilities Building 6A which houses SWPCA Collection System, Electricians and Regulatory Compliance staff is deteriorated and has a leaking roof that cannot be fixed.	Evaluate options for relocating SWPCA staff that currently work in Building 6A	Operations	Leasing two (2) temporary portable buildings fitted with office space to house the Collection System staff.	Coordinating with the temporary trailers supplier for the trailers fit out and delivery by end of March. Will issue a RFQ for an architect to develop a conceptual design for a new building to house SWPCA staff displaced from Building 6A.
10	Upgrade Alvord Lane, Commerce Drive and Saddle Rock Pump Stations	Pump Stations are aged and in need of upgrade or replacement	Operations	Selected Tighe & Bond Engineers to perform the study, design and engineering during construction services for upgrading the three (3) pump stations.	Technical Committee approved Tighe & Bond's proposed scope of services and fee to develop the Basis of Design for the pump stations upgrade. Will prepare an agreement for engineering services to present to the Board at its March meeting.