

**CITY OF GROTON UTILITIES COMMISSION
/WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
MINUTES**

November 20, 2019 10:00 a.m.
City of Groton Municipal Building
Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hedrick called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Mayor Keith Hedrick

Commissioners: Paul Duarte, Jeffrey Godley, George Scully, Robert Zuliani

Staff present: Director of Utilities Ronald A. Gaudet
Executive Administrator to the Director of Utilities, Noemi Walencewicz
General Manager-Operations Mark A. Biron
General Manager-Customer Service Tina Daniels
General Manager-Key Accounts Leonard J. Mediavilla
General Manager-Information Technology Sue Blanchette
Manager-Electric Engineering Brian Roche
Manager-Water / PAF Richard M. Stevens
Manager-Operations Water Raymond L. Valentini
Manager-Utility Analytics Aaron Brooks
Manager-Communications and Community Outreach Daniel L. Bouges
City Finance Director Ronald Yuhas
Accounting Manager Yi Xiang

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to approve the minutes of October 16, 2019.

Motion carried.

3. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Commission Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending October, 2019.

Motion carried.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence were received:

A. Thames River Heritage Park – Thank you email

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Sam Spano – 300 Thames Street, Groton – Mr. Spano brought the Letter to the Editor in The Day (11/20/2019) to the attention to the Commissioners. He stated bad odor days which correlated with warmer days. Mr. Spano asked the Commission to approve the Action Item and take immediate action as it will help the problem. He also notified the Commission of several other items he believed were the cause of odors.

Chairperson Hedrick assured Mr. Spano that these concerns will be reviewed under Old Business.

6. CMEEC BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Gaudet stated the Annual Meeting is being held tomorrow, November 21, 2019 and taking action on 1) acceptance of offer to new prospective CEO 2) voting on budgets for next year and 3) slate of officers (currently in draft form); Chair – Scott Barber, Vice Chair – Jeff Godley, Secretary – Mark Oefinger, and Treasurer – Chris LaRose. The current Policy under discussion is regarding Non-Employee travel. Out of 18 recommendations there are 7 left to bring to the Committee.

7. REGIONAL WATER UPDATE

No update this month

8. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Accounting Manager Xiang presented

Electric

- Overall this October was warmer than October of last year.
- Electric Revenues are 4% below budget for the month and 1.6% less than budget for the FYTD which is mostly driven by almost all classes.
- O&M Expenses are 14.7% less than budget for the month and 16.7% below budget for the FYTD.

Water

- Water Revenues are 2.6% more than budget for the month and 0.1% above budget for the FYTD which is mostly driven by all the Classes except Sales for Resale.
- O&M Expenses are 19.8% below budget for the month and 17.3% below budget for the FYTD.
- Net Earnings before DWSRF grant is \$673K more than budget for the FYTD due to below budget O&M Expenses, and delay of DPH Consent Agreement Projects.

Sewer

- Sewer Revenues are 5.7% over budget for the month and 8.4% over budget for the FYTD which is mostly driven by the Industrial Class.
- O&M Expenses are 19.3% below budget for the month and 25.5% below budget for the FYTD.
- Net Income from Operations for the FYTD is \$344K more than budget due to over budget Revenues plus below budget O&M Expenses.

9. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE

The Contingency Spreadsheet was reviewed in detail by Manager Valentini. In the future, the spreadsheet will be updated to address each change (addition/subtraction) and the changes will be highlighted to help clarify any questions from the Commission.

Manager Valentini reported on the Cross Connect Update, everything is connected to SCWA.

General Manager Biron reported on Bond Fund Projects and handed out a high level summary of where we stand.

Electric – in aggregate almost all bond funds are expended on schedule and will be expended in a timely manner.

Water – Overall 96% complete, there are a few hold outs that are still in progress. Spending will be completed in a timely manner and projected completed in the spring of 2020. Commissioner Duarte asked for confirmation that paving is a GU responsibility, Manager Valentini confirmed that the milling will begin in the spring of 2020. Several strategic meetings will be scheduled to look forward

to the next 4-5 years. Review of new bond funding requests with the commission will be in December/January.

Sewer – There was one bond issuance that has been completed and closed.

Chairperson Hedrick requested a breakdown of what our status is on bonds and low interest loans to be compiled in case the public questions the need for more bond funding while there are still existing bonds.

Water Cost of Service Study (COSS) is in progress and will be presented to the Commission to decide how much the Water Department can afford to bond.

10. **OLD BUSINESS**

A. PAF odor Update – General Manager Biron with the assistance of Manager Valentini and PAF Chief Plant Operator Pratt met and put a plan in place. Evoqua is completing an odor study to investigate the root cause of the odor. General Manager Biron has instructed the PAF to operate the plant according to original design and is reviewing new technology that would eliminate the hypochlorite tanks. Once the preliminary report from Evoqua is received the team will review it.

Chairperson Hedrick asked Manager Valentini for an update on the wet well. Manager Valentini stated that the wet well is currently without a pump as the pump was supposed to be installed early November but the vendor provided an incorrect pump. Until the correct pump is installed a piece of plywood will cover the wet well.

General Manager Biron noted that the two mini scrubbers were an intern project and a more permanent fix is being investigated, possibly a whole new scrubber system.

Commissioner Zuliani suggested we get ahead of the public with notifying them of our acknowledgement of the Letter to the Editor and the corrective action being taken. Manager Stevens feels once the odor study is released it would be an opportune time to notify the public. General Manager Daniels noted she can very easily target that area and send a letter to those customers.

Chairperson Hedrick allowed Sam Spano to ask what the schedule of tank cleaning is. Manager Stevens noted the digesters are cleaned on a seven (7) year frequency and the clarifying tanks do not require cleaning often. General Manager Biron will add the schedule of cleaning to the plan for review.

11. **NEW BUSINESS**

No new business

12. **ACTION ITEMS**

A. **GUC-WPCA 19-11-48** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to retain the lobbying services of Medici, LLC, 1 Gold Street, Hartford, Connecticut for lobbying services pertaining to electric, water, wastewater and any other utility matters as necessary in an amount not to exceed One Hundred Eight Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$108,000.00) to be paid from the Professional Services – Lobbying account in the approved fiscal year 2019-2020 and proposed Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Utilities Department budgets, and that the Director of Utilities be authorized to execute, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Godley** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-48.

Mark DiBella introduced himself and stated his company, Medici, Inc., has represented Groton Utilities for approximately 20 years. Brings a compelling value to Groton Utilities and rate

payers. Mr. DiBella reviewed some of his accomplishments and items coming down the pipeline: transportation special session, bond bill and hospital settlement.

Commissioner Zuliani questioned who assigns the responsibility? Chairperson Hedrick stated it is a coordinated effort with Director Gaudet as the Lobbyist represents Groton Utilities but is aligned with the City's goals.

Motion Carried.

- B. GUC-WPCA-19-11-49** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to purchase annual maintenance and support of the NorthStar Billing System and add-on modules used for Groton Utilities Electric, Water and Sewer Utility Billing and Bozrah Light and Power Company Electric Utility Billing from Harris Computer Systems, Incorporated, 62133 Collections Center Drive, Chicago, Illinois for an amount not to exceed Sixty-Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty –Three Dollars and Sixty Five Cents (\$67,863.65) to be paid from funds available in the approved Fiscal Year 2020 Customer Service budget and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Godley** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-49.

General Manager Daniels stated this is an annual maintenance fee and added an additional module. About \$19K will be billed to Bozrah Light & Power.

Motion Carried.

- C. GUC-WPCA-19-11-50** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to approve the contract for the period of January 1, 2020 or contract execution (whichever comes later) through December 31, 2020 with the State of Connecticut, Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), and execute other such documents as may be required for funding under the Clean Vessel Act to operate and maintain one (1) Marine Sewage Disposal Facility in the City of Groton and that Mayor Keith Hedrick be authorized to execute the agreement and the City Clerk to affix the City Seal thereto, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-50.

General Manager Biron reported that this will be the last year the marine pump out station will operate as it is risky and the gallons of sewage being pumped has declined due to land pump stations. The Exit Plan was reviewed and DEEP will amend. The existing structure will serve the DEEP pump out boat only. No money will be owed to DEEP. Manager Stevens emphasized that the structural welds have fatigued and reviewed the benefit that drove us to this decision.

Motion Carried.

- D. GUC-WPCA-19-11-51** Consideration of action to authorize a capital project for installation and replacement of the waste gas burner at the Pollution Abatement Facility for an amount not to exceed Twenty Five Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Seven Dollars and Eight Cents (\$25,687.08) which will include issue of a purchase order for parts from Equova Water Technologies, N19W23993 Ridgeview Pkwy, Suite 200, Waukesha, Wisconsin for an amount not to exceed Twenty Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Seven Dollars and Eight Cents

(\$20,687.08) and additional Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) to cover installation costs to be paid from retained earnings in the approved Fiscal Year 2020 Sewer budget and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-51. No further discussion.

Motion Carried.

- E. GUC-WPCA-19-11-52** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities management to provisionally approve Change Order No. 13 from R. H. White Construction Company, Incorporated, 41 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts for additional scope to include PCB abatement costs associated with sub-contractor, removal, abatement, remediation, and encapsulation of PCBs as part of the State of Connecticut, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Project No. 2013-0140, pending final approval by the State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health (DPH) in an amount not to exceed One Million Two Hundred Eighty Eight Thousand Ninety Dollars and No Cents (\$1,288,090.00), and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur and Mayor Keith Hedrick be authorized to execute the Change Order No. 13 upon final approval by the State of Connecticut DPH

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-52.

General Manager Biron noted the issue with PCB's. An independent consultant was hired to help us resolve the issue. There are two issues at hand; PCBs in the interior wall of the old plant and in the soil around the outside of the plant since PCBs were used in the window caulking. The draft plan is close to being finalized. Chairperson Hedrick clarified this will resolve the plant issue, not the dirt issue.

Commissioner Scully asked if the dirt needs to be taken off site. General Manager Biron said there will be sampling of soil and the hope is that PCBs are below the spec and will be able to reuse the soil.

Commissioner Godley suggested researching of grants or funds to get compensation for costs to be incurred. General Manager Biron will research.

Holdbacks that do not affect the primary functionality of the plant are being reviewed. To date \$600K of holdbacks have been identified.

Motion Carried.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A.** Pursuant to General Statutes section 1-200(6)(E) and 1-201(b)(5)(A) for a discussion of the Pfizer customer and potential customer contracts (possible action item).

Commissioner Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority enter into Executive Session at 11:25 a.m., to include Chairperson Hedrick; Commissioners Duarte, Scully, Godley, Zuliani; Director Gaudet;

General Managers Biron, Daniels and Mediavilla; Manager Roche, City Finance Director Yuhas; and Accounting Manager Xiang.

Motion Carried.

Executive Session ended at 12:04 p.m.

Following the Executive Session Chairperson Hedrick asked for a Motion to suspend the rules to amend the agenda to add an additional Action Item. **Commissioner Godley** moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority amend the agenda to add Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-53.

Motion Carried.

Action Item GUC-WPCA 19-11-53 was added

GUC-WPCA 19-11-53 Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to approve the terms of Exhibit B-1 to the Market Price Power Supply Agreement between the City of Groton, Department of Utilities and Pfizer, Inc., as presented to the Commission, together with such revisions, clarification and amendments as the Director of Utilities shall deem appropriate, and to execute and deliver the same on behalf of Groton Utilities

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-19-11-53.

Motion Carried.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 12:07 p.m., **Commissioner Godley** moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Attest:

Paul Duarte
Clerk