

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

December 21, 2022 10:30 a.m.
Council Chambers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Zuliani called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chairperson Robert Zuliani

Commissioners: Jeffrey Godley and George Scully

Absent: Keith Hedrick, George Mathanool

Staff present: Director of Utilities, Ronald A. Gaudet
Executive Administrator, Noemi Walencewicz
Executive Administrative Assistant, Maureen French
General Manager Operations, Mark Biron
General Manager Information Technology, Sue Blanchette
General Manager Customer Service, Tina Daniels
General Manager Business Development, Aaron Brooks
Utility Analytics Manager, Josh Bringhurst
Project Management Professional, Joshua Rehrig
Director of Finance, Ron Yuhas
Controller, Yi Xiang
Watershed Patrol and Surveillance, Ron Bata
Watershed Patrol and Surveillance, Kate Blacker
GU Water Engineering Consultant, Karl Acimovic

2. SAFETY MOMENT

General Manager Biron commented on driving while tired, and said it can be the result of insufficient sleep, traveling long distance, or long hours of work. Driving fatigue is just as dangerous as driving under the influence. He said ways to avoid driving fatigue include planning trips in advance, breaking up the day, and planning rest times. Additionally, one should avoid traveling between midnight and six o'clock a.m., get plenty of sleep before a long drive; and avoid alcohol, sedatives, and consuming a heavy meal prior to the drive.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on November 16, 2022.

Motion carried.

4. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for the month ending November 2022.

Motion carried.

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

- A.** Thank you from Groton Head Start – Touch a Truck
- B.** 2021 Water Fluoridation Quality Award certificate
- C.** Sam Spano, email December 20, 2022
- D.** Ledyard Town Council letter, December 19, 2022

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

Tom Olson – 188 Crosswinds Drive, Groton – Expressed appreciation that they were able to add input into the report and were taken into consideration.

Mike Boucher – 16 Hillside Drive, Groton - Thanked George Scully for his valuable contribution to the Commission. Last fall he was contacted by the FBI, looking for the GU meeting tape from 10/26/2016 discussing the Kentucky Derby. He expressed disappointment that the IT department is moving out of City Hall and into Town of Groton and can't stay in the City for Economic Development and that the topic was not posted on the Planning and Zoning agenda. Mr. Boucher would like more transparency from Groton Utilities regarding Economic Development.

7. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Controller Xiang reviewed November 2022 Financial Highlights:

Electric

November Electric revenue of \$4.2M is 6.8% or \$269K more than budget and 13.7% more than last November. The positive variance is driven by industrial sales which exceeds the budget 24.7%.

Fiscal Year to Date (FYTD) Electric Revenue of \$23.6M is 7.4% or \$1.6M more than budget and 16.9% more than last FYTD. The positive variance is driven by residential sales and industrial sales which exceeds the budget by 2.6% and 20% respectively.

Heating degree days are 28% more than last November and 14% less than last FYTD. Cooling degree days are 42% more than last FYTD.

Operations and Maintenance (O&M) expenses for November are 22% below the budget and net income for the month is \$129K more than budget. The favorable variance of net income is driven by below budget O&M expenses.

O&M expenses for FYTD are 13.7% below the budget and net income is \$690K more than the budget. The favorable variance of net income is driven by below budget O&M expenses.

Chairperson Zuliani inquired why labor charges are not being charged under expense. Controller Xiang stated some labor is being charged to capital jobs due to Transmission projects.

Total \$70K was billed to the customers for conservation charges and \$37K was spent for conservation rebates and related expenses for the month. As of November 30, 2022, \$2.3M remaining funds are available in the conservation account.

*The current CLM Rate of \$0.0025 per KWh has not changed since January 1, 2011.

Water

November Water revenue of \$1M is 2.7% or \$27K more than the budget and 14.6% more than last November. The positive variance is driven by commercial sales and sales for resale which is more than the budget by 11.7% and 11.8% respectively.

FYTD Water revenue of \$5.4M is 2.9% or \$155K over the budget and 9.6% more than last FYTD. The positive variance is driven by the sales from all classes.

Operation & Maintenance Expenses for November are 6.1% below the budget and net income for the month is \$39K over the budget. The favorable variance of net income is driven by over budget revenue plus below budget O&M expenses.

Sewer

November Sewer revenue of \$368K is 8.2% or \$28K more than the budget and 19.7% more than last November. The positive variance is driven by industrial sales which is 20.5% more than the budget.

FYTD Sewer revenue of \$1.6M is 4.1% or \$70K below the budget but 0.8% more than last FYTD. The negative variance is driven by residential and industrial sales which is below the budget by 2.3% and 7% respectively.

Operation and Maintenance Expenses for November are 15.8% below the budget and net income is \$72K over the budget. The favorable variance of net income is driven over budget revenue plus below budget O&M expenses.

8. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE

A. Projects Update

Project Manager Rehrig informed the Commission the 2X transformer was moved December 20, 2022, Eversource very pleased the Commission gave permission to move the transformer as it is in much better condition than the current transformer at Buddington. The logistics of the move required a closure of roads, coordination with state police trucking unit, building a temporary bridge on 184 and removing it within 45 minutes. The total move took two and half hours to complete the move, an hour and a half less than planned.

Buddington Substation Terminal Upgrade –

Project Manager Rehrig stated all civil work is completed. Steel is being delivered next week. The new deadline for high side steel has been pushed by five months to June 2023. Groton Utilities will be able to meet the terminal upgrade deadline but other Utilities will not.

Commissioner Godley questioned the conditioned current security of Buddington Substation given recent National events and if we need to harden Buddington Substation. Project Manager Rehrig noted members of Groton Utilities, City and Town of Groton officials are working diligently together to create a plan.

9. OLD BUSINESS

None.

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Watershed Trails Evaluation Presentation by Scott Bighinatti of Weston & Sampson

Director Gaudet introduced Scott Bighinatti and provided the background reason for his evaluation and presentation.

Scott Bighinatti introduced himself and provided his credentials to the Commission. He presented the Commission with an extensive third party evaluation. Commissioners were allowed to ask questions during the presentation.

Commissioner Zuliani thanked Mr. Bighinatti for the report and the presentation, very thorough and professional. All Commissioners agree to compile questions to bring at a future Utilities Commission Meeting.

Mr. Bighinatti returned the thanks stating it was a pleasure working with Groton Utilities and Tri Town Trails staff.

Tom Olson again stated his appreciation for the opportunity to provide input and the bottom line brought forward and looking forward to continuing the discussion.

11. ACTION ITEMS

- A. GUC-WPCA 22-12-49** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to issue a purchase order to Scan Optics, 169 Progress Drive, Manchester, Connecticut, a preferred vendor, for an amount not to exceed Fourteen Thousand Five Hundred Thirty Seven Dollars and Five Cents (\$14,537.05) including a ten percent (10%) contingency, to digitize and index the design and construction files associated with the Water Treatment Plant rebuild project and upload scanned files into a shared drive to access digitally, to be paid from available FY 2023 Water Cash, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

Commissioner Scully moved, **Commissioner Godley** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-12-49.

Director Gaudet said this is an administrative not budgeted expense. There are 36 boxes that have to be retained by CT state law. In the future, scanning will be added to project closeouts.

Motion carried.

12. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 11:43 a.m., **Commissioner Scully** moved, **Commissioner Godley** seconded a motion to adjourn.

Motion carried.

Attest:

Keith Hedrick
Chairperson