

APPROVED

7/5/23

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
WALLINGFORD ELECTRIC DIVISION

100 JOHN STREET

WALLINGFORD, CT 06492

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Beaumont; Commissioners Joel Rinebold and Laurence Zabrowski; Director Richard Hendershot; Electric Division Acting General Manager Jake Arborio; Electric Division Business Office Manager Marianne Dill; Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Neil Amwake; Water and Sewer Divisions Business Manager Donald Langenauer and Acting Recording Secretary Michelle Bracale

Absent – None

Members of the public – None

Mr. Beaumont called the Meeting to order at 6:34 P.M., and the pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Consider and Approve Meeting Minutes of June 6, 2023.
- b. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer – FY 2022-2023 – Water – Engineering & Miscellaneous Expenses.
- c. Consider and Approve Budget Transfer – FY 2022-2023 – Electric – Transmission – Station Expenses.
- d. Consider and Approve Budget Appropriation – Electric – Distribution – Station Expenses.
- e. Consider and Approve Budget Appropriation – Electric – Distribution – Maintenance Station Equipment.

- 41 f. Consider and Approve Budget Appropriation – Electric – Distribution – Operation
42 Overhead Line Expenses.
43
44
45

46 **Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda.**
47

48 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

49 **Seconded by: Mr. Zabrowski**

50 **Votes: 3 ayes**
51
52

53 **3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None**
54

55 **4. Discussion and Action: Approval of the Director’s Report for the Month of May**
56 **2023.**
57

58 Mr. Hendershot mentioned that there was an error on page 4-12 of the Director’s Report that Mr.
59 Beaumont had previously questioned in an email where the second bullet should state “a
60 decrease” instead of an “increase”.
61

62 Mr. Rinebold questioned Mr. Arborio on transformer supply chain, stating he thought it was
63 easing up, but after reading the Electric Division General Manager’s Report, he sees otherwise.
64

65 Mr. Arborio stated that it is not. The term he is using is “dire”. He is a bit concerned as we are
66 approaching storm season. The vendor responded that they are hoping for deliveries in January
67 2024.
68

69 Mr. Rinebold then asked about recycling?
70

71 Mr. Arborio replied that WED keeps anything that comes down and tests it. Then, they are set
72 aside, but not put back into inventory. WED has begun canvassing our system, both Engineering
73 and Operations to look at opportunities to harvest transformers that are currently in use now.
74 Typically, this is done during major storms, however, during these material shortages, we are
75 faced with performing this task now.
76

77 Mr. Rinebold asked how much is the higher efficiency standards slowing down the supply chain?
78

79 Mr. Arborio responded that it is on pause at this point in time as there was a formal request to the
80 DOE recently asking to relax it. He stated that the last time this was brought up in Washington
81 DC, it was shot down. The prices of transformers has increased from about \$800 to \$4,500 the
82 last time he checked.
83

84 Mr. Beaumont asked what period of time are we looking at?
85

86 Mr. Arborio responded about one year and a half. He also stated that another problem we are
87 facing is that vendors will not hold price. The cost of utility poles has also gone up
88 approximately 300% and the lead time has changed from about four days to eight weeks.
89

90 Mr. Rinebold questioned how the utility poles are looking?
91

92 Mr. Arborio stated that WED is in good shape, as the prices were starting to increase, he was
93 able to get ahead of it. He went into more detail regarding other materials such as crossarms,
94 which he noted that the WED has migrated back to wood due to their availability.

95 The only significant issue is the lead time for wire clamps. The relationships with other utilities
96 and colleagues is helpful as they are able to help out with situations as needs arise.

97 Mr. Arborio added that from a wire perspective, WED is in good shape, however, underground
98 cable was supposed to be a 20-week lead time he found out last week that it is now a 60-week
99 lead time.
100

101 Mr. Rinebold then questioned Mr. Arborio on the porcelain cutouts that are replaced on the
102 distribution feeders. He questioned how many and asked why we replace them?
103

104 Mr. Arborio explained that we replaced approximately 390 of them. He noted that, over time,
105 micro cracks causing water ingress resulting in tracking. He added that anytime it rains, WED
106 usually replaces a couple due to catastrophic failure.
107

108 Lastly, Mr. Rinebold asked about infrared inspections, as one is scheduled for next week. He
109 asked how WED does it and why?
110

111 Mr. Arborio replied that a contractor comes to do the inspections and it is ground based. He
112 stated that they are looking for "hot spots" and when one is detected, it is classified as low,
113 medium or extreme and that will determine how it is taken care of. The thermographer also
114 enters the substation to inspect various components within the station yard.
115
116
117

118 **Motion to Approve the Director's Report for the Month of May 2023.**
119

120 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

121 **Seconded by: Mr. Zabrowski**

122 **Votes: 3 ayes**
123
124

125 **Public Question and Answer Period**
126

127 **None – No Members of the Public Present**
128

129 **Public Question and Answer Period Closed**
130
131

132 Mr. Zabrowski questioned Mr. Amwake as to where we are regarding the Fine Bar Screens
133 Project at the Headworks Building?

134
135 Mr. Amwake explained that, as part of the original WPCF Upgrades Project, upgrades to the
136 Headworks Building to replace the existing coarse screens with one-quarter inch bar screens
137 were included. The Sewer Division had to bid and award this WPCF Upgrades Project by June
138 30, 2019 to meet DEEP administrative and grant funding requirements. In late fall 2018,
139 because we were on such an aggressive design schedule, we ran into some life safety items
140 regarding means of egress and HVAC issues with the headworks building in order to meet code
141 compliance that were not going to be fully resolved in order to meet the bidding and award
142 timeline. The other aspect of that is the Sewer Division was looking at the budget number. Then
143 when you add in what we presumed to be the cost of the construction contract plus the design
144 cost, construction administration costs and a 5% contingency, we were at \$60 million.

145
146 The Sewer Division and the design engineer evaluated removing two aspects from the overall
147 WPCF Upgrades Project. One was the anaerobic basin, the other was the fine screens. It was
148 decided to keep the anaerobic basin in the project because, at a later date, it would be more
149 difficult to construct the anaerobic basin given its placement. We were also constructing two
150 additional secondary settling tanks at that time, so the fine screens project was removed from the
151 project. We then bid and awarded the project and signed the contract with the Contractor on
152 June 26, 2019 (reminder that the regulatory deadline was June 30, 2019).

153
154 Mr. Amwake added that the tertiary phosphorus treatment system had to be online by April 1,
155 2022, and the tertiary phosphorus Actiflow system was turned over to the Sewer Division around
156 March 29, 2022. So again, two or three days before the deadline. As construction started to
157 wind down, we reengaged AECOM to complete the design for the Fine Screens Project. Mayor
158 Dickinson may have believed the fine screens project was further along in the design, but it was
159 not. When the Sewer Division removed the fine screens from the overall WPCF Upgrades
160 Project in Fall 2018, the overall Upgrades Project still had approximately 6 months of design to
161 go. (The overall design for this project was only 13 months).

162
163 AECOM had knowledge of the overall WPCF Upgrades Project – they had completed the
164 Facility Project in 2017-2018 and in full transparency, the last two fiscal years, the PUC has
165 approved, Mayor endorsed and Town Council has approved a line item of \$125,000 to continue
166 the Fine Screens Project design with AECOM.

167
168 Moving forward, the life safety aka means of egress, and the HVAC and electrical designs took a
169 greater design effort than the original \$250,000 that AECOM thought it was going to be, so the
170 Sewer Division will require additional funds to complete the design. In addition, the Sewer
171 Division would like AECOM to provide bidding support as well as construction administration
172 services.

173
174 Because we are cost conscious, and this was taken out of the WPCF Upgrades Project, the sewer
175 ratepayers are 1) losing the grant percentage at 37.8102%, and just as important, the Town is
176 losing the 2%, 20 year simple interest on the Fine Screens. So now, the ratepayers will be
177 paying current market value while bonding the Fine Screens Project. We've asked AECOM to

178 provide a quotation to us to finish the design as well as do bidding support and provide
179 construction administration services. For construction administration services, AECOM is going
180 to be looking at shop drawings, request for information (RFI's) as well as assisting Town staff
181 and Sewer Division staff with any change orders. The day to day inspection will be performed
182 by one of our inspectors from the Engineering Section of the Water and Sewer Division in order
183 to eliminate cost of a consulting construction inspector.

184
185 Mr. Amwake met with Mayor Dickinson along with Sal Amadeo, the Purchasing Agent for the
186 Town of Wallingford, to make sure that we are legally able to have AECOM continue. The
187 Sewer Division selected AECOM originally through a quality-based selection (QBS) process, we
188 negotiated the scope and fee for the Facility Plan with them, then we negotiated a scope of
189 services for the design, then we negotiated the scope of services for the construction
190 administration. Now we are looking execute a Supplemental Agreement No. 3 to the original
191 base Agreement in order to continue working with them.

192
193 Mayor Dickinson has asked the Bureau of Purchases to make sure we are in firm standing in
194 order to have AECOM provide bidding support and construction administration services. To
195 have someone else at this point in time take over the design, bidding support and construction
196 administration services for Fine Screens Project would not be prudent. The Mayor has inquired
197 as to who is negotiating the scope of services and fee. Mr. Amwake explained that it was
198 himself.

199
200 Mr. Amwake went on to state that the reality is that if we had picked up the entire project and
201 initiated it 12 to 18 months prior, we would have had enough time to finish the design on the fine
202 screens. That decision should have been made between 2012 and 2014. The Town could have
203 received grant money and a low interest loan for the fine screens portion of the project. Don
204 Langenauer, Water and Divisions Sewer Business Manager and Mr. Amwake have devised a
205 fiscal strategy as to what we are going to pay cash for and what we are going to bond (which is
206 the construction phase of this project).

207
208 Mr. Rinebold asked Mr. Amwake if they can go back to DEEP and see if they can include this
209 into Clean Water Act?

210
211 Mr. Amwake replied that they have already asked once or twice and the answer was "no". He
212 also proposed a change order to the Bureau of Purchases to which the response was "no" as well.
213 Eligibility for DEEP Clean Water Fund (CWF) projects is based on a points system for which the
214 Town does not have enough points to qualify as compared to other projects submitted for CWF
215 funding.

216
217 Mr. Zabrowski asked if there was any benefit to asking again?

218
219 Mr. Amwake stated that they can, however, it is a structured approach. The Town asked for
220 municipal projects for ARPA funding and the Fine Screens Project is the number one priority for
221 the Water and Sewer Divisions. Procedure was followed as established by the Mayor and it was
222 turned around in five days (which is what municipal departments were given).

223

224 Mr. Zabrowski questioned Mr. Amwake regarding the national level, in that they want to find out
225 the health of people by monitoring wastewater treatment of fluid to see if there are virus's and
226 asked if that is something that Mr. Amwake is hearing?

227

228 Mr. Amwake responded that the larger utilities are doing that, however, the Wallingford Sewer
229 Division does not have the staffing nor the financials to do so.

230

231 Mr. Rinebold added that it was done for COVID.

232

233 Mr. Amwake stated that, yes, and it is still being done for COVID, however, initially it was
234 complimentary, but now they are charging approximately \$1,200/month to have wastewater
235 samples sent up to a private biotech firm in Massachusetts, which is \$14,400 per year.

236

237 Mr. Hendershot then added that even if we did do that, what would we then do with the
238 information?

239

240

241 Mr. Rinebold went back to the point that Mr. Amwake made regarding taking the Fine Screens
242 Project out of the overall WPCF Upgrades Project. He asked if Mr. Amwake had a high level of
243 confidence that if the decision had not been made to take out the fine screens project that he
244 would have missed the deadline?

245

246 Mr. Amwake stated that the deadline would have been missed, given when the project was bid
247 and the number of addendums that were issued and all of the other factors.

248

249 Mr. Amwake also added that the Sewer Division and AECOM are still working on and refining
250 the design for the Fine Screens Project. The means of egress, HVAC and the electrical room has
251 become complicated. We are talking with AECOM and construction will be approximately 9-12
252 months due to the bypass pumping (we can only complete one channel at a time).

253

254 One of the best change orders that was done as part of the WPCF Upgrades Project was changing
255 the UV disinfection system from 10 to 12 lamps before construction had started. As such, the
256 changes were made on paper before concrete was poured and the UV disinfection channels were
257 formed. Contrast that with the Fine Screens Project where a lot of work will go into saw cutting
258 the existing concrete channels and chipping in order to accommodate the new screens. The
259 Sewer Division is planning on having AECOM do the shop drawings because they did the
260 design, but the inspection will be done in house because two construction inspectors (each who
261 have come with 30 years' experience) have been hired in the past year by the Water and Sewer
262 Divisions, each having the skills and knowledge to provide inspection services for this type of
263 project.

264

265 Some discussion ensued regarding the Purchasing Dept. and the process in regards to the
266 Purchase requisitions and timing as we are closing on the end of our fiscal year.

267

268 Mr. Zabrowski asked once again about approaching the EPA for a third time?

269

270 After some discussion between Mr. Amwake, Mr. Langenauer, Mr. Rinebold, Mr. Hendershot
271 and Mr. Beaumont, it was decided that to ask a third time would not be beneficial.

272
273 Mr. Amwake noted that we do still have the ARPA application in with the Town and that other
274 urban municipalities still have CSO's and SSO's. It is a hard argument to make that Wallingford
275 wants the state to fund a \$3.5million fine screens project when there are other communities that
276 are still getting, sanitary sewer overflows or combined sewer overflows into their local receiving
277 stream and we cannot compete with that – that has to be a priority.

278
279 He also stated that originally, Wallingford was not included in the original communities to
280 receive a 50% grant on Phosphorus – Wallingford only qualified for 30% until Representative
281 Mary Mushinsky updated the legislation to include Wallingford in the 50% rule, but Wallingford
282 did not move forward with the required Facility Plan or initiating design efforts for several years
283 after that. The Wallingford Sewer Division spent between \$110,000 and \$135,000 of ratepayer
284 money fighting the Phosphorus regulations. If you look at the CPI and take the \$45.5 MM
285 construction contract and bid this project one year earlier, back that into the CPI, it is over a
286 million dollar savings. Take that million dollars, back up the design and construction a year or
287 two and the Fine Screens Project could have been done as part of the overall WPCF Upgrades
288 Project. Mr. Amwake stated that he inherited this situation.

289
290 Mr. Beaumont added that Mr. Amwake, in fact, did inherit this situation and because of his
291 efforts, things got done and they got done right.

292
293

294 **ADJOURNMENT**

295

296 **Motion to Adjourn**

297

298 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**

299 **Seconded by: Mr. Zabrowski**

300 **Votes: 3 ayes**

301

302 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:25 p.m.

303

304 Respectfully submitted,

305


306 

307
308 Michelle Bracale

309 Acting Recording Secretary

310

Respectfully submitted,



Laurence J. Zabrowski

Secretary