

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF CHESHIRE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL  
AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2020 AT  
6:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, TOWN HALL, 84 SOUTH MAIN STREET,  
CHESHIRE CT 06410**

Present

John Perrotti, Chairman; Steve Carroll, Vice Chairman; Abdul Abdelghani, Jason Beach, Tom Scannell, James Urbano, Zack Wellburn  
Staff: Walter Gancarz, Town Engineer; John Cronin, Asst. Plant Supt. WWTP  
Guests: Chris Pierce, V.P. and Dennis Dievert Jr. Engineer, Wright Pierce.

Chairman Perrotti called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and read the emergency notice.

**1. ROLL CALL**

The Clerk called the roll and a quorum was determined to be present.

The group Pledged Allegiance to the Flag.

**2. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**3. APPLICATIONS**

None

**3. PROJECTS**

**a. Introduction of Wright-Pierce representative**

Chairman Perrotti introduced Dennis Dievert, Jr. and Chris Pierce to the Authority members, and welcomed them to the WPCA meeting. Mr. Dievert will be the direct contact/assigned liaison and Wright Pierce Consulting Engineer for the Town of Cheshire. Mr. Pierce is VP and Manager of the Middletown office, and will assist with engineering services, if needed. Both Mr. Dievert and Mr. Pierce have 19 years of service and experience with Wright Pierce, and stated they look forward to working with the Town of Cheshire, WPCA .

Authority members introduced themselves and welcomed Mr. Dievert and Mr. Pierce.

Town Engineer Gancarz gave a brief explanation on the process for a WPCA application. An application comes in; Don Nolte sends it to Wright Pierce (Mr. Dievert) and Supt. Hallier; any comments on the application are incorporated with a summary back to Mr. Nolte which are included in the WPCA packet and minutes.

The rule is that 10 days before a meeting the application must be submitted, and going forward this time frame will be adhered to and imposed.

There are many items which come up before the WPCA. Mr. Gancarz noted the WPCA, at this September meeting, will be going through the process of review and discussion about the 2021 sewer rate.

Chairman Perrotti stated the WPCA will look to Wright Pierce for engineering consultation. The Authority will create a standard work flow chart/process for documenting when things come in, a tracking system to insure the Town and WPCA are giving Wright Pierce the time needed for application review. Most communications will go from the Town Engineering Department to Wright Pierce and WPCA members in the meeting packet.

Vice-Chairman Carroll commented on his hope that all works out with the consulting engineer, the Town and WPCA. He hopes for an open relationship with Wright Pierce, what is being done, associated costs, and no surprises.

Mr. Pierce appreciates the opportunity to work with the Town and WPCA. He agreed with these comments, and stated Wright Pierce has the same expectations of its relationship with the Town and WPCA.

#### **4. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Mr. Cronin informed the Authority that all is status quo at the treatment plant. It has been a dry and uneventful summer; flows are low the plant at the same level as August 2019; UV is off line as of October 1<sup>st</sup>; phosphorous goes off on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **5. TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT**

Mr. Gancarz retires as Town Engineer as of this September WPCA meeting. He stated it has been a pleasure working with everyone in Cheshire. Mr. Gancarz started his relationship with Cheshire as a WPCA member, and then became Town Engineer. He has had a good working relationship with WPCA, WWTP staff, Town staff, and commented on the treatment plant as a well run system...which he knows will continue to run well.

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **a. 2021 Sewer Rate Projections**

The current sewer rates (2020) were reviewed by Mr. Gancarz and the Authority members.

##### **2020 – \$425 rate**

Residential - 4,933 units, \$425 rate; \$2,095,525.00.

Seniors - 148 units; \$368 rate; \$54,464.00 (income levels allow for rate to be frozen).

Commercial - 197,627.8 units; @ \$4.23 rate; \$835,965.76.

Commercial - 40 units at \$425 rate; \$17,000.

Commercial rates are based on water usage from RWA records.

Note: No business can be charged less than the single family residential rate.

CCI - @\$4.23 rate; 222,923.8 units; \$942,967.66; CCI is lower this year due to I&I component and COVID-19 early release program, and lower prison population; CCI represents 25% of the plant flow; charges are off the sewer meter.

Revenue - \$3,946,922.42; less deductions of \$20,859.90.

Projected Revenue based on \$425 rate - \$3,926,062.00.

Town Budget projected revenue - \$3,970,367.00 (\$100,000 higher than last year).

WPCD Budget - \$4,113,831.00 (other money comes from connection fees, septic disposal etc.).

**2020 – \$430 rate**

Residential - 4,933 units, \$425 rate; \$2,121,190.00

Seniors - 148 units; \$368 rate; \$54,464.00 (income levels allow for rate to be frozen).

Commercial - 197,627.8 units; @ \$4.23 rate; \$845,847.16.

Commercial - 40 units at \$425 rate; \$17,200.

Revenue - \$3,992,815.01; less deductions of \$20,859.90;

Projected Revenue - \$3,971,955.11.

CCI – the flow numbers being used are from December 2010 through July 2020 and are actual numbers; August and September numbers will be available soon; projected total CCI flow number is 166.747MG; Total CCF is 222,923.8.

WPCD Control Fund Budget – the Town Manager recommended revenue is \$3,970,367 from sewer revenues; FY2020 appropriation was \$3,884,975, or about \$100,000 less. The WPCD must raise about \$87,000 more revenue this year.

Two (2) years ago the WPCA adjusted the relationship of commercial/home use for parity reasons, and Mr. Perrotti asked if another adjustment will be needed.

Mr. Gancarz replied that the single family rate was used - 260gpd per household, and the actual number was 206gpd. This had a direct impact on the commercial rate, which was increased significantly. He expects the 206gpd to decrease as water saving devices continue to be used.

For 2021 the Town Manager recommended sewer rate stay the same at \$425.

Restricted Fund Balance – Mr. Gancarz pointed out the balance increasing to \$1,442,652 in FY 2021. He cited two options for the WPCA on the sewer rate.

Option #1 – remain at \$425 single family rate; take some funds out of the fund balance to offset the difference in revenue generation.

Option #2 – Set the sewer rate at \$430 which will cover the revenue needed.

Current Year – Calculation of estimated revenue (existing fee structure) was \$3,910,472. Actual revenue was \$3,963,566. Mr. Gancarz attributed the actual revenue to higher CCI flows; other commercial and residential units came on-line and paid fees; more revenue was collected than projected. If the WPCA chooses to go with the \$425 rate, the revenue may come closer than what is projected...and some of the fund balance could be used for a revenue shortfall.

Chairman Perrotti talked about the commercial accounts such as restaurants and service businesses having revenue decreased throughout the upcoming winter, and keeping the current rate.

Mr. Scannell agreed about commercial businesses having less revenue. He noted the required revenue to support the WPCD would be the \$430 rate, and he is in favor of increasing the rate to \$430.

Mr. Beach stated there are many economic uncertainties, and supports the \$5 increase to \$430 which will cover all costs.

Mr. Urbano supports the \$430 rate.

Mr. Wellburn supports the \$430 rate.

Mr. Abdelghani supports keeping the rate at \$425.

With regard to the fund balance, Mr. Carroll cited the current balance at \$1.4M, and in 2017 it was \$2.3M. He questioned the large balance variance.

The Authority members were informed by Mr. Gancarz that the large increase in the fund balance was due to the CCI settlement (about \$1.6M). The large decrease was the payoff of the construction interest on the treatment plant. At the closing, the interest on the construction draws had to be paid.

The original CCI settlement went into the WPCD fund balance, and the Town Council appropriated some funds into the General Fund.

Mr. Carroll supports maintaining the \$425 sewer rate. He noted these numbers are projected, and he advocates holding the rate at \$425. This could create about a \$50,000 shortfall. Local businesses are hurting financially, and Mr. Carroll does not want to increase their costs.

Stating he is leaning towards the sensitive side on this issue, Mr. Perrotti favors holding the rate at \$425.

Mr. Gancarz supports holding the rate at \$425. He cited the fact there was \$79,000 more raised in revenue last year than required. The fund balance increased last year, and taking \$45,000 to \$50,000 from fund balance over a two-year average actually balances the budget. From a public relations side, Mr. Gancarz said keeping the rate flat at \$425 would be beneficial for all.

WPCA must hold a public hearing on the sewer use rate. Mr. Gancarz explained the Authority can set a \$430 maximum rate; it cannot adopt a rate higher than the \$430 stated; and can keep the rate at \$425. The revised CCI numbers will be available prior to the public hearing date.

**b. Approval of Legal Notice for setting 2021 Sewer Rates**

Following the discussion on the sewer rate, the Authority members approved call of a public hearing for the 2021 sewer rates.

MOTION by Mr. Carroll; seconded by Mr. Beach.

MOVED that pursuant to Connecticut State Statutes, Chapter 103, Section #7-255 and Section #7-147, notice is hereby given of a Public Hearing held by the Water Pollution Control Authority of the Town of Cheshire at the Cheshire Town Hall, Council Chambers, 84 South Main Street, Cheshire, Connecticut on November 18, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

At said time and place, the Water Pollution Control Authority will consider and take action on the proposed revision of the Sewer User Charge Regulations. It is proposed that the Sewer User Charge will be established at Four-Hundred Thirty Dollars \$430.00 per annum per single-family dwelling. Other users will pay an amount based on their relative water use as reported by the Regional Water Authority (RWA) or sewer meter readings in the case of Cheshire Correctional Institution (CCI), in accordance with the format outlined in the Regulations, but not less than Four-Hundred and Thirty Dollars \$430.00 per year.

VOTE The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Chairman Perrotti clarified that this public hearing of November 18, 2020 will be immediately followed by the WPCA monthly meeting.

**7. OLD BUSINESS**

**a. Calvary Life Church Sewer Invoice**

Chairman Perrotti acknowledged receipt of more substantial information from Pastor Sam (Calvary Life Church ) to help defend the request for relief of the Church's bill for sewer use. The Church's higher RWA bill was due to a toilet leak.

The information from Calvary Church was reviewed by Mr. Gancarz with the Authority.

Last year's sewer bill is based on July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019 and CCF used. The sewer bill went from \$2,000 (usual fee for several years) to \$6,000 and the Church questioned the bill with the WPCA. The sewer bill for last year, \$2,100, was paid, and Pastor Sam was asked by WPCA to provide information on why the \$6,000 bill should not be paid.

Mr. Gancarz reported the amended information was submitted. In these cases, the Town takes the lead of the RWA. There have been other cases where water leaks or breaks and extra water was used. If RWA agrees to the situation, deems it accurate, they give a credit to the user. In this case, RWA agrees the water usage was abnormal, probably due to a leaking toilet. The RWA program is one chance for a deduction, and if anything happens in the future, the user pays the bill. On behalf of the Church, Pastor Sam is afraid to do this, and take the chance in case something worse happens in the future.

Options – The Authority members reviewed the possible options for Calvary Life Church as presented by Mr. Gancarz.

The average per quarter over the last three (3) years (w/o the disputed quarter) is 501.8CCF; the highest quarter is 662CCF.

Option #1 - 501.81CCF x sewer rate bill last year (w/o disputed quarters) – bill would be \$2,121.59. Calvary Church has already paid \$2,142, leaving a credit of \$20.41.

Option #2 - With the highest quarter in the last three (3) years of 662CF x sewer rate, the Church bill would be \$2,798.91. With credit of \$2,142 paid bill, the balance owed is \$656.91.

Option #3 - According to Mr. Gancarz the WPCA can decide to not entertain a reduction at all, and the Church owes the full \$6,088.69.

The WPCA policy has been to follow the lead of RWA, with a one-time forgiveness, and this can be done with Calvary Church.

MOTION by Mr. Carroll; seconded by Mr. Beach.

MOVED that the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) makes an offer to amend the sewer bill for Calvary Life Church in the amount of \$2,798.91, leaving a net due of \$656.91. This offer is presented and made clear to Calvary Life Church that the policy of the WPCA is to forgive errant flows in the same manner as that done by the Regional Water Authority (RWA) in the past. That this is a one-time offer and once used cannot be used again; this offer will be followed up with a letter from Town Engineer Walter Gancarz, as detailed in this motion.

Discussion

In his letter to Pastor Sam and Calvary Life Church, Mr. Gancarz said it will be communicated that the offer to amend the sewer bill is only for thirty (30) days until the October 28, 2020 WPCA meeting.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Mr. Gancarz reported on an issue that has been submitted prior to the meeting by the Cheshire Craft Brewing on the capacity fee of \$8,200. He read the e-mail into the record.

The business went to get a building permit; WPCA put a capacity fee of \$8,200 based upon the difference of flows from the existing unit and what is projected for use for the brewery. The business owners make a point that the water meter size has not been changed, and there should not be a capacity fee assigned.

For the brewing company, Mr. Gancarz said there is no change in the size of the meter, and applicant has not increased the size of the meter, and no fee should be assessed. Everything is tied to the building permit, and the business can get a permit and still owe the capacity fee when going for the certificate of occupancy.

Chairman Perrotti considered the brewery matter being referred to the WPCA, and stated it should be a matter for review and discussion at the October meeting.

Authority members briefly discussed the capacity issue, large or small meters, using set capacity and getting billed for usage. Mr. Perrotti stated the capacity fee is based on the meter size.

Mr. Gancarz said the capacity fee pays for the infrastructure. He cited the new medical building having a one-inch meter, and staying with this meter without a capacity fee. There is a difference between one and two inch meters, and this is the capacity fee.

WPCA members agreed with the brewery matter being on the October 2020 agenda.

Before adjournment, Authority members acknowledged the retirement of Mr. Gancarz as Town Engineer.

Mr. Urbano expressed appreciation and thanks to Mr. Gancarz for his knowledge, passion, and experience as Town Engineer...and said he is a special person.

Mr. Abdelghani agreed, and said he learned so much from the educational portion of meetings through Mr. Gancarz.

Mr. Carroll noted that he and Mr. Gancarz are high school grads together. He commented on Mr. Gancarz being a very smart man, and thanked him for his service to the community as Town Engineer.

Mr. Scannell said he knows Mr. Gancarz's facts are right at all the meetings, and appreciates his knowledge...it has been a pleasure working with him.

Mr. Beach knows Mr. Gancarz for 20 years, respects him, and learned much from him during this time.

Mr. Wellburn thanked Mr. Gancarz for his work with the WPCA.

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – August 25, 2020 Meeting**

MOTION by Mr. Scannell; seconded by Mr. Urbano.

MOVED to accept and approve the minutes of August 25, 2020 subject to corrections, deletions, additions.

Correction: Mr. Abdelghani and Mr. Wellburn were absent from the 8/25/20 meeting, and their names are removed from the attendee list.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

## **OCTOBER 28, 2020 MEETING – 6:00 P.M. AT THE WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANT CONFERENCE ROOM.**

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Scannell; seconded by Mr. Urbano

MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

VOTE           The motion passed unanimously by those present.

Attest:

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Marilyn W. Milton, Clerk