



Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting

Monday, December 18, 2023

5:30 p.m.

Meeting held via teleconference

Full Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Ed Kelly	Chairman, WPCA Board Member
Amiel Goldberg	Vice Chair, WPCA Board Member/Board of Reps
Benjamin Barnes	WPCA Board Member/ Director of Administration
Matthew Quinones (Absent)	WPCA Board Member/ Director of Operations
J.R. McMullen (Absent)	WPCA Board Member/Board of Finance
Robert Barocas (Absent)	WPCA Board Member/Finance Committee Chair
Steven Bagwin	WPCA Board Member/ Workforce Development Chair
Merritt Nesin	WPCA Board Member
Frank Salem	WPCA Board Member
William Brink	Executive Director, WPCA
Rhudean Bull	Administration Manager, WPCA
Ann Brown	Supervising Engineer, WPCA
Vernesa DeCausey	Financial Manager, WPCA
Crystal Blair	Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA
Abigail Logrono	Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA
Robert Pudelka	Plant Supervisor
Steve Pietrzyk	Collections System Supervisor
David Yanik	City Comptroller
Tom McKirdy	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 5:30 pm with roll call; there was no pledge of allegiance. A quorum was present eight (6 Board Members).

Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

Minutes Approval of the Full Board Meeting of November 20, 2023

S. Bagwin made a motion to approve the November 20, 2023 minutes; seconded by B. Barnes. There was no further discussion. **Vote 6-0-0.**

Administrative/Budget Report

R. Bull briefly reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies
- Staffing
- Worker's Comp injury
- Covid 19
- Budget Breakdown
- Darien Billing

Sub-Committee Reports

Finance Committee

F. Salem stated that the Finance Committee was held before the Board meeting and the following occurred:

- Discussed the financial report
- Review of the 655 properties that are along sewer street but are not connected. The discussion was deferred until further legal opinion is obtained
- The Housing Authority discussion was deferred for further legal opinion
- Discussed the unused portion bond proceeds for current projects

Technical Committee

E. Kelly reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, and the following was discussed:

- Discussed and approved the bid waiver for Siemens to perform the Arc Flash study
- S. Pietrzyk updated the committee on the collection system
- R. Pudelka gave an update on Plant operations
- A. Brown gave an update on engineering studies and design. She also provided an update on construction projects including a very detailed presentation and photos

Workforce Development Committee

S. Bagwin stated that there was a meeting held on Wednesday, December 14, 2023, and the following was discussed:

- Position vacancies and intent to fill

Financial Update

CompUtil Report

L. Roca reported that out of the 19,809 accounts, 508 accounts have open liens, which is equivalent to just over 2.5%. She stated that there are roughly 300 accounts that are currently with our collections attorney or in internal collections. She recalled that a previous collection attorney recommended not releasing liens for customers that were still in collections because the lien secures the debt, so Computil has continued with this practice. She went on to say that the reminder bills for the October billing went out at the beginning of December and included penalty interest and regular interest. She explained that the October billing was \$11,452 million and 88.84% has already been collected. She said her team, the collection attorney's team and the WPCA team has made a joint effort to collect some of the outstanding money faster. She ended by reporting that the intent to lien letters will be going out in January.

Receivables & Arrears

V. DeCausey reported for the month of November

- \$3,196,383 Total Sewer Usage collection for the month of November
- \$88,889k sewer use & assessment fees collected
- \$11,504,518 million total Sewer Usage & Assessment & Connection collection for FY' 2023-2024
- 48% of the budget revenues collected YTD
- The October billing was \$11,452,111 million
- 82.50% October billing collection rate
- 97.13% of the April bill collected
- Average collection rate 98.72% vs. 95.22% last month's

Pilicy Ryan & Ward, P.C. Collections Report & Update

T. McKirdy reported the following:

- 260 active files
- 52 accounts with balances above (\$5,000) Foreclosure Threshold
- 8 accounts with Payment Plans are not in foreclosure, but are over the threshold
- 0 stayed due to bankruptcy filing
- 45 active foreclosures
- 193 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- 13 files referred
- 12 Files closed since last meeting

- Collected \$17,816.89 for December as of today
- Total collected for 2023 \$735,766.63

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 vote: Resolution Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 for WPCA Capital Project CP1455 Primary Sludge De-Gritting System in the amount of \$1,200,000

The Chairman asked B. Brink to provide a general overview of agenda items 8 – 13 and explain what the WPCA is trying to accomplish. B. Brink stated that there were four bond issues—in 2013, another issue in 2015, and an issue in 2019, and 2020. He stated that there are remaining proceeds from projects for the 2015, 2019 and 2020 issues that were not spent, and as a result, the WPCA literally needs a resolution from the Board to repurpose those funds to other projects. He stated that the WPCA also had accrued interest on the Bonds, and Bond Council advised that the monies and accrued interests can only be spent on those projects or another Capital Project; it could not be moved to an Operating project. He explained that a resolution is required for the remaining proceeds to be spent on other Capital Projects and that the following agenda item authorizes a change in the way the WPCA is funding the Primary Sludge De-Gritting System.

Discussion and vote: Resolution Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 for WPCA Capital Project CP1455 Primary Sludge De-Gritting System in the amount of \$1,200,000

B. Brink explained that the WPCA originally envisioned that part of the funding for this project would be from Capital Reserves but that now, the WPCA wants to use bond proceeds instead. He stated that the resolution is to close out the \$1.2 million Capital Reserve expenditure and use the bonds proceeds for the Capital Project. After a brief discussion, A. Goldberg made the motion to authorize and approve the resolution amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 for WPCA Capital Project CP1455 Primary Sludge De-Gritting System in the amount of \$1,200,000; seconded by F. Salem. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Discussion and vote: Resolution Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 for WPCA Capital Project C71282 Vehicle Replacement and Repair in the amount of \$140,367

B. Brink explained that the WPCA has been paying for its vehicles from the Capital Reserves. OPM tracks the bond accounts and instead of allocating the funds from Cash Reserves, the expenditure of \$140,367 was placed in Bond Advances. He stated the WPCA wants its vehicles expenditures to come from cash reserves and not from Bond Advances. After a brief discussion, S. Bagwin made a motion to approve the resolution amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 for WPCA Capital Project C71282 Vehicle Replacement and Repair in the amount of \$140,367; seconded by A. Goldberg. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Discussion and vote: Resolution Amending a Resolution with Respect to the Issuance and Sale of \$22,095,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, 2013 Series A

B. Brink explained that this is the resolution addressing the 2013 Series A, which authorizes the accrued interest of \$6,562.42 from this bond be applied to the upgrade of the U.V. system. After a brief discussion, S. Bagwin made a motion to approve the resolution amending a resolution with respect to the issuance and sale of \$22,095,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, 2013 Series A; seconded by A. Goldberg. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Discussion and vote: Resolution Amending a Resolution with Respect to the Issuance and Sale of \$31,070,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, Issue of 2015

B. Brink clarified that this resolution also involves the transfer of authorized accrued interest, totaling \$13,844.37, from the canceled Wedgemere Sewer Capital Project to fund the upgrade of the U.V. disinfection system. Additionally, he mentioned that the WPCA is seeking approval to allocate \$181,335.51 from the bond's accrued interest of \$266,506.54 to the UV Disinfection System, \$33,544.43 to the closed-out SCADA System Upgrade for settling outstanding invoices, and \$51,626.60 to the Headworks Upgrade project to cover the remaining costs of the nearly completed project. A. Goldberg made a motion to approve the resolution amending a resolution with respect to the issuance and sale of \$31,070,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, 2015; seconded by F. Salem. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Discussion and vote: Resolution Amending a Resolution with Respect to the Issuance and Sale of \$15,700,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, Issue of 2019

B. Brink explained that this resolution addresses the 2019 issue, and the request is to authorize the accrued interest of \$167,746.61 be applied to the Headworks Upgrade project. A. Goldberg made a motion to approve the resolution amending a resolution with respect to the issuance and sale of \$15,700,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, Issue of 2019; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion.

Vote: 6-0-0.

Discussion and vote: Resolution Amending a Resolution with Respect to the Issuance and Sale of \$23,765,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, Issue of 2020

B. Brink explained that this resolution addresses the 2020 issue, and the request is twofold. He stated the first request is to repurpose the funds allocated in this bond issue from the replacement of the plant water and RAS pumps of \$6,311,000. He stated this project is in design phase and will not be going into construction phase until over a year from now and \$203,267.44 from the aeration blower upgrade, which is a completed project. He explained that \$5,700,000 will be repurposed to primary sludge de-gritting system, which is in construction currently, \$216,763.33 will be repurposed to Plant Headworks and \$597,504.05 will be repurposed to WPCA Major Replacement for minor upgrades and replacement parts and pumps that do not require their own project. He stated that the second part of the request is to authorize the accrued interest of \$630,126.84 be applied to the WPCA Major Replacement. A. Goldberg made a motion to approve the resolution amending a resolution with respect to the issuance and sale of \$23,765,000 City of Stamford, Connecticut WPCA System and Facility Revenue Bonds, Issue of 2020; seconded by B. Barnes. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Discussion and vote: Approval of a Bid Waiver for Siemens to Perform the Arc Flash Study in accordance with their Proposal in the amount of \$79,600.00 with data verification if needed for a daily rate of \$2,500.00

A. Brown stated that this request has to do with studying the power systems in the Plant and determines what the level of energy would be should a fault occur. She explained Arc Flash and its history, as this is a long-awaited project. After a brief discussion, E. Kelly made a motion for the approval of a Bid Waiver for Siemens to perform the Arc Flash Study in accordance with their proposal in the amount of \$79,600.00 with data verification if needed for a daily rate of \$2,500.00; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Discussion and Vote: 2024 SWPCA Board Meeting Schedule—R. Bull

R. Bull presented the Board with two potential meeting schedules to vote on for the upcoming new year. She explained the difference between each schedule, and the results of choosing either one. She explained that schedule I consist of no meeting date in February, an early meeting date in March, which will allow for OPM to gather all the final numbers needed to conclude the vote on the budget in March and eliminate the need for a special meeting. She explained that the II schedule includes a February meeting, but this schedule could call for a special meeting sometime between the board meeting at the end of February and March 8th budget deadline. After a brief discussion, E. Kelly made a motion to approve the WPCA 2024 II meeting schedule; seconded by A. Goldberg. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0**

Old Business:

W. Brink stated he wanted to briefly discuss the Capital Improvement Plan with respects to the impact of spending money from the cash reserves on capital improvements and what that would look like going forward in light of the fact the WPCA will need additional new bond issues. He presented a handout showing the amount of expenditures from the cash reserves to date, which is about one half million dollars and said that going forward the WPCA will be spending upwards of \$2.2 to \$2.5 million. He explained what the rating company's expectations are with respect to the WPCA's expenditures when determining our rating.

New Business:

No new business discussed.

At 6:21 pm, E. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the December meeting; seconded by A. Goldberg. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Stamford WPCA Top Issues (11/17/23)

No.	Issue	Action Description	Impact	Status	Schedule
1	Service Contract with Synagro to Operate and Maintain Sludge Dryer and Dispose of Sludge Solids expires on March 3, 2024	Evaluate options for operating the sludge dryer and sludge disposal.	Operations and Financial	Received qualifications in response to RFQ from two firms interested in operating the sludge dryer on 11/9/23.	Selection Committee will review the qualifications to determine if the firms are qualified to respond to a Request for Proposal.
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 has prepared the jacking pit for installing new primary sludge piping between primary settling tank No. 1 and the primary sludge pump building. Began excavation for jacking pit for tank No. 2	Primary sludge piping to primary clarifier No. 1 is scheduled to be installed in December. Construction is on schedule for project to be substantially completed by January 2025.
3	Providing sanitary sewers to Perna Lane Area	Evaluate cost effective options for providing sanitary sewers to the Perna Lane Area.	Operations	Tighe & Bond has completed re-design of the sanitary sewers in Phase I and is finalizing plans for the two pump stations.	Plan to advertise for bids for construction in December. Start construction in the spring of 2024.
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	National Water Main performing sewer rehabilitation in Phase II subareas next on priority list for I/I removal. Have lined 4,500 feet of sanitary sewer so far.	Work to continue this fall.
5	Hurricane barrier gate on East Branch of Stamford Harbor needs repair. Gate may need to be removed for at least 4 to 6 months to do the repair.	Need to evaluate impact of an extreme weather event and storm surge occurring during the gate repair on the treatment plant and three (3) storm water pump stations.	Operations	Army Corps of Engineers currently evaluating the extent of the repair and duration it will be out of service.	Hurricane barrier gate is expected to be inoperable starting January 2025 for 3 to 6 months. SWPCA needs to evaluate impact of storm event on treatment plant without protection of the gate.
6	Personnel Safety	Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.	Operations	Received proposal from Siemens to complete data collection and perform the arc flash study and labeling of MCC panels.	Will evaluate proposal and present recommendation to Board.

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	Hazen has finalized the study report and the "road map" to guide our future course of action.	Will continue to monitor the development of sludge treatment technologies, especially pyrolysis and gasification.
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	Had kick-off meeting with Gannett Fleming Engineers on 10/19 to start the final design of RAS/WAS and plant water pumps.	Gannett Fleming to complete final design by summer of 2024.
9	Facilities Building 6A which houses SWPCA Collection System, Electricians and Regulatory Compliance staff is deteriorated and has a leaking roof.	Evaluate options for relocating SWPCA staff that currently work in Building 6A	Operations	Collection System Staff have moved into their trailers. WPCA on call contractor will install potable water line to trailers and connect trailers to nearby building sewer lateral to eliminate need for bottled water and pumping of trailer belly tank.	City is planning to replace the roofs on the Facilities Buildings, including Building 6A, by the end of this year.
10	Upgrade Alvord Lane, Commerce Drive and Saddle Rock Pump Stations	Pump Stations are aged and in need of upgrade or replacement	Operations	Tighe & Bond has submitted their draft report and presented their recommendations for the upgrades to the three (3) pump stations to the Technical Committee.	Tighe & Bond to submit a proposal for design of the upgrade of the Saddle Rock Pump Station to be done in FY24 with construction in FY25. Design of Alvord Lane and Commerce Drive PS's to be done in FY25.