

**TOWN OF WINDSOR LOCKS
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2014**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeffrey Ives, Denise Balboni, Robert Crochetiere, Dennis Gragnolati, William Hamel, and Gary Laurito

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steven N. Wawruck, Jr. and Michael Russo
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: At 5:30 p.m., Jeffrey Ives called the meeting to order.

MINUTES: October 14, 2014 Regular Monthly Meeting: Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 14, 2014 REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING** – Seconded by Robert Crochetiere. Without further discussion, the motion passed by 4 votes in favor and 0 votes opposed with one abstention for Denise Balboni.

PUBLIC INPUT: None

FINANCIAL REPORTS:

- a. **October 2014 Cash Reports:** Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO ACCEPT THE OCTOBER 2014 CASH REPORTS INCLUDING THE CD INVESTMENT UPDATE INFORMATION** – Seconded by William Hamel. Without further discussion, the motion passed by 4 votes in favor and 0 votes opposed.
- b. **CD Investments – update and changes:** Please see item (a) under Financial Reports for the related motion.

CORRESPONDENCE: None

OLD BUSINESS:

- a. **Sharon Williams – 119 Center Street:** Gary Kuczarski handed out a breakdown of events with copies of relevant documents to the Authority. A major rain event occurred August 9, 2013 which caused the sewer to back-up into Ms. Williams' finished basement. Mr. Kuczarski was contacted by a CIRMA municipal claims representative, Brenda, almost ten months after the event on June 2, 2014. He spoke briefly with Brenda at that time and was not provided with a claim number. CIRMA, the Town's insurer, did pay the homeowner \$27,340.96 on their claim, which had been filed through the Town Clerk's office. Typically, CIRMA does not contact the Town or WPCA to inform them of any decision they make on a claim or to get the Town's approval to pay on a claim. Mr. Hamel had an issue that CIRMA paid the claim based on it being the second incident when this was the first time the Town was made aware of the issue because Ms. Williams did not file a claim after the first occurrence in 2005.

At 5:35 p.m., Dennis Gragnolati arrived to the meeting.

Mr. Kuczarski stated that Brenda's information showed that storm water entered the sewer system (since the WPCA has no control over the infiltration of storm water, this may have caused her to deduct some from the original claim amount which was \$33,400.000) and that there was a long period between the jetting maintenance in that area. Brenda's expectation for a typical jetting maintenance period in a municipality is once a year. Mr. Kuczarski informed her that the WPCF can't jet the entire system in a year. If the WPCF staff knows that there is a problem area, that area gets added to one of two lists that the operators go by for jetting maintenance – a three-week trouble list or a six-month trouble list. 119 Center Street has not been known as a problem area in the past. But now knowing

this is CIRMA's expectation, Mr. Kuczarski will put this area on the six-month or one year trouble list. Though, jetting this area is most likely not going to help this situation. The situation is that the main pipe, even with a little back pitch to it, works fine during a normal flow. An issue only arises when the system gets overwhelmed during a major rain event. Ms. William's finished basement is the lowest point on that line.

Brenda commented that the Town is not obligated to put in the backflow preventer. The backflow preventer would be a betterment to the home and the homeowner would need to take some responsibility in installing it. Mr. Lappen thinks that the homeowner, who now knowing that this problem exists, would want to put some of the settlement she just received from the Town towards trying to prevent this from happening again. Mr. Lappen stated that the WPCA provides a utility just like CL&P provides a utility. If one loses power due to a problem with the electrical service and all the food in the refrigerator goes bad, one does not go back to CL&P and get the cost of the food reimbursed.

Mr. Gragnolati shared that the reason the system gets overwhelmed during rain events is due to leaks in the system, illegal connections and cross connections. Everyone is required, unless there is a real hardship, to be connected to the sewer system. Mr. Gragnolati sees the issue with infiltration of storm water into the sewer system as being partially the Town's problem. Therefore, Mr. Gragnolati feels that the Town should provide a remedy to this situation when there is a remedy. The backflow preventer may or may not remedy or fix the situation. Assuming a backflow preventer would remedy the situation, Mr. Ives asked why the homeowner should not buy a backflow preventer and pay for the installation out of the payment they received from the Town. Mr. Gragnolati stated that the payment is to just cover what was lost or damaged due to the incident; Mr. Hamel agreed that the claim payment is only to bring the property back to the condition it was in prior to the incident. Mr. Laurito suggested that Mr. Gragnolati is claiming that the WPCA is responsible for it raining 3.75" instead of 3.5" (for example) and asked how the WPCA would control that. The WPCA is aware that there is some inflow and infiltration (I & I) in the system but typically the system can handle the normal I & I and it is only during these major rain events that there is a problem. How many more years will it be before another major rain event occurs? Ms. Balboni stated that after the first occurrence it is not a gamble anymore but a likelihood and there is an obligation to address and remedy the situation by the homeowner. Sometime around 2003, Tighe & Bond did some smoke testing to identify the real problem areas. It takes time and is expensive to replace the current infrastructure of the sewer system.

Mr. Ives stated that the homeowner is responsible for their lateral and the Town has already paid a claim for \$27,340.96. Personally, he does not see the WPCA adding to the payment already made to the homeowner. Mr. Ives would like to know the reasons behind paying the claim. Mrs. Balboni stated she does not understand why the Town or the WPCA, as the policy holder, is not included in the claim discussion or decision process in order to ensure that the Town or WPCA's position or intent is not impacted or compromised by a decision to pay a claim. At least, the WPCA should have an opportunity to talk about the claim with CIRMA and to share the staff's knowledge and expertise regarding the situation before a decision is made. Premiums are paid by the Town. Mr. Laurito stated that, since the WPCA is not self-insured, there typically is a section in most insurance policies that allows the insurance companies to create a settlement with or without the policy holders' consideration. But in such cases, the insurance company gets a release. If the individual settled with the insurance company for \$27,340.96, then they were willing to accept that as a settlement for their total claim. Therefore, Mr. Laurito does not see any reason to increase that number. Ms. Balboni wondered what the settlement paperwork said regarding future claims. Mr. Hamel stated that the insurance payment is only to make the homeowner whole; it is not to improve the property. Mr. Ives and Mr. Hamel would like to know, though they don't think they will ever find out, what criteria was used by CIRMA to assess the Town's responsibility in this situation. Ms. Williams did not issue a formal request in a letter regarding her request that the WPCA pay for a backflow preventer. She instead verbally spoke with Mr. Kuczarski and Mr. Lappen about it and then she spoke with the Authority during last month's meeting. There is only a ballpark figure provided by a contractor regarding the cost of purchasing and installing a backflow preventer.

Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO SEND A LETTER TO MS. WILLIAMS PROVIDING HER WITH SOME INFORMATION ON THE TYPES OF CHECK VALVES THAT SHE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PURCHASE AND HAVE INSTALLED IN HER LATERAL SERVING THE HOUSE.** Mr. Lappen shared that if the WPCA tells the homeowner what type of check valve should be installed, the next time it backs up, she will come back to the WPCA stating that she installed what the WPCA recommended and that it is now the WPCA's responsibility. Ms. Williams should go to a reputable plumber. The plumber should recommend a remedy for the situation and then, if it doesn't work, Ms. Williams can go back to the plumber. **Gary Laurito withdrew the motion.**

Gary Laurito made a motion: **TO SEND MS. WILLIAMS A LETTER INDICATING THAT CHECK VALVES CAN BE INSTALLED BY AUTHORIZED PLUMBERS AND THAT IT IS THE HOMEOWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO LOOK INTO AND OBTAIN ONE SHOULD THEY WANT TO PUT A CHECK VALVE INTO THE LATERAL** – Seconded by Robert Crochetiere.

Whether the homeowner needs to obtain a permit through the WPCA or the building department depends on where the licensed plumber will be installing the check valve. If the WPCA inspects it, the inspector is just making sure it is a sound connection and will not be approving the design. Mr. Lappen suggested that the letter to the homeowner states that, based on the information provided to the WPCA regarding the incident at 119 Center Street, the WPCA recommends that the homeowner contacts a reputable licensed plumber for suggestions on possible remedies to the situation.

Without further discussion, the motion passed by 5 votes in favor and 1 vote opposed.

- b. H.A.R.P. Mechanical:** Mr. Kuczarski hand-delivered the check today to H.A.R.P. Mechanical. Kevin Moriarty, the President of H.A.R.P. Mechanical, was very appreciative and signed the general release in Mr. Kuczarski's and a witness's presence.
- c. Clean Water Fund – Dexter's and Halfway House Pump Stations update:** Mr. Kuczarski has been in contact with Paul Dombrowski regarding the draft scope of work. Mr. Dombrowski was very apologetic as some issues had come up in their office that demanded his attention away from working on this scope of work. Mr. Dombrowski should have the draft scope of work done and ready for review by Mr. Kuczarski tomorrow. Mr. Dombrowski does not feel that any delay would jeopardize the ability to obtain funding as DEEP representatives have informed him that there has not been much activity in the way of municipalities approaching them on funding for projects.

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Meeting schedule for 2015:** William Hamel made a motion on having examined the schedule for any conflicts with holidays: **TO ACCEPT THE MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE NEXT YEAR AS PRESENTED** – Seconded by Denise Balboni. Without further discussion, the motion passed by 6 votes in favor and 0 votes opposed.

ADJOURNMENT: At 6:07 p.m., with no other business to discuss, William Hamel made a motion: **TO ADJOURN THE MEETING** – Seconded by Gary Laurito. Without further discussion, the motion passed by 6 votes in favor and 0 votes opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Kane
Recording Secretary