

**WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY  
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING  
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2012**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steven N. Wawruck, Jr., Jeffrey Ives, Denise Balboni, Kevin Brace, Robert Crochetiere, Dennis Gagnolati and Gary Laurito

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** William Hamel  
Dana Steele, Town Engineer, Ex Officio

**ALSO PRESENT:** Scott C. Lappen, Director of Public Works, Ex Officio  
Gary Kuczarski, Superintendent  
Heather Kane, Recording Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER:** Steven N. Wawruck, Jr. called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

**MINUTES: August 14, 2012 Regular Monthly Meeting:** Kevin Brace made a motion: **TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 14, 2012 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING** - Seconded by Gary Laurito. Without further discussion, the motion to approve the minutes passed 5 – 0.

**PUBLIC INPUT:** None

**FINANCIAL REPORTS:**

- a. **August 2012 Cash Reports:** Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO ACCEPT THE AUGUST FINANCIAL REPORTS INCLUDING THE CD INVESTMENT UPDATE AND CHANGES** - Seconded by Jeffrey Ives. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
- b. **CD Investments – update and changes:** Please see item (a) under Financial Reports.

Robert Crochetiere arrived at the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

- c. **FY 11-12 Final Budget Report inc. completed transfers:** Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO ACCEPT THE FY 11-12 FINAL BUDGET REPORT INCLUDING COMPLETED TRANSFERS**– Seconded by Jeffrey Ives. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None

**OLD BUSINESS:**

- a. **Mr. Paoletti's appeal / well rate calculation discussion:** In all fairness to Mr. Paoletti and his plea to the Authority, Mr. Wawruck would like the WPCA to entertain a couple of ideas therefore he had requested that information regarding water meters and some options be presented at the meeting to initiate discussion on the topic though the Authority may decide to not change the current process after the discussion.

Dennis Gagnolati arrived at the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

Mr. Wawruck stated that a lot of what Mr. Paoletti said had merit as the Authority lumps all residential well users (88 accounts) together into one category. A hand held reader (to enable the WPCA operators to read the meters remotely) would cost \$800 whether there were a few meters or 88 meters. There would also be the cost in wages to have the staff read the meters once a year. The cost for a new meter assembly through Connecticut Water Company is \$370.00. Kevin Brace asked if the WPCA could charge well users a \$2.00 fee on the annual bill for reading the meter. There is currently one well user with a meter in Windsor Locks. More residents have put meters on irrigation systems to reduce their charge based on city water than well users have put on their wells. Jeffrey Ives asked what the reason was behind the resident putting a meter on their well. Heather Kane explained that about two years ago the WPCA informed well users who were appealing their bill that the homeowners must install a meter on

their well if they do not want to be charged the average rate. Once the meter was installed, the homeowner would be charged for their actual usage (or the minimum charge if usage was low). This resident did exactly what the WPCA recommended; she paid for the cost of the meter and the installation herself. She now pays the minimum rate each year.

Mrs. Kane contacted other towns regarding their policy for well users. Most charge a flat rate and do not reduce the rate when there is an appeal. Two towns recommend installing a meter on the well when residents appeal their bill. Some towns require commercial well properties install a meter. This is paid for by the property owner. In some towns the well rate is the same as the minimum rate (\$185 in one town). Some towns charge per unit, i.e. 1 unit is a single family home. In these towns the well is being charged at a single family home rate. One town charges \$258.00 for wells compared to the \$244.72 well rate charged by the Windsor Locks WPCA. There were no towns that provide these meters to anyone under any circumstances. Mr. Wawruck asked if Mrs. Kane knew how many wells were in the towns that she surveyed. Mrs. Kane didn't know the number of wells in these towns. Mr. Wawruck stated that he believed the towns surveyed have a lot more wells compared to Windsor Locks' minimum well usage.

The WPCA has, in addition to the 88 residential well accounts, 32 commercial wells for a total of 120 wells. Two percent of all residential accounts are well users. There are no meters currently on commercial wells in Windsor Locks. Commercial well users are being charged \$473.72 for the year which is the same as the commercial minimum rate. There have been no appeals from commercial properties on wells.

When Scott Lappen and Mr. Kuczarski were discussing various scenarios regarding the installation of the well meters, questions arose such as:

1. If the WPCA does pay for the meters in full or in half, what would happen when the house transfers ownership?
2. What if after putting in the meter the resident realizes they were getting a better deal under the flat rate, could they take the meter off their well?
3. Would the meter be mandatory or non-mandatory?
4. What is the payback time?
5. Would the WPCA offer installment plans?
6. Would the WPCA subsidize for people with hardships?

There are a lot of questions that still need to be discussed. If the Town did pay for half of the meter it would technically be the Town's property. The Town would have quasi-ownership.

The well user rate is \$244.72 and the minimum rate is \$147.28. The difference is roughly \$100.00. Even if a homeowner pays for the meter and installation themselves, the payback time is about five or six years. Mr. Wawruck said that the average homeowner keeps a mortgage for seven years. The payback time is within those seven years.

Mr. Laurito asked if it is legal for the WPCA to create a regulation that requires the installation of a meter on every well. If the WPCA offered a zero percent interest, two year installment plan to residents to pay for the meter, that would put a meter on every well in Town. Then if the resident sells the house, the meter remains at the house because it is a requirement. This plan would require the Town to pay for the meters upfront and then get paid back from the residents over a two year period. The WPCA would need to write up an agreement with the homeowners that would include the installment payments as part of the sewer bill.

Mr. Ives stated that with every problem the WPCA has come across similar to this situation (such as a homeowner with a swimming pool or sprinkler system), the WPCA has said that in order to receive an adjustment on the sewer bill the resident has to prove the actual usage by installing a meter. Mr. Ives cannot think of another way to calculate the well rate that would have a finer result than by using the average. Mrs. Balboni added that it seems consistent with what other towns are doing. Mrs. Kane stated that she calculates the average rate by taking the average of all the residential bills. There are other ways to take an average on the information received from

the Connecticut Water Company. The WPCA could take an average of the actual usage on all residential accounts (which, for this year, would be \$10.00 more than the current well rate). The WPCA could also take an average of the residents' adjusted annual consumption (which, for this year, would be about \$20.00 less than the current well rate).

Mr. Ives sees this as either the WPCA adjusts the way the well rate is figured or they change the circumstances in the field (i.e. the installation of a meter on a well). Mr. Ives would like to know of another circumstance where the Town chips in and pays for something similar to a meter. Mr. Lappen used the scenario that if you have electric heat in your home it is up to you to install a special meter to accommodate the different rates during the day. It is the same thing here with the well line.

Connecticut Water would provide the meters. Mr. Wawruck asked how we treat that one resident that has the meter on the well. The WPCA operators manually read the meter.

Mr. Laurito asked if any information was gathered from the towns that were surveyed on how they determine the minimum rate. The minimum rate is based on the facility's budget. All the towns surveyed had one minimum rate for both commercial and residential properties. There was not a separate minimum rate for commercial properties. The Windsor Locks WPCA has 282 commercial accounts, 189 are charged the minimum rate (67%). If the commercial minimum rate was reduced to the current residential minimum rate, 119 accounts would still be charged the minimum rate (42% of commercial accounts). Mrs. Balboni and Mr. Ives felt that it made no sense to charge the small commercial properties the higher commercial minimum rate.

Mr. Ives, with an understanding of Mr. Paoletti's objections, pointed out that there are a lot of well users that are not appealing their bills. Mr. Wawruck requested that the information discussed today (i.e. commercial rates, well rates, minimum rates, other towns' information and if there are any other towns with about 100 wells out of 4,000 to 5,000 users) be compiled onto one sheet for next month's meeting. Mrs. Balboni asked if it is safe to assume that these other towns are solely using the revenue from the sewer user bills to fund their operation and that there is no other funding.

Kevin Brace left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Mrs. Balboni stated that she does not feel comfortable with taking on the installation, purchase or sale of meters in any shape or form. Mr. Ives agreed. Mr. Wawruck stated that this exercise was not to agree to the purchase of the meters but to better understand the possible cost, identify potential problems, and discover what other municipalities do in similar situations. Authority members agreed that it is a great exercise to gain a better understanding of the way rates are determined and to know where the WPCA fits in with peers in the industry. This is a good time to go through the exercise in a thorough manner since the WPCA had said it was not going to change anything before next year.

- b. **Cost for water meters:** Please see the notes under Old Business item a.
- c. **Mr. Griffin's and Mr. Burke's appeal / pump discharge:** Mr. Kuczarski and Mr. Lappen did dye-test the pump and found that it does not discharge into the sewer or the catch basins. The WPCA recommended averaging the eight quarters prior to the drastic increase in usage and multiply that average by four to determine the annual adjusted bill. The Authority will formally vote on the adjusted bill amount during next month's meeting.
- d. **Commercial Minimum rate:** Please see the notes under Old Business item a. This is a topic that will continue to be discussed in the future. Mr. Ives suggested looking at the volumes. The current commercial minimum rate is for a volume of about 100 thousand gallons. Commercial accounts that are being billed the minimum rate have probably a wide range of water usage. It would be worth looking at volumes for the minimum. There could be different categories for commercial property.
- e. **How other towns respond to appeals:** Please see the notes under Old Business item a.

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

At 6:11 p.m., there being no other business to discuss, Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING** - Seconded by Jeffrey Ives. Without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Kane  
Recording Secretary