

APPROVED

2/24/22

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

WALLINGFORD TOWN HALL

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS

45 SOUTH MAIN STREET

WALLINGFORD, CT 06492

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Robert Beaumont; Commissioner Patrick Birney; Director Richard Hendershot; Electric Division General Manager Tony Buccheri; Electric Division Business Office Manager Marianne Dill; Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Neil Amwake, Water and Sewer Divisions Business Manager Brian Naples and Recording Secretary Bernadette Sorbo.

Absent - Commissioner Joel Rinebold

Members of the public – Lauren Takores

Mr. Beaumont called the Meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., and the pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

2. Consent Agenda

- a. Consider and approve Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2022.

No Action Taken

3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None

41 **4. Discussion and Possible Action: High Consumption and Billing – State of**
42 **Connecticut at Wharton Brook State Park**
43

44 Mr. Amwake referenced the memorandum regarding high consumption and billing for the State
45 of Connecticut at Wharton State Brook Park dated January 26, 2022 and highlighted some of the
46 key points. Mr. Amwake stated in 1958, the State of Connecticut paid the Wallingford Water
47 Division to relocate the water meter pit due to a road widening and reconstruction project along
48 South Colony Road by CT-DOT. All work regarding the abandonment of the old meter pit and
49 the construction of the new meter pit was performed by the Wallingford Water Division. This
50 meter pit is located in a remote section of Wharton Brook State Park. The only access to the
51 meter pit is on foot. In April 2019, the Wallingford Water Division was unable to obtain a
52 reading from the water meter using the “touchpad” along South Colony Road; therefore, an
53 estimated bill was sent to the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental
54 Protection (DEEP) office in Hartford. In July 2019, the Water Division attempted to repair the
55 “touchread” system but could not locate the meter pit as the vegetation adjacent to and around
56 the meter pit was severely overgrown. Once the meter pit was located and the standing water was
57 pumped down, it was discovered that an existing three-inch diameter pipe coupling downstream
58 of the water meter was severely corroded and leaking. Since the leak from this coupling was
59 downstream of the water meter, usage from the leak was recorded on the existing meter. This
60 leak resulted in approximately 739,000 cubic feet (5,528,104 gallons) of usage registered on the
61 three-inch water meter. A bill in the amount of \$30,241.96 was sent to the State of Connecticut
62 though this bill has not yet been paid. It is noted that the DEEP has continued to pay all current
63 water bills with the exception of this one bill. Staff is recommending that since this meter pit
64 was constructed by the Water Division in 1958, and since the Water Division routinely
65 maintained the meter, it may be recognized that this leak was caused by a pipe coupling that was
66 provided by the Water Division. Therefore, it is recommended that this usage less the normal
67 average usage of 2,000 cubic feet per quarter be deducted or waived from the billable usage for
68 the above referenced account. This would mean a credit of approximately 734,877 cubic feet, or
69 \$30,056.47. Concurrent with this recommendation the Water Division suggests that the
70 following improvements be undertaken and completed by the DEEP as a condition of continued
71 service if so approved by the PUC:

- 72 • The area around this meter pit should be cleared and maintained, and a walkable or
73 drivable path to the water meter pit be provided;
- 74 • A stone and/or cement floor should be constructed within the existing meter pit; and
- 75 • The wooden cover should be replaced with an aluminum hatch or plate. Repointing or
76 replacement of the top course of concrete cinderblocks should be completed prior to
77 installation of the new hatch or cover.

78 The above items should be completed within six months’ time following Public Utilities
79 Commission action. Should the work not be completed within the timeframe specified then
80 water service to the meter pit (to Wharton Brook State Park) will be shutoff. Please note that the
81 above items have been discussed with the DEEP Park Supervisor, who feels that the
82 improvements can be completed in the time period recommended.

83
84 Mr. Birney questioned, what prompted this to arise now? Why is this being addressed and why
85 is this the Wallingford Water Division attempting to close the file today?
86

87 Mr. Amwake stated that this happened in April 2019 but was not discovered until July 2019.
88 The Wallingford Water Division did fix the leak. Due to Covid-19 the Wallingford Water
89 Division was unable to coordinate and communicate with DEEP personnel and this was a lower
90 priority item as there were other important matters that needed to be addressed first. Internally
91 the Wallingford Water Division needed to get all of the details together as well as put together a
92 recommendation.

93
94 Mr. Birney questioned, in terms with your discussion with the representative at the State Park is
95 there an agreement?

96
97 Mr. Amwake stated that this was a verbal discussion and there is nothing in writing. The State
98 Park may or may not do it. If the State Park does not complete the action items the Wallingford
99 Water Division will simply shut off the service. The State Park has been very courteous and
100 friendly to work with so the Wallingford Water Division gave the State Park six months to
101 complete the improvements. This will also give the State Park time to complete the
102 improvements as the State Park cannot do construction in the winter.

103
104 Mr. Birney questioned, if the shut off is the result of the State Park not paying the bill?

105
106 Mr. Amwake stated that the State Park currently has water service. Once the Wallingford Water
107 Division repaired the meter, removed the touchpad that was located on South Colony Road and
108 put in the radio read unit the water services were restored. The State Park uses these services for
109 the drinking fountains.

110
111 Mr. Birney questioned, if the State Park does not undertake the construction will the Water
112 Division shut the water off? What would be the means to shut the water off?

113
114 Mr. Amwake stated that the meter pit does not meet the Wallingford Water Division's current
115 technical standards and in some respects the State Park is grandfathered in. The Wallingford
116 Water Division built the meter pit back in 1958. If this was a new customer requesting to put a
117 meter pit on their property it would need to come up to current standards. In discussions with the
118 Wallingford Water Division as well as the superintendent from DEEP this is what was arrived at.
119 The meter pit does not meet the Divisions current standards. This is a happy medium.

120
121 **Motion to credit \$30,056.47 contingent upon undertaking recommended conditions and**
122 **requirements stated herein**

123
124 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

125 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

126 **Votes: 2 ayes**

127
128
129
130 **5. Discussion and Possible Action: Water Division – Budget Amendment –**
131 **Miscellaneous General Expenses**

132

133 Mr. Amwake stated that the Water Division has an account 43100930, titled Miscellaneous
134 General Expense. Examples of these expenses are pre-employment physicals, training,
135 advertising and trade association dues. Each of these miscellaneous expenses is independently
136 budgeted for in separate line accounts within Account #43100930. One of the sub-accounts,
137 “Advertising”, collects expenses related to newspaper and online advertisements required of the
138 Water Division such as job postings and bid advertisements. This sub-account has outpaced its
139 budget due to a higher number of job vacancies than in prior fiscal years, with each vacancy
140 necessitating at least one, but often multiple, paid advertisements. Mr. Amwake referenced the
141 footnote included in the memo dated January 26, 2022 as to the various Water Division positions
142 that were advertised for in FY21-22: Water Division Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent
143 for Water Distribution, Watershed Caretaker, Water Treatment and Pumping Operator II, Water
144 Treatment and Pumping Operator I, Water – Sanitary Sewer Inspector (50% water), and Clerk-
145 Typist II (50% water). Mr. Amwake stated that there have been quite a few vacancies. Each of
146 these vacancies resulted in advertising at the minimum in the Record Journal, the Inner City
147 News and the Connecticut Section of AWWA. With several months remaining in FY21-22,
148 there are no longer sufficient funds within the Miscellaneous General Expense account to cover
149 both the known and unknown future advertising expenses of the Water Division as well as the
150 remaining expenses of the other sub-accounts within Account #43100930. Therefore, the Water
151 Division respectfully requests PUC approval of a FY21-22 budget amendment to increase
152 Account #43100930 – Miscellaneous General Expense by \$9,600.00. This was calculated by
153 prorating the remaining five and one-half months of the fiscal year, plus a ten percent
154 contingency. Funds for this purpose will be made available through a corresponding increase to
155 the Appropriation from Cash in the Source of Funds section of the Water Division budget.

156
157 **Motion to approve FY 21-22 Budget Amendment to increase account #43100930 –**
158 **Miscellaneous General Expenses by \$9,600.00**

159
160 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

161 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

162 **Votes: 2 ayes**

163

164

165

166 **6. Discussion and Possible Action: Water Division – Budget Amendment – Meters**

167

168 Mr. Amwake stated that this request is similar to the prior Electric Division Budget Amendment
169 from approximately two months ago in regards to requesting transformers. In discussion with
170 the meter suppliers the lead time after placing an order is approximately nine months for water
171 meters. If the Water Division places an order when the FY22-23 funds are made available on
172 July 1, 2022, the meters would likely not be delivered until the fourth quarter of the upcoming
173 fiscal year. The total projected cost of meters for FY22-23 is based on a historical average
174 quantity of meters budgeted, adjusted for current inventory levels, and a recent unit cost price
175 quote from the Water Division’s meter supplier. Therefore, the Water Division arrived at a
176 budget amendment for the FY21-22 to increase Account # 43300346 – Meters by \$131,036.00.
177 Very similar to the Electric Division’s request the intent is to take the money from Retained
178 Earnings now and in preparation of the Water Division’s 22-23 budget these specific line items

179 will be zeroed out. What the PUC will see in approximately 4-6 weeks are some labor charges
180 and benefit charges.

181

182 **Motion to approve FY 21-22 budget amendment to increase account #43300346 – Meters**
183 **by \$131,036.00**

184

185 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

186 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**

187 **Votes: 2 ayes**

188

189

190

191 **Public Question and Answer Period**

192

193 None

194

195 **Public Question and Answer Period Closed**

196

197

198

199 **Correspondence/Committee Reports**

200

201 None

202

203

204

205 **7. Executive Session pursuant to State of Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f),**
206 **§7-232a, §1-200(6)(E) and §1-210(b)(5)(B) regarding commercially valuable**
207 **and financial information given in confidence regarding the Pierce Project**

208

209

210 **Motion was made to move into Executive Session at 6:54 p.m. pursuant to State of**
211 **Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f), §7-232a, §1-200(6)(E) and §1-210(b)(5)(B)**
212 **regarding commercially valuable and financial information given in confidence regarding**
213 **the Pierce Project**

214

215 **No Action Taken**

216

217 **Attendance at Executive Session: Chairman Robert Beaumont, Commissioner Patrick**
218 **Birney, Director of Public Utilities Richard Hendershot, Electric Division General**
219 **Manager Tony Buccheri, Business Office Manager Marianne Dill, Attorney Gerald E.**
220 **Farrell, Sr.**

221

222 **Motion was made to move out of Executive Session at 6:56 p.m. pursuant to State of**

223 **Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f), §7-232a, §1-200(6)(E) and §1-210(b)(5)(B)**
224 **regarding commercially valuable and financial information given in confidence regarding**
225 **the Pierce Project.**

226
227 **No Action Taken**

228
229 **Time of Executive Session: 6:54 p.m. to 6:56 p.m.**

230
231
232
233 **8. Discussion and Possible Action: Further amendment to the Pierce Project Lease**
234 **as discussed in Executive Session**

235
236 **No Action Taken**

237
238
239
240 **ADJOURNMENT**

241
242 **Motion to adjourn**

243
244 **Made by: Mr. Birney**
245 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**
246 **Votes: 2 ayes**

247
248 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:56 p.m.

249
250 Respectfully submitted,

251
252 *Michelle Sorbo for*

253
254 Bernadette Sorbo
255 Recording Secretary