



Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting

Monday, June 17, 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	WPCA Board Member/ Director of Administration
Matthew Quinones (Absent)	WPCA Board Member/ Director of Operations
J.R. McMullen	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	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	Procurement Coordinator, WPCA
Maria LoDolce	Seasonal, WPCA
Steve Pietrzyk	Collections System Supervisor, WPCA
Tom McKirdy	Collection Attorney Ackerly & Ward
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 May 20, 2024

E. Kelly made a motion to approve the May 20, 2024, minutes; seconded by A. Goldberg. There was no further discussion. **Vote 6-0-1.** M. Nesin abstained.

Administrative/Budget Report

R. Bull briefly reported the following:

- Staffing vacancies
- Staffing issues
- No COVID19 case reported
- One (1) Injury reported
- Two grievances pending since last meeting
- Anonymous email
- No vehicle accidents reported
- IUOE Negotiations
- FY'24 Budget breakdown

Sub-Committee Reports

Technical Committee

E. Kelly reported the committee meeting was held on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, and the following was discussed:

- Discussed Bid Waiver for Vitti to install conduit for electric service to the Barry Place Pump Station
- Discussed Amendment No. 3 to Gannet Flemings contract for sludge dewatering
- S. Pietrzyk gave an update on the Collection System
- B. Brink provided an update on planned operations
- A. Brown provided an update on engineering studies and design and construction projects, with details on the Perna Lane sewer extension

Workforce Development Committee

S. Bagwin stated that the Workforce Development Committee meeting was held on Wednesday, June 12, 2024, and the following was discussed:

- Position vacancies
- Plant Supervisor position
- Anonymous email
- IUOE Contract

Note:

At 5:41pm, Board member R. Barocas joined the meeting. Eight (8) Board Members were present.

Finance Committee

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

- Approval of the May 20, 2024, Meeting Minutes
- Received an update on the May Financials
- Attorney Tom Cassone was present to discuss the legal opinion on the Stamford Housing Authority receivable accounts

Financial Update

CompUtil Report

R. Roca explained that she and her staff have been very busy making collection calls and working with Kubra and the WPCA staff processing the consumptions to get the numbers as soon as possible. She stated that they continue to look for account anomalies and review the No Consumption reports to address any issues to ensure accurate billing. She went on to say that the WPCA is in good shape as noted on the trial balance summary. She said reminder bills and tax warrant letters have been mailed out, and calls are coming in from that. She went over the collection rates and stated that money is coming in, closings are picking up, and foreclosures are on the rise again.

Receivables & Arrears

V. DeCausey reported for the month of May

- \$3.6 million total Sewer Usage collection for the month of May
- \$24.1 million sewer use & assessment fees collected
- \$23.8 million total Sewer Usage & Assessment & Connection collection for FY' 2023-2024
- 101% of the budget revenues collected YTD
- 88.6% April billing collection rate
- 97.88% of the October 2023 bill collected
- Average collection rate is 99.4% vs 98.51% last month's

Financial Update

V. DeCausey reported the following

- \$24.9 million total operating revenue year-to-date
- \$11.7 million operating expenses
- \$13.2 million total operating income
- \$6.1 million pool cash
- \$820,000k cash on hand
- \$35.6 million current assets

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

T. McKirdy informed the Board that Pilicy Ryan & Ward has changed back to Ackerly & Ward.

- 251 active files
- 31 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
- 23 active foreclosures
- 9 accounts foreclosure eligible
- 215 with no payment plan below Foreclosure Threshold
- 3 files referred
- 10 Files closed since last meeting
- Collected \$40,491.45 for May 2024 (an increase of \$7,817.35 from last meeting)
- Collected \$19,459.81 to date for June 2024
- Total collected for 2024 \$213,939.89

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: Approval of revisions to the SWPCA Billing / Collections Policy Manual

R. Bull started by saying the SWPA Billing Collection and Policy Manual doesn't relate to collections and therefore, the first proposal is to change the manual to the SWPCA Billing Policy and Billing Services Manual, since that more accurately reflects its content. She explained that there are changes throughout the document and stated that she sent the updated version to the Board for review. She explained that she would not go through each change individually but would like to highlight a few key updates.

She stated that the next change was to update the minimum charge. She said the change occurred the previous year but was never updated in the manual; that the minimum charge was updated from \$30 to \$50 on page 6. Additionally, she stated changes were made to improve clarity throughout the document; that the WPCA encountered situations where the manual didn't address specific inquiries, so those details were included. She said that corresponding with the minimum charge update, the CCF (centum cubic feet) was updated from 5 to 9 on page 8. She said the language was updated from "vendor" to "services" to better reflect the relationships with the 3rd party billing company. She explained that changes were made to the lien placement paragraph to clean up the language and that L. Roca requested changing "obtain" to "initiate" regarding a closing quote, to better reflect the process.

She explained that changes were made to "adjustments" under prorated balances and real estate closings, to emphasize that the buyer is responsible for all amounts due if the seller fails to pay at the time of closing; that in the billing section, on page 13, language was added that laundromats and car washes need to provide written notification to request a discount and; that most of the changes involve billing services operations, reflecting how the processes have evolved.

J. R. McMullen pointed out several suggestion and corrections that needed to be made and after a brief discussion of adjustment for leaks, B. Barnes made a motion to approve the revisions, with J.R. McMullen's suggestions, to the SWPCA Billing Collection and Policy Manual; seconded by J.R. McMullen. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 8-0-0**

Discussion and vote: Approval of Bid Waiver for A. Vitti to install conduit for electric service to Barry Place Pump Station in an amount not to exceed \$270,016.48

A. Brown gave a brief overview of the situation at Barry Place Pump Station. She explained that WPCA has a sanitary sewer pump station located on private property at Barry Place and that the station has been in service since 1940, with an easement filed in the land use records. She said since that time, WPCA and the building owner agreed that power would be supplied from their building and WPCA would be invoiced for an agreed amount each month. She explained that the current owner has decided to demolish the building to develop the site as residential units and that the owner has applied for a demolition permit and requires WPCA to supply power to their pump station independent of the building, so that it can be demolished. She explained that currently the pump station is one thousand feet from the road; that a conduit was ideal for restoring power, but the building has numerous safety issues. She mentioned that a generator is being used at this time as a temporary power source and is being monitored. She emphasized that time is of the essence to restore power and that a plan has been drawn up showing the easement with the conduit running from the street to the pump station. She reported that Eversource has

approved the plans and will own the service line when it's completed; that Eversource will also handle the wiring, service connection, and installation of a new transformer at the station. She also sent the plans to four contractors for quotes, with Vitti Construction providing a quote of \$270,016. She requested that the Board approve the bid waiver for this amount so a contract can be established, allowing the work to begin as soon as possible. She also stated that the WPCA will be meeting with the adjacent property owner to discuss sharing costs for part of the conduit.

M. Nesin stated that he was not satisfied with the pump station being located one thousand feet from the road and in the back of a property. He also disagreed with the project costs. After a brief discussion, E. Kelly made a motion to approve the bid waiver for A. Vitti construction to install a conduit for electric service to Barry Place pump station in an amount not to exceed \$270,016.48; seconded by F. Salem. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-1** M. Nesin abstained.

Note:

At 6:29pm, Board member A. Goldberg left the meeting. Seven (7) Board Members were present.

Discussion and vote: Approval of Amendment No. 3 to Gannett Flemings Contract for Sludge Degritting in an amount not to exceed \$130,000

A. Brown explained that additional work was requested from Gannett Fleming, beyond the scope of work in the original contract, due to the projects rebidding and conditions discovered during construction. She stated that as a result of these extra services provided, Gannett Fleming is requesting \$130,000, bringing the estimated total cost for their services during construction to \$672,741 and that this would be Amendment No. 3 to the Agreement. E. Kelly made a motion to approve Amendment No. 3 to Gannett Flemings Contract for Sludge Degritting in an amount not to exceed \$130,000; seconded by M. Nesin. **Vote: 7-0-0**

Discussion and vote: Election of Board Officers

a. Chairman

E. Kelly inquired if anyone would like to nominate a candidate for the position of Chairman of the Board for a one-year term? R. Barocas replied that he would like to nominate Ed Kelly for Chairman, if he is willing to serve again and that he would volunteer himself for the Vice Chairman role; that together, he believed they would make a great team. E. Kelly asked if there any other nominations for Chairman and saying that hearing none, the Board would proceed to a vote. S. Bagwin seconded the motion. **Vote: 6-1-0.** M. Nesin was the dissenting vote. During the discussion E. Kelly asked the reason behind his objection, to which M. Nesin replied, "I don't believe you should continue as Chairman".

E. Kelly said that for the record, he has served as Chairman for five terms and has been on the board for eleven (11 years). He further stated that while he is honored to serve the WPCA and the City of Stamford, he acknowledges that it might be beneficial for someone else to take over in the future and that as it stands, the motion carries, and he would serve as Chairman for another year.

b. Vice Chairman

E. Kelly stated that regarding the Vice Chairman position, one nomination for Mr. Robert Barocas was on the table; that unfortunately, Amiel Goldberg had to leave for another commitment and is not present to participate.

M. Nesin nominated Steve Bagwin for Vice Chairman, saying that he attends all the meetings. E. Kelly asked if there were any other nominations? R. Barocas stated that he believes Amiel would be a good candidate, but that given his absence, he would support Steve Bagwin as Vice Chair; that his commitment to the city and legal expertise make him a strong candidate and he withdrew his nomination in favor of Steve. R. Barocas seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. **Vote 7-0-0.**

Update: Perna Lane Sewer Extension

A. Brown explained that the contractor Grasso is on site and has begun saw cutting the pavement on High Ridge Road and Perna Lane. On Perna Lane, they have started excavation and have already installed one manhole and some sewer pipes. She mentioned that stakes were provided to homeowners to identify the locations of the lateral stubs. She said the onsite field inspector has been receiving many calls from residents regarding the location of the stakes. She has also received numerous calls about the stakes, but overall, the project is going well.

E. Kelly mentioned that a member of the public who attended the Technical meeting expressed joy over the progress made and the fact that the project has finally moved into the construction phase after many years of analysis and discussion. He said there appears to be a certain amount of joy in the community over this project.

Old Business:

No old business discussed.

New Business:

R. Bull explained that the new KUBRA platform EZ-Pay project, that she had mentioned previously, is now being installed. She stated that work is ongoing with Computil and the IT department and that the WPCA has had a few meetings and plans to continue meeting for fifteen minutes three times a week to ensure that the project stays on track. She stated that although this project is just an easy pay module, they believe KUBRA is building it free of charge so that they can later expand it to include the actual billing platform. She said that the platform will allow customers to view their invoices online, pay online, access their bill, and opt for bill pay, which will function similarly to the old CCM platform, allowing for monthly payments. She said that she would inform the Board when the payment platform goes live and within the next six months, she will return to discuss incorporating the billing platform.

M. Nesin expressed his gratitude for working with the WPCA staff and Board for over 8 years. He explained that he had reinstated his PE License, researched the wastewater industry, and visited the Plant every month; that he provided alternative designs suggested by the consulting engineers. He said he enjoyed keeping his engineering thought process active and hoped that his enthusiasm was a positive force in the rebuilding plan. He went on to announce that today would be his last meeting. M. Nesin then left the meeting.

At 6:51pm, E. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the June meeting; seconded by J.R. McMullen. There was no further discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Stamford WPCA Top Issues (6/17/24)

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.	Position has been posted and widely advertised.
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	We are continuing our negotiations with Synagro which began on May 17 th . Negotiations are proceeding well so far.	Our existing contract with Synagro was extended to September 3, 2024. We plan is to have a new contract in place by then.
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 has installed two (2) new primary sludge pumps and is currently working on the installation of new piping and new sludge degritting equipment in the Sludge Degritting Building.	Will begin removing existing equipment in Primary Clarifier No. 1 next week. Installation of new equipment in PC No. 1 expected to take 4 weeks. 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 the week of June 3 rd . Complete installation of the pump stations and sewers by end of summer 2024.
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 completing the sewer rehabilitation in Phase II subareas.	A proposal by CDM-Smith Engineers for the next phase of a sewer system evaluation survey (SSES) of those sewer subareas next on the priority list for I/I removal was submitted to CTDEEP for review and approval.
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. Hazen and Sawyer advised a number of new facilities are starting up and we will monitor their progress.
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 late summer of 2024.
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 report and presented their recommendations for needed upgrades to the three (3) pump stations to the Technical Committee.	Tighe & Bond is currently designing the upgrade of the Saddle Rock Road Pump Station expected to be completed this summer to go to bid for construction in the fall. Design of Alvord Lane and Commerce Drive PS's to be done in FY25.