

CITY OF GROTON UTILITIES COMMISSION

Minutes of Regular Meeting

May 23, 2012

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Galbraith called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Mayor Marian K. Galbraith

Commissioners: Edward E. DeMuzzio until 12:03 p.m., Paul A. Duarte, Shirleyann Dunbar-Rose, Bruce J. Fafard until 11:45 a.m.

Excused:

Staff present: Director of Utilities Paul Yatcho
General Manager-Information Technology Susan G. Blanchette
General Manager-Utility Finance David F. Collard
General Manager-Electric Herbert D. Cummings
General Manager-Customer Service Tina M. Daniels
General Manager-Water Richard M. Stevens
Manager-Engineering Brian J. Roche
Executive Assistant Deborah J. Gaudette

2. APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 25, 2012

Duarte / Dunbar-Rose that the minutes of the regular meeting of April 25, 2012 be approved. **So voted unanimously.**

3. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Fafard / Duarte that the Treasurer's Report be accepted as presented. **So voted unanimously.**

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter dated May 2, 2012 from Town of Ledyard Mayor John A. Rodolico, Ledyard Councilman Sean Sullivan, and Ledyard Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman James Diaz regarding the proposed Bluff Point to Preston Trail.
- Mayor Galbraith reported receiving a communication from a City resident strongly opposing opening the watershed area for recreational access.

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Joellen Anderson, a City of Groton resident, addressed the Commission regarding the protection of the watershed areas. Ms. Anderson feels there are ample areas in Groton for recreational purposes without providing access to the reservoirs. Issues Ms. Anderson feels have not be addressed by the Tri Town Trails Committee include who would be responsible for monitoring the trails, whether there has been an environmental impact study done for the area, and if the trail would comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act which indicates that any trail would have to provide access for wheelchairs, including motorized wheelchairs. Ms. Anderson also noted that Connecticut law allows for the carrying of concealed weapons and she feels anyone monitoring the trail could be put at risk

under certain circumstances. Ms. Anderson concluded by stating she feels this is a golden opportunity to protect our watershed area, not only for the residents of this area, but residents in neighboring towns as well.

Mr. Dave Holdridge, Tri Town Trails Committee Chairman, addressed the Commission. Mr. Holdridge stated the idea that recreational trails are inconsistent with clean water does not conform to recent science. Mr. Holdridge stated there are nationwide studies on the internet regarding water testing and clean water with recreational access to reservoirs. Mr. Holdridge expressed the desire for an opportunity for new thinking among the Commission and Utilities staff.

Mr. Bill Saums, Ledyard councilman and Ledyard Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) liaison, addressed the Commission. Mr. Saums stated he is very much in favor of the Trails project. Mr. Saums has attended the initial meetings and has appeared with Mr. Holdridge before the Commission in the past. Mr. Saums would like the Commission to consider what is different about this water system and reservoir system from the other reservoir systems that do allow recreational trails and other activities. And if there are differences, what those differences are that specifically require that Commission to prevent public access to the system.

6. CMEEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

Commissioner DeMuzzio distributed a graph comparing of actual and projected CMEEC costs versus wholesale components of CL&P standard service rates.

Commissioner DeMuzzio also reported that Mr. Tom Solinsky has been transferred from Sustainable Energy Analytics (SEA) to CMEEC as Asset Manager for all of CMEEC's projects.

Mayor Galbraith asked the Commission if there was a motion to move **Agenda Item 10A** forward on the Agenda for the convenience of the members of the public in attendance. There was no motion made.

7. REGIONAL WATER UPDATE

Mayor Galbraith reported that the Southeastern Council of Governments' Regional Water meeting for May was cancelled. Manager Stevens reported that the next Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting is scheduled for May 31, 2012 and the Committee will be reviewing the Milone & MacBroom report and the report on the stakeholders and subunits within the region.

8. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

General Manager Collard presenting the following financial highlights:

Electric:

- The returns from TRANSCO reduced the transmission costs for March about 5%, thereby minimizing the high transmission costs for March that resulted in a deficit charge to the TCA fund of \$27,458. A \$28,387 surplus was added to the PPA fund.
- Expenses for restoration due to Tropical Storm Irene for the fiscal year-to-date are \$263,000.
- Warmer weather continues to drive lower revenues in the residential class. Heating degree days were 11% below last year. For the second month in a row, the Navy owns the lion's share of the 14% negative variance in the industrial revenues.
- The adjustments made to power cost yielded a benefit of \$1,353,000.
- Net income for the month is almost 23% more than budget due to the reduction in power cost.

Water:

- Water revenues are almost 2% more than budget for the month, driven by Sales for Resale revenues that were 33% more than budget. The major contributor to the positive variance was Regional Water sales, which were 36% more than last year.
- Net earnings for the month are almost 5 times more than budget primarily due to the lower than budget O&M Expenses.
- For the fiscal year-to-date, net earnings are more than 80% higher than budget primarily due to lower than budget O&M Expenses that more than offset lower revenues.
- Net earnings before debt principal and depreciation is over \$2.2 million.

9. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE

The Commission discussed the options for going paperless for Commission documents. General Manager Blanchette stated there were various options based on the goals and need of the Commission. It was determined the Commissioners did not use or need their @yurservice e-mail accounts. The Commission discussed what, if any, network resources would be needed. General Manager Blanchette reported documents could be delivered via a secure ftp site, stating it would be the easiest way to access documents and would put less strain on the Commissioners' e-mail inboxes as well as the City's e-mail servers. Internet access could be provided via Wi-Fi that would be available after the relocation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to Council Chambers. The Commission discussed the umbrella policy of the IT Department regarding administrative access to City owned equipment.

Sampled devices will be for Commission review at the June 27th meeting. General Manager Blanchette and Executive Assistant Gaudette will provide a return on investment (ROI) analysis at the next Commission meeting.

Manager Stevens distributed updated map of Flanders Road service area and briefed the Commission on the various options for the three (3) proposed alternatives.

10. OLD BUSINESS

Agenda Item 10A, Commission Review of Bluff Point to Present Trail / Tri-Town Trails Communication

Mayor Galbraith gave a review of the Tri Town Trails request. Most recently, in December 2010, Mr. Chad Frost met with former City of Groton Mayor Dennis Popp. The concerns communicated in that discussion were reported to the Tri Town Trails Committee at its December 14, 2010 meeting.

On July 25, 2011, the City Council met with Director Yatcko and Mr. Chris Wardruff of USI Insurance Services to discuss concerns regarding liability. The Councilors were in agreement that opening the property would not be in the best interest of the City, Groton Utilities, or the citizens who utilize Groton Utilities' water.

On October 24, 2011, the Tri Town Trail Committee gave a presentation to the City Council. The Council chose not to move the item forward. On October 26, 2011, the Utilities Commission was asked if they would like a presentation by the Tri Town Trails Committee. The Commission, at that time, felt they were familiar with the presentation and had watched the televised City Council meeting and were provided DVDs of the meeting.

The current request asks for a response within 30 day with potential dates when all interested parties can meet to develop a way forward. The Council will await the Commission's recommendation as the issue falls within the purview of the Commission.

Commissioner Dunbar-Rose stated this request has been addressed both by the Commission and the City Council. Commissioner Dunbar-Rose still strongly supports denying the request to allow recreational access to the reservoir. She feels there is no need for the trail as there are plenty of outdoor recreational areas available in the area. Commissioner Dunbar-Rose stated she knew of no requests by City or Town residents to open the reservoir to recreational access.

Commissioner Duarte reported he too has heard the presentations of the Tri Town Trails Committee both as a Councilor and a Utilities Commissioner. He expressed that he is still opposed to opening the reservoir to passive recreation of this type. How the plan is structured will cause the burden to fall on the City and its residents. No matter how well intentioned the other communities are, volunteers will not be able to monitor the trails long term, as volunteerism can be inconsistent from year to year. Commissioner Duarte also feels there are many other open space areas available in all the involved town areas and he is opposed to moving the item forward.

Commissioner DeMuzzio feels a balance needs to be achieved. The plan as presented by the Tri Town Trails Committee needs to be more detailed in order for it to be considered. Commissioner DeMuzzio stated his major concern is the security of the property.

Commissioner Dunbar-Rose said one of the major concerns she has is the potential cost. The Tri Town Trail Committee has proposed guaranteed security and protection of the water, and while that may happen for a few years with volunteers, in the long term it is unclear who will be responsible to provide 24 hour security to ensure that no one is injured on the property or prevent an incident that would affect the water quality. Commissioner Dunbar-Rose said she would only consider a request that provided fencing, 24 hour security and the guarantee of liability in the event of accident.

Mayor Galbraith stated the Utilities Commission and the City Council have not ignored the request as it has been presented to each group and considered many times. The fact that Commission does not wish to proceed with the request does not mean the request has been ignored. There are still several concerns which the Tri Town Trails Committee has not addressed such as the protection of the water quality, maintenance of the trail, and monitoring of the area. The offer of volunteerism is not a convincing option for the protection of the trail. Volunteers put in the Birch Plain Creek trail and volunteerism fell off as soon as the project was completed. The City is now responsible for the maintenance of the trail. Volunteers have great intentions but cannot be guaranteed in the future. The Commission's concerns have been communicated to the Tri Town Trails Committee as evidenced in their meeting minutes, but the concerns have yet to be answered.

Mayor Galbraith asked the Commission if they wished to respond to the request to propose dates at which to continue this discussion with the Tri Town Trails Committee. Commissioner Dunbar-Rose stated the Commission has given legitimate reasons for denying the request in the past and she would not be interested in further discussion. Commissioner DeMuzzio stated he would be willing to discuss the request, but there needs to be something new to discuss. The concerns the Commission has expressed have still not been addressed. Commissioners Duarte stated he would not be interested in further discussion. Commission Fafard stated he would not be interested in further discussions as the concerns raised by the other Commissioners are valid and have not been adequately addressed. Mayor Galbraith concurred and will pass the Commissions' recommendation to City Council.

Agenda Item 10B, GUC-12-05-09: Consideration of and Action to authorize Management to award the contract to construct a concrete secondary containment at the Buddington Substation for each of the three (3) transformers to Tim Bonanno General Contractor, LLC of Waterford, Connecticut for the quoted price of \$248,882.00, and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur and Mayor Marian K. Galbraith be authorized to execute the contract

Dunbar-Rose / Duarte that the City of Groton Utilities Commission authorize Management to award the contract to construct a concrete secondary containment at the Buddington Substation for each of the three (3) transformers to Tim Bonanno General Contractor, LLC of Waterford, Connecticut for the quoted price of \$248,882.00, and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur and Mayor Marian K. Galbraith be authorized to execute the contract.

General Manager Cummings gave an overview of the project. The plastic main containment for Buddington Substation transformers is very old and Management believes it would not hold in the event of an incident. Three (3) prospective bidders participated in a site visit to the Buddington Substation on April 11, 2012. Two (2) bids were received. Management also recommends not performing the removal of existing concrete foundation next to transformer 1X, which was Alternate Bid No.2. This work will be performed at a later date when the 400 line and the 1X bus are rebuilt. The project is expected to be completed within a few months and no service impact is expected.

So voted unanimously.

11. NEW BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 11A, GUC-12-05-10: Consideration of and Action to appoint a Commissioner to serve as a member of the Community Service Award Selection Committee for the 9th Annual “Jacqueline B. Nixon Community Service Award” to be presented at City Day on August 3, 2012

Dunbar-Rose / Fafard that the City of Groton Utilities Commission appoint Commissioner Duarte to serve as a member of the Community Service Award Selection Committee for the 9th Annual “Jacqueline B. Nixon Community Service Award” to be presented at City Day on August 3, 2012. **So voted unanimously.**

At 11:08 a.m. Mayor Galbraith called for a motion to recess the meeting. **Dunbar-Rose / DeMuzzio** that this meeting recess to allow for the continuation of the Thames Valley Communications, Inc. meeting. **So voted unanimously.**

At 12:20 a.m., Mayor Galbraith called the meeting to order.

Dunbar-Rose / Duarte that the City of Groton Utilities Commission table Agenda Items **11B, GUC-12-05-11; 11C, GUC-12-05-12; and 11D** due to the absence of Commissioners DeMuzzio and Fafard. **So voted unanimously.**

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 12:21 p.m., **Dunbar-Rose / Duarte** that this meeting adjourn. **So voted unanimously.**

Attest:

Paul A. Duarte
Clerk