



Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting

Monday, April 15, 2024

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 (Absent)	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	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 (Absent)	Executive Director, WPCA
Rhudean Bull	Administration Manager, WPCA
Ann Brown (Absent)	Supervising Engineer, WPCA
Vernesa DeCausey	Financial Manager, WPCA
Crystal Blair	Administrative Account Assistant, WPCA
Abigail Logrono	Procurement Coordinator, WPCA
Maria LoDolce	Seasonal, WPCA
Steve Pietrzyk (Absent)	Collections System Supervisor
Teresa Viscariello	City Comptroller
William Ward	Collection Attorney Ackerly & Ward
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 six (6 Board Members).

Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

Minutes Approval of the Full Board Meeting of March 18, 2024

S. Bagwin made a motion to approve the March 18, 2024, minutes; seconded by R. Barocas. There was no further discussion. **Vote 6-0-0.**

Administrative/Budget Report

R. Bull briefly reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies
- Staffing issues
- No COVID19 case reported
- Two (2) Injuries reported
- One Grievance pending since last meeting
- No vehicle accidents reported
- Next Quarterly Staff Meeting scheduled for May 9th
- FY'24 Budget breakdown

Sub-Committee Reports

Finance Committee

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

- Approval of March 18, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- Received March Financial update
- Audit drafts completed
- Received double A bond rating due to incomplete audit
- Old business is being carried forward to allow the legal team to address policy decisions.

Technical Committee

E. Kelly reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, April 10, 2024, and the following was discussed:

- A. Brown conducted a tutorial on utilizing the ProcureWare software, which the City utilizes to manage bids.
- S. Pietrzyk was not present at the meeting, but his monthly report was provided and reviewed. The key issue was a longstanding issue concerning Edice Road requiring regular jetting. As a result, the contract with Vitti Construction was signed, and preparations are underway to replace the line.
- B. Brink provided an update on Plant operations, highlighting that the plant reached its design capacity of 24 MGD. This increase was primarily caused by a surge in storm inflow, and there are hopes that these numbers will subside.
- A. Brown provided an update on capital and construction projects, specifically mentioning the progress of the Perna Lane sewer extension, which is currently underway and scheduled to commence in May.

Workforce Development Committee

S. Bagwin stated that the Workforce Development Committee meeting was held on April 10, 2024, and the following was discussed:

- R. Bull reported on all the topics discussed in her Administrative Report
- Open positions
- IUOE contract settlement retro payout

M. Nesin expressed his intention to step down from the Board, citing concerns over conflicts with the Executive Director and the former Plant Supervisor. He mentioned having already requested to leave but would remain in his position until a replacement is secured. He noted the prolonged search for his successor. Additionally, he stated that he'd visited the former Plant Supervisor and suspects there was an undisclosed incident. He encourages Board members to attend the upcoming Workforce Development meeting, highlighting an Executive session where the Plant Supervisor's resignation would be addressed.

Financial Update

CompUtil Report

L. Roca reported that they billed at the beginning of April, which resulted in an increase in phone calls and incoming payments. She reported that out of the 27 billing cycles, 21 are at a collection rate exceeding 99%, 3 are over 98%, and 2 are over 97%. She explained that the April bill reflects a 7% collection rate, which is expected to rise as more payments are received. She mentioned that customers are still inquiring about autopay and e-billing options. She said that currently, there are 19,812 active accounts, with only 593 of them having open liens and that the WPCA Customer Service and Computil team are diligently working to ensure that customers who returned from Ackerly and Ward maintain compliance with their payment plans. She further explained that no referrals were sent to Ackerly and Ward during the billing period. There are currently 13 or 14 potential referrals back to A & W due to non-payment. She concluded by saying that every effort is made to keep customers in good standing and adhering to their payment plan terms. However, when they do not comply, they are referred back to collections and incur additional legal fees.

Receivables & Arrears

V. DeCausey reported for the month of March

- \$197,069 total Sewer Usage collection for the month of March
- \$14.272 million sewer use & assessment fees collected
- \$23.8 million total Sewer Usage & Assessment & Connection collection for FY' 2023-2024
- 60% of the budget revenues collected YTD
- 97.30% October billing collection rate
- 4.59% of the April 2024 bill collected

- Average collection rate is 95.46% vs.99% last month's

Ackerly & Ward, P.C. Collections Report & Update

Bill Ward provided the following report to the Board:

- 268 active files
- 25 accounts with balances above (\$5,000) Foreclosure Threshold
- 2 accounts with payment plans that are not in foreclosure, but are over the threshold
- 0 stayed due to bankruptcy filing
- 20 active foreclosures
- 8 accounts foreclosure eligible
- 238 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- No files referred for due to the April billing
- 8 Files closed since last meeting
- Collected \$4,536.33 for April
- Total collected for 2024 \$170,878.37

Executive Director's Top Ten

R. Bull briefly went over a portion of the monthly report. E. Kelly stated that the report did not have any significant changes and that the remainder of the report could be read by the Board individually; the report will be made a part of these minutes.

Discussion & vote: Amendment #3 to Bid Waiver WPCA 23/24-27 to Traver Electric Motor for Temporary Electrician Services

R. Bull explained that the WPCA is requesting to increase the bid waiver by \$60K, which will total \$109K for electrician services while the full-time Electrician is out on medical leave and is not expected to return until the end of the summer. She explained that although the retired Electrician helps out and is willing to assist as needed, the onsite service is necessary until a full-time Electrician either returns or is hired. After a brief discussion, E. Kelly made a motion to approve amendment #3 to the bid waiver for temporary electrician services from Traver Electric Motor from \$49,000 up to \$109,000; seconded by S. Bagwin. There was no further discussion. **Vote 6-0-0.**

Update: FY 2023 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report

V. DeCausey reported that the WPCA is in the process of finishing up its audit for FY '23. She reported that the debt ratio coverage will be submitted to US Bank on April 5th; the draft financial to EMMA (Electronic Municipality Market Access) was submitted and the WPCA is looking to submit the final financial by next week. She concluded by saying the WPCA is in a good position with its audit.

T. Viscariello, the newly appointed City Controller, managed to join the meeting despite technical difficulties. She affirmed Vernessa's accurate update on the WPCA Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. Additionally, she mentioned that B. Barnes uploaded the unaudited draft of the WPCA financials on EMMA last week. She concluded by saying that everyone is eagerly anticipating the completion date, likely April 27th, for the final submission to external auditors, RSM.

Update: Perna Lane Sewer Extension

R. Bull stated that this topic has been thoroughly discussed, and further discussion is unnecessary. A. Brown will provide updates to the Board on this project as necessary.

Old Business:

No old business discussed.

New Business:

R. Bull reported that the Administration Staff and L. Roca will review the Billing & Collection Policy Manual, which will result in some changes, specifically, the Minimum Charge that should be changed from \$30 to \$50, as well as a few other changes. She stated the initial meeting will be scheduled for next week and the changes will be presented at the May Finance Committee for recommendation to the full Board.

At 6:07pm, A. Goldberg made a motion to adjourn the April meeting; seconded by R. Barocas. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Stamford WPCA Top Issues (4/11/24)

No.	Issue	Action Description	Impact	Status	Schedule
1	The Plant Supervisor position will be open at the end of March. This position requires a Class IV Operator license to meet the Plant's permit.	Advertise and interview qualified candidates for Plant Supervisor and fill the position as soon as possible.	Regulatory and Operations	Shift foremen have Class III license and will direct the operation and maintenance of the plant.	Have requested City HR to expedite the hiring process.
2	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	Sent RFP to two firms that responded to an RFQ and were determined to be qualified. Proposals were opened on 3/28/24 and only Synagro submitted.	Will negotiate contract with Synagro. Amendment 1 to contract with Synagro extended the contract to 9/3/24.
3	Primary sludge pumping and degritting 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 degritting 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 completed the installation of the new primary sludge piping and scum line from primary clarifier (PC) No. 1 to the primary sludge pump building.	Complete installation of primary sludge piping and scum piping from PC No. 2 by end of April. Begin installation of new clarifier equipment in PC No. 1 beginning of May. Construction is on schedule to be substantially completed by end of 2024.
4	Providing sanitary sewers to Perna Lane Area	Evaluate cost effective options for providing sanitary sewers to the Perna Lane Area.	Operations	Construction contract has been executed with Grasso Construction for the lowest bid price of \$8,263,194.	Pre-construction meeting was held on March 27 th . Grasso expects to start construction by May 1 st as soon as the construction materials have been approved and are delivered to site, and Grasso secures a construction permit from CTDOT. Complete construction by the 8/1/25.
5	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 completed sewer lining portion of contract	National Water Main currently grouting sewer laterals in road ROW identified for repair.

6	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.
7	Personnel Safety	Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.	Operations	Siemens has been retained to perform the arc flash hazard analysis and label electrical switchgear for proper PPE.	Siemens has completed checking the field data that was previously collected. Arc flash hazard analysis will then take 20 days to model.
8	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.
9	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	Gannett Fleming has completed the basis of design report and started final design of the Plant Water, RAS and WAS pumps and piping.	Gannett Fleming to complete final design by summer of 2024.
10	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.	City has issued a contract to replace the roofs on the Facilities Buildings, including Building 6A, and remediate the building interior.
11	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.	Amendment No. 1 to the Tighe & Bond Agreement for the final design and bidding of the upgrade of the Saddle Rock Road PS has been executed. Design of Alvord Lane and Commerce Drive PS's to be done in FY25.