

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

January 15, 2020 10:30 a.m.
City of Groton Municipal Building
Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Hedrick called the meeting to order at 10:34 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
Executive Administrative Assistant Maureen French
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 Electric Operations Randy Surprenant
Jr. Electric Engineer Andrew Lewis
Manager-Water / PAF Richard M. Stevens
Manager Water Operations Ray Valentini
Utility Analytics Manager Aaron Brooks
Manager of Communications and Community Outreach Dan Bouges
City Finance Director Ronald Yuhas
Accounting Manager Yi Xiang
Senior Accounting Assistant Nicole Romanski

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded a motion to approve the minutes of December 18, 2019.

Motion carried.

3. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Motion carried.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

There was no communications and correspondence.

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

A. Julie Woody from Avalonia Land Conservancy was present and addressed the Commission with an update to the Atkinson property closing. She indicated the project is moving forward, but had anticipated the property closing to be scheduled for December. The closing was delayed due to a correction that needed to be made to correct a title error for the property at 760 Long Cove Road. The property closing is now scheduled for January 21, 2020. Commissioner Zuliani asked if the

closing would be made public, or if there would be a press release. Ms. Woody said a press release would be arranged.

B. Sam Spano 300 Thames Street Groton, CT 06340

Mr. Spano passed out photos and submitted his comments (attached) to the Commission and thanked those involved in making his tour of the Pollution Abatement Facility on January 14, 2020 possible.

He presented again to express his concern for the odor problems at the Pollution Abatement Facility.

Commissioner Zuliani asked Mr. Spano to confirm that he lives directly across from the PAF and how frequent the odor is detected? Mr. Spano confirmed he has lived there for 25 years and stated the odors were more frequent starting July 8, 2019.

6. CMEEC BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The Director of Utilities said he was not able to attend the last CMEEC BOD Meeting, but informed the Commission that the contract was approved for the new CEO, Dave Meisinger. He started his position last week. He added that CMEEC is in the process of confirming Charters and assigning Chairpersons for their various committees.

7. REGIONAL WATER UPDATE

Water Manager Rick Stevens reported that the Regional Water Update included updates on two projects in progress. He said Leadership is in the process of renewing the Diversion Permit to allow water under the Thames River; it has been submitted to DEEP.

The Diversion Permit for the Emergency Interconnection Agreement which will allow transfer of water for up to seven days between other communities has also been submitted.

8. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Accounting Manager Xiang presented

Electric

- Overall this December was colder than December of last year.
- Electric Revenues are 0.7% below budget for the month and 1.9% less than budget for the FYTD which is mostly driven by Residential and Commercial classes.
- O&M Expenses are 0.6% more than budget for the month and 12% below budget for the FYTD.

Water

- Water Revenues are 7.7% below the budget for the month and 0.8% less than budget for the FYTD which is mostly driven by Resale Class.
- O&M Expenses are 6.3% below budget for the month and 14.6% below budget for the FYTD.
- Net Earnings before DWSRF grant is \$958K more than budget for the FYTD due to below budget O&M Expenses, and delay of DPH Consent Agreement Projects.

Sewer

- Sewer Revenues are 7% below budget for the month and 4.4% over budget for the FYTD which is mostly driven by the Industrial Class.
- O&M Expenses are 16% below budget for the month and 20.9% below budget for the FYTD.
- Net Income from Operations for the FYTD is \$383K more than budget due to over budget Revenues plus below budget O&M Expenses.

9. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE

Electrical Engineering Manager Brian Roche introduced the new Jr. Electric Engineer, Andrew Louis; a senior at University of Connecticut who will be with the Utility full time once he graduates in May.

Director Gaudet made reference to the list of capital items in the Director's Report that have been pending. Once planned out, a few capital items will be brought before the Commission to move forward.

Electric Operations Manager, Randy Surprenant talked about the Department's preparation for the NERC Compliance Audit that the Utility will undergo in 2020. He said the audit is needed to help identify shortcomings, and the Utility has partnered with Utility Services who will help us identify shortcoming prior to the actual audit. As a result of the pre- audit, the way we send data has changed.

10. OLD BUSINESS

A. PAF odor Update

General Manager Mark Biron presented a plan to mitigate odor at the PAF. He credited PAF Chief Plant Operator, Joe Pratt, for his work with the plan. The proposal, which he said would come before the Commission next month for action, includes a plan to install an automated system that would use Bioxide. Leadership has collected data, and has worked with Equova to obtain a quote the proposed system. Equova evaluated the current system and determined it needs updating. Manager Valentini said other area towns use similar systems and odor mitigation is successful.

General Manager Biron said installation of this system would not only mitigate odors, but it would also address the issue of corrosivity. He also noted that putting a cover on the PAF would be extremely costly, but will be able to get a quote if requested. Commissioner Duarte asked if there is space for the system at the pump station, and Manager Valentini confirmed that there is. The Commission expressed a desire to have this expedited.

B. PCB Update

General Manager Biron reported that progress has been made over the past two weeks. He said the two areas identified are first, the 3500 cu yds. of contaminated soil which is covered and labeled; and second, the PCBs on the walls, ceilings, and equipment in the old Treatment Plant. He said the priority is the abatement plan for the plant to get approved to not delay construction. He added that there has been good support from Statec, RH White, and Environmental Partners, and they are all working together to satisfy DEEP and the EPA. The next area of priority will be the sampling plan. The PCB content in the paint and in the concrete will be sampled to see if the PCBs have penetrated to any depth. Air sampling will be conducted to determine if there is any risk. All information will be put together to make a risk assessment plan. Chairperson Hedrick asked if the schedule is still on track for plants operability in March or April. General Manager Biron answered affirmatively and added the schedule is on track for a November, 2020 end date.

C. COSS

City Finance Director, Ron Yuhus began by thanking staff for their assistance. He said there is a plan to bring the presentation to the Commission in the near future. He said the presentation is very informative. Chairperson Hedrick said once the COSS is brought to the Commission, a Public Hearing would be scheduled and then a vote.

D. Electric Charging Stations

Commissioner Godley asked that the topic of Electric Charging Stations be brought up again, and asked that it be added to the Agenda under Old Business. Director Gaudet said that the Utility has looked at three different places to install charging stations but the ideal location has not been identified yet. He said there is a plan to allocate money in the Key Accounts Budget for next year. Chairperson Hedrick said research needs to be done because Cadillac has promised to transition to only electric vehicle sales over the next 10 years. He said a thorough study needs to be done

with a monthly update to the Commission. General Manager Biron promised to bring a plan to the Commission within 60 days.

11. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. GUC-WPCA 20-01-01 Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to purchase two thousand feet of 500 MCM Flat Strap 15kV underground cable as replacement for failed 15 kV underground cable on Thomas Road (Bridge) from Metrowest Electric Sales, Incorporated, PO Box 1082, Westboro, Massachusetts, for an amount not to exceed Eighty One Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Five Dollars and Forty Cents (\$81,695.40), as a non-budgeted item to be paid from retained earnings in the Approved FY 2020 Electric Budget, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-01-01.

Electric Engineer Manager, Brian Roche said he has the cable to install in stock, but it will deplete stock. This item was going to be a planned purchase in the FY20-21 Budget, but it needs to be replaced now and he is asking for approval for early purchase. Commissioner Scully asked if the cable is out of service now, and Brian replied that it is.

Motion carried.

Chairperson Hedrick asked for a Motion to suspend the rules to move next Action Item until after the Executive Session.

Commissioner Godley made a motion, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded that the next item be suspended for vote until after Executive Session.

Motion carried.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Chairperson asked for a Motion to enter into Executive Session. **Commissioner Godley** made a motion, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded that The Commission enter into Executive Session, first, pursuant to General Statutes section 1-200 (6) E, 1-210(10) to discuss legal strategy to include The Commission, Director Gaudet, General Managers Biron, Mediavilla, Blanchette and Daniels, Utility Analytics Manager Brooks and City Finance Director Yuhas; and second, pursuant to General Statutes section 1-200 (6) E, 1-210(10) to discuss legal strategy to include The Commission, Director Gaudet, General Manager Biron, City Finance Director Yuhas, Manager Valentini and Manager Stevens.

Motion carried.

The Commission entered into Executive Session at 11:38 am.

Executive Session ended at 12:30 p.m.

14. ACTION ITEM

A. GUC-WPCA-20-01-02 Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to secure services for Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) related consulting from Environmental Partners, 213 Court Street Middletown, Connecticut to address current Water Filtration Plant issues for an amount not to exceed Fifty Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$50,000.00), as a non-budgeted item to be paid from retained earnings in the Approved FY 2020 Water Budget, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-01-02.

Motion carried.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 12:33 p.m., **Commissioner Godley** moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded a motion to adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Attest:

Paul Duarte
Clerk

Sam Spano 300 Thames St

I am again submitting the main points of my comments for this meeting in writing.

Odor days since the last meeting- Mon 01/06, Sat 01/11. Again corresponding to warmer days and wind conditions.

Primary Back-Up Pump Still Not Installed.

Mini Bio-Scrubbers Both Removed from WPCA premises- Who authorized?

Tanks still Not being Cleaned or Maintained on a regular schedule.

Red Retrieval Unit left out in the Weather.

Gas Alarm and Detection System -Unplugged?

Correct schedule for cleaning tanks-

Primary Sludge Tanks -2x year (spring/fall) (3 out of 4 rotation)

Chlorine Contact Tank- 2x year (spring/fall)

Final Effluent(secondary) Tanks-1x year (fall)

Airation Tanks – Every 2 years

All Lines entering the plant-2x year (July/Nov)

In short the plant is not being properly maintained

This is the fourth time I have addressed the Commission about the problems at the WPCA. During this time period I have seen little forward progress by Groton Utilities management to correct these issues with the exception of the methane burner parts being ordered. Unlike the current mess at the new fresh water plant now involving both the EPA and DEEP there is a simple solution to correcting the issues at the WPCA.

As I have stated at the last three meetings, I see a direct correlation between the removal of Kevin Cini as Chief Plant Operator and this past years unprecedented odor problems.

Again, I am asking that Kevin be immediately reinstated as Chief Plant Operator. Unless this is done I fear the warmer weather coming again in 2020 will bring back the same or worse odor problems than experienced in 2019.

Again, Thank You in advance for your help