

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

April 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 10:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Mayor Keith Hedrick

In Person Commissioners: Paul Duarte (via Skype), George Scully (via Skype), Robert Zuliani (via Skype)

Absent: Jeffrey Godley

Staff present: Director of Utilities Ronald A. Gaudet (via Skype)
Executive Administrator to the Director of Utilities, Noemi Walencewicz
Executive Administrative Assistant Maureen French (via Skype)
General Manager-Operations Mark A. Biron (via Skype)
General Manager-Projects & Planning Bruce Kruszewski (via Skype)
General Manager-Key Accounts Leonard J. Mediavilla (via Skype)
General Manager-Information Technology Sue Blanchette (via Skype)
General Manager- Customer Service Tina Daniels (via Skype)
Manager Water Operations Ray Valentini (via Skype)
Manager Water Division Rick Stevens (via Skype)
City Finance Director Ronald Yuhas (via Skype)
Accounting Manager Yi Xiang (via Skype)
Manager of Engineering Randall Surprenant (via Skype)
Utility Analytics Manager Aaron Brooks (via Skype)
Manager of Communications and Community Outreach Dan Bouges (via Skype)
Senior Accounting Assistant Nicole Romanski (via Skype)
Executive Administrative Assistant Electric Kelsey Haughey (via Skype)
Office Manager Bozrah Light and Power – Ruth Ellen Ouimet (via Skype)

In response to State of Connecticut Executive Order No. 7B “Protection of Public Health and Safety During Covid-19 Pandemic and Response – Further Suspension or Modification of Statutes”, dated March 14, 2020, suspending in-person open meeting requirements, all public meetings will be closed to the public at this time. Public Meetings will be televised in real time on Groton Municipal Television Channel 2 and online. If you wish to address the Commission, please call 860-446-4130 during the Public Communications part of the agenda. In addition, written communication sent to directorsoffice@grotonutilities.com by 9am on the date of the meeting will be read during this portion of the agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Duarte moved, Commissioner Scully seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2020.

Motion carried.

3. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Duarte** seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending March 2020.

Motion carried.

4. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

There was no communications or correspondence.

5. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Chairperson Hedrick read the public communication submitted by Sam Spano, 300 Thames Street, Groton. Please see attached.

6. CMEEC BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

There was no update.

7. REGIONAL WATER UPDATE

There was no update.

8. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Accounting Manager Xiang presented

Electric

- Total Electric Revenues presented for the month of March are 0.1% less than budget. The negative variance is driven by Commercial Classes. FYTD total Electric Revenues are 1.8% less than budget and 3.1% less than the same period of last year.
- This March is warmer than March of last year. Heating Degree Day requirements are 19% less than March of last year.
- Operation & Maintenance Expenses for March are 13.8% less than budget. Net performance after the effects of TVC is almost \$323K more than budget for the month due to below budget O& M Expenses and below budget Power Cost.
- Operation & Maintenance Expenses for the FYTD are 11% below budget and Net performance after the effects of TVC is 46.8% more than budget. The favorable variance is driven by the below budget O&M Expenses.
- Around \$76K in conservation funds are charged to customers in March and will be transferred to CLM Account at CMEEC. \$34K in conservation expenditures are incurred for the month and will be reimbursed by the fund.
*The current CLM Rate of \$0.0025 has not changed since January 1, 2011.
- Days' cash on hand for Electric is 105.

Water

- Total Water Revenues presented for the month of March are 5.9% more than budget. The positive variance is driven by Industrial Classes. FYTD total Water Revenues are 0.1% more than budget and 2.3% more than the same period of last year.
- Operation & Maintenance Expenses for March are 7.8% less than budget. Net Earnings before DWSRF grant proceeds for March is 92% or \$220K more than budget.
- Operation & Maintenance Expenses for the FYTD are 12.8% below budget. Net Earnings before the DWSRF grant proceeds for the FYTD is 181.8% or \$1.6M more than budget due to below budget O&M Expenses and delay of the DPH Consent Agreement projects.
- As end of March 2020, \$40.6M has been incurred for the Water Treatment Plant project. Total \$38.5M has been received from Drinking State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF), including almost \$10.7M from grants and \$27.8M from loan.
- The Water Division Balance Sheet (line 26) reflects the restriction of \$3M in cash for the WTP upgrade and reflects transfers for collections through December 2019.
- Days' cash on hand for Water is 160.

Sewer

- Total Sewer Revenues presented for March are 18.4% more than budget. The positive variance is driven by Industrial Classes. The FYTD Sewer Revenues are 7.7% more than budget and the positive variance is also drive by Industrial Classes.
- Operation and Maintenance Expenses for March are 8.8% below budget. Net Income from Operations for March is 304.4% or \$75K more than budget.
- Operation and Maintenance Expenses for FYTD are 17.1% below budget. Net Income from Operations for FYTD is 100.6% or \$603K more than budget due to over budget Revenues plus below budget O&M Expenses.
- Combined days' cash on hand for all three divisions is 118.

9. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE

No Update

10. OLD BUSINESS

A. PAF odor update

General Manager, Mark Biron reported that the extra pumps needed in inventory have been received and have revised operational practices to ensure use of appropriate vent hosing when using the pumper truck. A process to notify Mr. Spano when there is any activity involving chlorine or the pump truck has been instituted. We are following the appropriate cleaning scheduled of the tanks. He added that Evoqua will be coming this month to work on the injection pumps at the remote Pump Stations so the odor doesn't become an issue at the main Pollution Abatement Facility, and also that the flare has been repaired.

Chairperson Hedrick asked if General Manager Biron was referencing the Bioxide injection; General Manager Biron confirmed. Chairperson Hedrick said there should be odor improvement at the PAF.

B. PCB Update

General Manager Biron reported that the analysis has been a Risk Based Assessment regarding the PCB issue at the Water Treatment Plant. The Analysis recommends to not do remediation as it would pose more of a health hazard over the next 30 years to workers at the plant. A conference call was held on April 14, 2020 with GU's consultant to talk about next steps. There is a plan to have the Mayor intervene with EPA and State Officials, and a letter has been drafted from the Mayor to the EPA and are working on an endorsement letter from the DPH to EPA and CT DEEP requesting plan approval for the plan that will be submitted regarding remediation. Manager Valentini said the plan will be ready to send out and hope to move forward. Commissioner Zuliani asked if this refers to Action Item 20-04-12. Manager Valentini clarified that this is in regard to the action item that was approved in March.

C. Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Communications Manager Bouges indicated that this is planned, but on hold – the location for the charging station has been selected at Washington Park. General Manager Biron said that after the slow down it will hopefully be addressed by summer given work arrangements due to the pandemic.

D. Public Hearing – Revised Schedule

Director Gaudet reported that this has been put off. Noemi is working on a schedule with the Mayor's office to reschedule the Public Hearing and Special Meeting regarding the Water Rate increase.

11. NEW BUSINESS

A. Strategic Plan Development – Revised Schedule

Director Gaudet noted working on a revised plan that would start up in June or July. Things are on hold.

B. RP3 Award

Director Gaudet announced to the Utility Commission that Electric received the RP3 Electric Quality Award. Thanks especially to Dawn Renaldi for her efforts.

Commissioner Duarte asked if RP3 pins would be issued. Manager Bouges said he would check. Commissioner Scully congratulated the Electric Department, it is a tremendous award in the Electric Municipality and there is a lot of work that goes into it.

12. ACTION ITEMS

A. GUC-WPCA 20-04-10 Consideration of and action to grant Groton Utilities Management project approval to proceed with replacement of 128, 30 year old existing metal halide light fixtures at Avery Point Campus with new ARC-080-LED light fixtures due to environmental corrosion for a total project cost not exceed Two Hundred Fifty Four Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and No Cents (\$254,500.00) as a non-budgeted project to be paid from the Regional Greenhouse Gas

Initiative (RGGI) Fund, and furthermore that the Mayor and Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-10.

Commissioner Scully asked who owns the lights at Avery Point. Manager Surprenant indicated that Groton Utilities owns the lights, and Avery Point is charged a monthly fee for service and power used for the lights. He said the agreement has been in place for a long time. Management has been working with Key Accounts to submit a contract to cover LED lighting the lights are corroded due to salt air and the idea is to replenish the whole site with LED lights to costs. This is an issue of energy conservation, so the plan is to use energy conservation money for the project. General Manager Biron said they have come up with a plan that will use in house work force to address the capital project. A letter received from Avery Point described the lighting problem as a safety issue. Commissioner Scully asked how many lights are involved. Manager Surprenant said this project includes 128 and the lights will be replaced with one type to ease ordering and stocking. Commissioner Scully asked if the lights in the parking lot on the East Side on wooden poles are part of this project, and Manager Surprenant explained they are not.

Motion Carried.

- B. GUC-WPCA-20-04-11** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to issue a purchase order to WESCO, 15 Executive Boulevard, Orange, Connecticut for an amount not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Three Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety Dollars and Fifty Three Cents (\$153,890.53) as part of the Avery Point Campus Project to be paid from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) Fund, and furthermore that the Mayor and Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Scully** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-11.

Chairperson Hedrick asked for clarification that this amount is not an additional charge to Action Item GUC-WPCA 20-04-10. Director Gaudet explained it is not an additional expenditure, but is presented as an action item due to the amount of the purchase.

Commissioner Scully asked why only two bids were received, and Manager Surprenant said that there are only two companies that supply this lighting to companies in the region, and Management recommended purchasing from WESCO who provided the lower of the two bids.

Motion carried.

- C. GUC-WPCA-20-04-12** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities management to provisionally approve Change Order No. 14 from R. H. White Construction Company, Incorporated, 41 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts to provide additional compensation for additional time required by tradesman due to inefficiencies in working around the abatement of PCB coated surfaces and a ten-week increase in the Contract Time due to delays in the work

caused by coordination needed to complete PCB abatement/encapsulation in the Water Filtration Plant to the general contractor and prime subcontractors impacted 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 Four Hundred Sixty Five Thousand Three Hundred Thirty Five Dollars and Ninety Eight Cents (\$465,335.98), 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. 14 upon final approval by the State of Connecticut DPH

Commissioner Scully moved, **Commissioner Duarte** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-12.

Manager Valentini explained that this action item is related to the PCB issue at the Water Treatment Plant. The contractor has not been able to work in some areas, so this Change Order is a sort of delay claim.

Motion carried.

- D. GUC-WPCA-20-04-13** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities management to provisionally approve Change Order No. 15 from R. H. White Construction Company, Incorporated, 41 Central Street, Auburn, Massachusetts to delete the remaining contract lining scope and provide material to Groton Utilities for the installation of a new 20" DICL water main, which includes the widening and paving of the bituminous drive north of the storage tanks 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 a credit amount of at least Four Hundred Eighty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Two Dollars and Sixty Three Cents (-\$483,922.63), 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. 15 upon final approval by the State of Connecticut DPH

Commissioner Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Duarte** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-13.

Manager Valentini explained that during the lining process of the existing 16" main, the lining failed. There was a schedule to do some more lining on the project. The lining project was stopped, and Groton Utility Water Department received the materials from the contractor to install the pipe. The contractor will do the paving. Water Distribution installed 880' of pipe within a month. It was pressure tested last week. It passed the pressure test and is being chlorinated. It will be in service in a week. Management negotiated that the Utility would get remaining funds for the lining of the pipe and that resulted in this credit.

Commissioner Duarte asked about the lining process. Manager Valentini said the main is emptied and scraped clean. A sock is pulled through with a resin that attaches to the existing pipe and pressurized with water and then cures. The material will line the pipe and strengthen the pipe. The problem was the lining didn't adhere in some areas, and when it was tested there were some leaks.

Commissioner Scully asked if the work was completed by the Water Distribution Department. Manager Valentini confirmed that it was. There was equipment that needed to be rented, but this was the first time that they installed this much of the larger pipe.

Motion carried.

- E. GUC-WPCA 20-04-14** Consideration of and action to approve the Operating and Capital Budgets for the Electric Division for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Scully** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-14.
Motion carried.

- F. GUC-WPCA 20-04-15** Consideration of and action to approve the Operating and Capital Budgets for the Water Division for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Scully** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-15.

Motion carried.

- G. GUC-WPCA-20-04-16** Consideration of and action to approve the Operating and Capital Budgets for the Sewer Division for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 and furthermore, that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Duarte moved, **Commissioner Scully** second that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA-20-04-16.

Motion carried.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no Executive Session.

14. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 11:15 a.m., **Commissioner Duarte** moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded a motion to adjourn.

Motion Carried.

Attest:

Paul Duarte
Clerk

Sam Spano 300 Thames St

This season has gotten off to a rough start at the WPCA with three bad odor days in March- Tues 3/10, Friday 3/13 and Tues 3/17 despite the still fairly cool weather.

The 3/10 issue was due to the tanker truck picking up the waste sludge not being vented properly. The Good news is I believe this issue has now been resolved. This progress is largely due to the fact that Kevin Cini is now the direct liaison to the plant reporting directly to General Mgr. of Operations Mark Biron. Procedures are now in place to properly vent the trucks based on his expertise.

The cause is unknown for the other two incidents. I believe they were caused by the tanks not being cleaned or properly maintained for the last 16 months. This is despite what the Manager of Water/ PAC stated at the 2/19/20 meeting. A review of the logs could verify this.

I request that procedures immediately be put in place to clean and maintain all the tanks on a regular schedule Again Kevin can help with this. The correct schedule for maintaining the tanks is listed below:

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)