

Water Pollution Control Authority
May 23, 2012
Regular Meeting
Town Hall – Council Chambers

Members Present: Mr. Matt Bowman
Mr. Steve Carroll
Mr. Steve Eberle
Mr. Walter Gancarz
Mr. Tim Pelton (Chairman)
Mr. John Perrotti
Mr. Thomas Scannell

Members Absent: All members present.

Others Present: Mr. Dennis Dievert, Superintendent, WPCD
Mr. Joe Michelangelo, Director of Public Works
Town Manager Michael Milone
Mr. Jim Jascot, Finance Director
Mr. David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison

Chairman Pelton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum determined. The assembled group recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Pelton explained to the audience how to exit the chamber in the event of an emergency, in compliance with the Fire Marshal's order.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Pelton referred to correspondence relating to an article which appeared in the Meriden Record Journal regarding the fact that the Federal Environmental Protection Agency is willing to defend in court phosphorous limits for wastewater treatment plants against challenges by area towns and cities. The municipalities have formed a coalition to oppose new phosphorous limits, which will cost millions of dollars in plant upgrades.

APPLICATIONS

There were no applications to come before the Authority.

PROJECTS

Cook Hill Pump Station Design Project

Mr. John Braccio of Wright-Pierce addressed the Authority and stated that the pump station design is 100% complete. Design documents have been delivered as well as 100% design construction cost estimates.

Mr. Braccio informed the Authority that there is natural gas available in the pump station area. Although the station has been designed with a propane generator, the Town may wish to change to a natural gas connection prior to bidding the project. He will obtain a price for a generator which will utilize natural gas. Mr. Braccio stated that although the project is ready to go out to bid, because it will be delayed because of lack of funding, there may have to be some updates to the plans when it goes out to bid.

Mr. Braccio informed the Authority that Mr. Mariusz Jedrychowski and Mr. Dievert met with Mr. Ron Deninger of Elim Park and showed him the plans for the pump station. Since Elim Park uses approximately 50% of the flow to the pump station, they have been asked to make a financial contribution towards the project. Mr. Deninger will meet with Elim Park directors to determine whether they will contribute.

Mr. Pelton commented that funds are not available at this time to move forward with this project but design will be in place when it is ready to go out to bid. The priority at this time has to be the plant upgrade.

In response to a query from Mr. Gancarz, Mr. Braccio stated that he will follow up with the Authority regarding the natural gas generator information. In response to a query from Mr. Bowman it was stated that the generator is a 500 gallon unit which will last approximately one week.

Mr. Dievert thanked Mr. Braccio and stated that he was very pleased with the work done by Wright-Pierce and Mr. Jedrychowski.

Mr. Gancarz moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve Invoice 83193 of Wright-Pierce in the amount of \$1,979.27 for design services related to the Cook Hill Road Pump Station Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Perrotti and carried unanimously.

WPCD Plant Upgrade Design-Project Update

Mr. Dievert reported that the design of this project is in the vendor selection phase. Three firms have expressed interest in bidding the project. One firm has requested further information, which AECOM will answer with an addendum to the bidding documents.

Mr. Chelton presented an estimated design completion and contract bidding schedule as requested by the Authority. He noted in the document that in order to comply with the requirements of the Clean Water Funding program bids must be received no later than June 30, 2013. The schedule shows that bids will be received in advance of that date. Mr. Gancarz commented that the schedule looks good, but there is no room for any delays.

West Johnson Pump Station Design Project

Mr. Dievert informed the Authority that AECOM has received the signed contract to proceed with the project. Staff from AECOM are scheduled to come to the pump station soon to look at what needs to be done to design this project.

RIVERSIDE/APPLEWOOD SEWER ASSESSMENT

Mr. Michelangelo informed the Authority that in 2011 sewers were installed in the Riverside Drive, Applewood Drive area. The project was completed about 12 months ago. The Town assesses those property owners who received sewers in front of their property. As has been past practice, an assessor was hired to determine the benefit or value added to the properties because of the installation of the sewers.

The assessment was performed by Mr. Arthur B. Estrada, a real estate appraiser and consultant. Mr. Estrada addressed the Authority and described the detailed process utilized to arrive at the benefit assessment. He noted that it can never be an exact science, because each property is unique. The value is the average benefit to the property owners. There is a wide divergence within the project itself because of the different properties.

Mr. Estrada noted that if one property owner is having severe problems with a septic system, the benefit will be much more than that of one who is not having any problems. State Statute dictates that the assessment cannot be more than the benefit to the property. He stated that he examined over 100 home sales, and then used 20 of them to quantify the relationship of benefits.

Mr. Estrada stated that the method used to arrive at the benefit assessment is fair and reasonable and has been used for years. In response to a query from Mr. Bowman, Mr. Estrada responded that he does use information regarding the fact that some homes will now have the ability to expand, whereas with a septic system they could not. That information is included in the data analysis.

Mr. Bowman offered that the assessment seems rather low. Mr. Estrada agreed that it may seem low, but it is necessary to err on the low side to protect the town. He recommends an assessment between \$5,000 and \$6,000. Mr. Pelton stated that it is necessary for the Authority to accept the report, pay Mr. Estrada's invoice and determine an assessment.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority accept the Sanitary Sewer Benefit Analysis prepared by Arthur B. Estrada & Associates for properties on Applewood Drive, Country Club Road, Bridgets Lane and Oxford Court. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell and carried 6-0-1. Mr. Pelton abstained.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority authorize payment of the invoice of Arthur Estrada & Associates in the amount of \$6,750 for work

related to the Applewood Drive area benefit assessment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell and carried unanimously.

In response to a query from the Authority, Mr. Estrada stated that he would attend the public hearing on June 27.

Mr. Michelangelo commented that the assessment charge cannot exceed the benefit to the property from the sewer. He also noted that two years ago the Authority authorized a sewer capacity fee which must be paid when property owners connect to the sewer. This is in addition to the assessment. Mr. Dievert explained that this is a fee to buy into the sewer system.

In response to a query from the Authority, Mr. Michelangelo stated that typically 80% of construction costs are recovered from the assessment charge. He further stated that there is also a charge for any developer who extends a sewer.

Attorney Andrew Lord explained that there are three charges: a benefit assessment, a capacity charge and a connection charge. The capacity charge was enacted two years ago and is not part of this benefit assessment. In response to a query from Mr. Pelton, Mr. Michelangelo stated that the benefit assessment can be paid over time, usually the remaining length of the bond. Attorney Lord commented that the interest rate charged cannot exceed the rate on the bond.

Mr. Gancarz suggested setting a benefit assessment of \$5,720, which is 40% of the cost of the sewer project.

Mr. Gancarz moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority set the benefit assessment for the Applewood Drive, Country Club Road, Bridgets Lane, Oxford Court sewer project at \$5,220 plus a \$500 connection fee for a total of \$5,720. The motion was seconded by Mr. Perrotti and carried unanimously.

Mr. Michelangelo and Mr. Dievert will take care of calling the public hearing for 7:00 p.m. on June 27. In response to a query from Mr. Carroll, it was noted that the notice will be in the Cheshire Herald and all affected property owners will be notified of the public hearing by certified mail.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Plant Equipment Status

Mr. Dievert informed the Authority that all equipment is still functioning. DEEP performed an inspection of the plant and they were very impressed with the operation of the plant.

NEW BUSINESS

Draft NPDES Permit, CWF Final Award, SB440

Mr. Dievert reported receipt of The Clean Water Fund program and objectives, future clean water funds demands and economic benefits to the State and well as the priority project program of grants and loans. The NPDES draft permit was also received with a flow rate of 4.0 mgd.

A copy of Substitute Bill No. 440, an act concerning phosphorous reduction in state waters was also received. The Bill stated that municipalities who qualify will receive a grant of 30% of project costs and a 20% cost of project loan. Cheshire is on that priority list.

Proposed Capital Budget

Mr. Dievert presented Authority members with a copy of last year's Five Year Capital Expenditures Plan. Mr. Michelangelo informed the Authority that decisions need to be made concerning how to move forward with this plan for the next five years. It was determined that the two pump station projects, West Johnson Avenue and Cook Hill Road pump stations be moved out to Fiscal year 13-14 and/or years 14-15.

It was noted that the most immediate project and the most costly is the WPCD Plant Upgrade of 31.1 Million which is in the current budget. After discussion, it was decided that work relating to I & I be moved out to the 13-14 year of the plan.

In response to a query from Mr. Eberle regarding the proposed homeowner remediation program for sump pumps, Mr. Dievert stated that as part of the current reassessment program, assessors are looking for sump pumps as they investigate properties. Mr. Gancarz noted that the original plan was to offer property owners a financial benefit to encourage them to disconnect their sump pumps from the sewer system. It was determined that the funding that was planned for that project was deemed to not be allowed to be used for that purpose. Thus, there is no funding available for that program at this time.

Town Manager Milone offered that the re-evaluation process includes a provision in the contract to try to explore the basement area to determine if there is a sump pump. However, that information will not be available until next year. He further commented that funds for a remediation program would not be part of the Five Year Capital Budget, but rather the Operating Budget. Mr. Scannell noted that when his house was inspected for re-evaluation he was asked about a sump pump, but no one inspected his basement. Mr. Bowman suggested that the assessors take pictures if they find a sump pump.

Recording of Minutes

Mr. Pelton stated that this was added to the agenda as a result of an inquiry from Mr. Bowman regarding recording the meeting minutes. Mr. Pelton opined that there has never been an instance when it was necessary to look back at the minutes, as the essence of the meeting is captured in the minutes. Any changes can be amended to the minutes at the next meeting. Mr. Bowman inquired of Attorney Lord as to who has the ability to amend the minutes—only Authority members or can others make corrections. Attorney Lord responded that it is not unusual for others who are not members to make corrections, which would have to be approved by a majority of the Authority members when they approve the minutes. Mr. Bowman requested that Attorney Lord look into this matter and report back with his findings.

Mr. Bowman informed the Authority that he is hard of hearing, and finds it difficult to hear what some members are saying. Mr. Schrumm concurred, and stated that the Authority should use the microphones when they speak as it is difficult to hear the discourse from the audience. Mr. Pelton agreed that from now on members will use the mikes when they speak.

RWA Update

Town Manager Milone addressed the Authority and stated that his office is continuing the investigation regarding the feasibility of billing water customers based on consumption, rather than a flat rate as it is now. He noted that when the Authority and his staff investigated this situation a couple of years ago, it was determined that the cost of obtaining information on customers' water usage was cost prohibitive.

Mr. Michelangelo, Mr. Dievert and Mr. Milone have been working on this scenario, and the RWA is now using new software which makes obtaining water usage information much easier. Mr. Michelangelo stated that currently individual water usage is being obtained for the 45 commercial and industrial users. He stated that the tax office could manipulate the information on the spreadsheet for residences as well.

Mr. Dievert stated that now that the water usage information is available, it would be possible to obtain water consumption usage for the 4,500 residential customers. The process of obtaining this information will have to be analyzed to determine the best method of obtaining the necessary data. It may be preferable to have a fixed rate, with a variable rate relating to water consumption. He noted that there will be some hurdles, but doesn't feel they are insurmountable.

It was noted that it may be preferable to hire a consultant to look into the feasibility of switching to a consumption based water charge. Mr. Pelton inquired as to how the situation with summer pools and lawn and garden watering would factor into the charges.

Mr. Gancarz stated that during his tenure on the Authority he has heard very few complaints regarding the current water charge system. He queried whether this will

result in spending more money going to a new consumption based system. That could cause more complaints if a new system is instituted, as some property owners may find their water bills increasing drastically.

Mr. Milone stated that the Town Council wants the proposed system pursued as it is more progressive and equitable. In good faith the system should at least be investigated. He agreed that there are a lot more questions than answers at this time, but he recommends that at least a cost benefit analysis be conducted. Mr. Bowman concurred, and added that having a consumption based billing charge may encourage property owners to think more about their water consumption. Mr. Pelton agreed that it would be worth looking into.

Debt Service Analysis

Town Manager Milone presented cost estimates and potential funding options for the treatment plant upgrade. He commented that the debt service for this project will be borne by the General Fund, not the WPCA budget. Mr. Milone discussed the plant upgrade debt analysis. Mr. Pelton will attend the June Town Council meeting to discuss the plant upgrade and costs associated with the project.

The funding options presented by Mr. Milone related to two scenarios, one treating phosphorous with chemicals and one removing the phosphorous. Authority members agreed that the option with phosphorous removal and disk filters will be used, as that is a condition upon receiving funding from the DEEP.

Mr. Jim Jaskot, Finance Director, explained the debt service over the years as well as the projected debt analysis relating to the General Fund. Another analysis with current plant costs will be available in 5-6 weeks. Mr. Jaskot explained that even though the Town is receiving a grant and loan for the plant upgrade, the total gross cost must be presented at the referendum, not just the amount borrowed.

OLD BUSINESS

WPCA Education Effort

Mr. Gancarz will assist Mr. Pelton in putting together a presentation for the Town Council meeting to discuss the treatment plant upgrade. Mr. Gancarz will also take that presentation to other organizations in an effort to educate the public on the plant upgrade and the associated costs, grants and loans. It will also appear on the cable access channel.

Chesprocott Information

Authority members received a copy of the update from Chesprocott, listing the septic system failures and repairs for the month of April. Nothing of significance was reported.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of April 25, 2012, as published, subject to correction. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberle.

Correction: Page 5, Title should read, "RIVERSIDE/APPLEWOOD SEWER ASSESSMENT."

The motion to approve the minutes, as amended, carried unanimously.

Pending Claims and Litigation

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending claims and litigation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberle. Those invited: Members of the Water Pollution Control Authority, Town Attorney Andrew Lord, Town Council liaison Mr. Schrumm, Mr. Michelangelo, Mr. Dievert and Town Manager Michael Milone. The motion was approved unanimously.

Mr. Pelton moved the Water Pollution Control Authority out of executive session at 9:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberle and carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Perrotti moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority adjourn at 10:05 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberle and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Pelton, Chairman
Water Pollution Control Authority

Attest:

Susan F. Zwick

Distribution:

Members: W.P.C.A.
Michael Milone, Town Manager
David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison
Andrew Lord, Town Attorney
Donald Chelton/Jon Pearson, AECOM
Joseph Michelangelo, Ex-Officio Member
George Noewatne, Operations Manager
Dennis Dievert, Superintendent [WPCD](#)
Susan Zwick, Recording Secretary

