

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

June 15, 2022 10:30 a.m.  
Council Chambers

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Hedrick called the meeting to order at 10:39 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chairperson Mayor Keith Hedrick

**Commissioners:** Jeffrey Godley (via Zoom), George Mathanool, George Scully and Robert Zuliani

**Staff present:** Director of Utilities, Ronald A. Gaudet  
Executive Administrator, Noemi Walencewicz  
Executive Administrative Assistant, Maureen French  
General Manager Operations, Mark A. Biron  
General Manager Projects & Planning, Bruce Kruszewski  
General Manager Customer Service, Tina Daniels  
General Manager Information Technology, Sue Blanchette  
Associate General Manager Key Accounts, Aaron Brooks  
Manager of Communications and Community Outreach, Dan Bouges  
Water Manager, Ray Valentini  
Water Foreman, Mauricio Duarte  
WWTF CPO, Joe Pratt  
Senior Technical Aide, Doug LaFontaine  
Project Manager, Joshua Rehrig  
Environmental Engineer, Kelsey Haughey  
Finance Director, Ron Yuhas  
Accounting Manager, Yi Xiang  
Utility Finance Analyst, Patricia Thomas  
Senior Accounting Assistant, Nicole Romanski

**2. SAFETY MOMENT**

General Manager Biron reminded the Commission to practice sun safety to reduce the risk of skin cancer. He reported that skin cancer has drastically increased, affecting one out of every five people, and there are 9,500 new skin cancer diagnoses each day. Some practices to reduce the risk of getting skin cancer include seeking shade, avoiding direct exposure to the sun during the hours of 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., covering up and wearing loose comfortable clothing, applying sunscreen with a minimum of 30 SPF, wearing a hat, and wearing sunglasses with 100% UVA and UVB protection.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Commissioner Scully** moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on May 18, 2022.

**Motion carried.**

**4. REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE OF TREASURER'S REPORT**

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

**Motion carried.**

## **5. PUBLIC HEARING**

At 10:05 a.m. the Public Hearing began.

Dennis Dievert Jr., PE of Wright-Pierce presented the City of Groton Pollution Abatement Facility Wastewater Facilities Plan.

Mr. Dievert completed the presentation stating the project is on DEEP's priority list for grants. He said that there is a possibility to obtain additional bonus points for nitrogen improvements and aeration system upgrades, which could bump up the grant percentage.

Commissioner Godley inquired if the \$50K contingency that is included in the plan for hazardous abatement is sufficient.

Mr. Dievert explained that some abatement has been completed but physical testing will not happen until Phase II; abatement is not part of Phase I, the assessment. Once it is determined what will be demolished, those areas will be tested. Abatement is only required on areas touched. Commissioner Godley asked what Phase II work will consist of. Mr. Dievert explained Phase II will take about one to two years and includes design survey, development of drawings and fine tuning the recommendations. A preliminary design report will also be completed. He further explained that the study included the possibility of reversing the flow through piping, but due to multiple utilities already in place it would not be cost effective. Commissioner Zuliani asked if the flow could be reversed from the City of Groton to the Town of Groton by installing effluent pipe from Thomas Road to the Plant. Mr. Dievert said there is an outfall pipe on Thomas Road and Wright-Pierce didn't review the alternative any further because the permitting approval process would take about seven years.

Mr. Dievert responded to Commissioner Mathanool's questions explaining that the appendix in the facilities plan includes an extensive breakdown of costs and reflects inflation as well as a 25% contingency.

Commissioner Scully asked for clarification on what flood protection would entail.

Mr. Dievert said the plan is creative. Most of the existing tanks are at or above elevation, but there are some tanks that are low in the administration building. He said they may be grandfathered in, but all mechanicals will be elevated about four feet to ensure they are protected from flooding.

Chairperson Hedrick also noted that flood elevation can be changed. Due to resiliency, the plant would be able to recover from a storm and the rising sea level. Since the project is slated to start in 2025 we are continuing non-bonded and bonded capital projects as approved in the budget process.

The Public Hearing closed at 11:22 a.m.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

A. 2022 Legislative Summary

B. Thank you from Safe Futures

C. Thank you from Special Olympics

D. Sam Spano – 300 Thames Street, Groton, CT – email submitted 06/14/2022 (attached) – Chairperson Hedrick stated General Manager Biron will address the bio-scrubbers inquiry during the next Groton Utilities Commission meeting.

## **7. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Tom Olson – 188 Crossman's Drive, Groton. Vice President of the Tri Town Trails Association. Mr. Olson thanked the Commission for their participation in the Greenway Trails. He has meet with our consultant and hiked the reservoir. He wanted to thank the Commission for their support.

## **8. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

Manager Xiang reviewed May 2022 monthly financial highlights

### **Electric**

Total Electric Revenue for the month of May including PPA/TCA is 24.6% more than budget and 20.2% more than last May. The positive variance is driven by the PPA/TCA of \$595K collected for the month to cover the increasing purchased power cost. Total kWh sold for the month is 1.3% more than last May.

Operation & Maintenance Expenses for May are 3.4% below budget. Net Income for the month is \$70K more than budget. The favorable variance of net income is driven by over budget revenues plus below budget O&M Expenses.

For the month of May, customer conservation charges are \$71K and conservation expenditures are \$58K. As of May 31, 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**

May Water Revenue of \$885K is 2.5% or \$22K below than budget and 1.3% less than last May. The negative variance is driven by industrial sales which is below the budget by 22.8%.

Operation & Maintenance Expenses for May are 3.1% over the budget and net income for the month is \$79K below the budget. The unfavorable variance of net income is driven by below budget revenues plus over budget O&M expenses.

### **Sewer**

May Sewer revenue of \$220K is 33.7% below the budget and 25.1% less than last May. The negative variance is driven by Industrial Sales which is 59.8% less than the budget.

Operation and Maintenance Expenses for May are 5.7% less than the budget and net income is \$93K below the budget. The unfavorable variance of net income is driven by below budget revenues.

Commissioner Zuliani inquired about industrial revenues and what was the deduct meter portion. Manager Xiang stated another industrial customer water sales is 60% below the budget and is being investigated. The deduct meter portion is about 10% but the major driver is the reduced usage.

Manager Xiang noted the audited financials for 2021 have been received. It will be uploaded to the website and hard copies will be available in City Finance. The major adjustment is pension and Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB). \$1.9M pension liability and increase OPEB liability by \$600K will create a year-end adjustment of a favorable net impact of \$1.3M.

Chairperson Hedrick was happy to inform the Commission that the City's bond rating has improved from AA- to AA, meaning it will be cheaper for us to borrow money. Over \$28M is expected to be bonded.

Commissioner Zuliani said he would like to see the good news advertised. Chairperson Hedrick said he is exploring options and plans to make a YouTube video to explain.

**9. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE**

A. Projects Update

**Transmission** – Project Manager Rehrig stated all holes are drilled and seven poles are fully installed. The 1280 line will be completed by next week.

Chairperson Hedrick asked for confirmation that the project is on track, on schedule, and on budget. Project Manager Rehrig confirmed.

**Ledyard WPCA Contract** – General Manager Daniels informed the Commission that GU was awarded the contract for Ledyard WPCA operations and customer service. It is a three year contract with two, one year renewals. Increases will be re-evaluated after the third year.

Director Gaudet expressed his gratitude of Rick Stevens and Ray Valentini on their assistance with the contracts. He also noted Rick and Ray will be retiring by the end of this summer. Ray has dedicated 42 years to GU and Rick dedicated 45 years.

Chairperson Hedrick also expressed his gratitude towards Rick’s and Ray’s years of service.

**10. OLD BUSINESS**

Commissioner Scully questioned if the sewer lining has been completed.

General Manger Kruszewski said the lining has been completed and Management is waiting on videos and reports.

Chairperson Hedrick stated he has received positive comments.

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**12. ACTION ITEMS**

A. **GUC-WPCA 22-06-24-** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to enter into the following contracts which have an initial term of two years with a two year renewal option, with a spend not to exceed the contracted amount as budgeted, for chemicals listed for the Water Treatment Plant

<b>Chemical Company</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Chemical Name</b>	<b>FY2022-23 Cost</b>
Univar Solutions	200 Dean Stievers Place Morrisville, PA	Sodium Hypochlorite	\$85,945.61 Eighty Five Thousand Nine Hundred Forty Five Dollars and Sixty One Cents
Holland Company, Inc.	153 Howland Avenue Adams, MA	Polyaluminum Chloride	\$144,461.81 One Hundred Forty Four Thousand Four Hundred Sixty One Dollars and Eighty One Cents
Shannon Chemical Corp.	PO Box 376 Malverne, PA	Blended Phosphate	\$164,064.03 One Hundred Sixty Four Thousand Sixty Four Dollars and Three Cents
Bordon and Remington	63 Water Street Fall River, MA	Hydrofluosilicic Acid	\$22,146.38 Twenty Two Thousand One Hundred Forty Six Dollars and Thirty Eight Cents
Bordon and Remington	63 Water Street Fall River, MA	Caustic Soda aka Sodium Hydroxide	\$60,996.88 Sixty Thousand Nine Hundred Ninety Six Dollars and Eighty Eight Cents

and for chemicals at the Wastewater Treatment Plant

<b>Chemical Company</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Chemical Name</b>	<b>FY2022-23 Cost</b>
Polydyne, Inc.	1 Chemical Plant Road Riceboro, GA	Polymer	\$11,868.00 Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Eight Dollars and No Cents
Univar Solutions	200 Dean Stievers Place Morrisville, PA	Sodium Hypochlorite	\$54,804.75 Fifty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Four Dollars and Seventy Five Cents

to be paid from the funds in the FY 2022-2023 and subsequent FY 2023-2024 Water and Wastewater Operating Budgets and furthermore that the City council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

**Commissioner Scully** moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-06-24.

**Motion carried.**

Chairperson Hedrick indicated a motion was needed to suspend the rules to amend the agenda and add two action items.

**Commissioner Mathanool** moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to suspend the rules to amend the agenda. GUC-WPCA 22-06-26 and GUC-WPCA 22-06-27 was added.

- B. **GUC-WPCA 22-06-26** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to issue a purchase order to Electrical Power Products, 4240 Army Post Road, Des Moines, Iowa, for an amount not to exceed Two Hundred Five Thousand Six Hundred Eight Dollars and No Cents (\$205,608.00) including a thirty percent (30%) contingency, to construct four new relay panels in support of the Buddington Substation Upgrade Project to be paid by the Transmission Lines 1410/1280/400/Buddington Substation FY 2022 bond fund project; and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

**Commissioner Zuliani** moved, **Commissioner Mathanool** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-06-26.

Project Manager Rehrig thanked the Commission for their approval of the late submission of the action items. These relay panels are identical to Eversource's. Quote pricing will be held until Committee of the Whole and Mayor and Council approval.

Commissioner Scully asked if this purchase includes relays.

Project Manager Rehrig explained that the quote includes the panels to assemble, wire and test, but the relays are not included because they have already been purchased.

**Motion Carried.**

- C. **GUC –WPCA 22-06-27** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to issue a purchase order to Wesco Distribution Company, 15 Executive Boulevard, Orange, Connecticut for an amount not to exceed One Hundred Thirty Five Thousand Seven Hundred Five

Dollars and No Cents (\$135,705.00) including a twenty five percent (25%) contingency, to purchase transformers to be placed in stock to be paid from Electric Non Bonded Capital, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur

**Commissioner Scully** moved, **Commissioner Mathanool** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-06-27.

Project Manager Rehrig informed the Commission that these transformers are for stock. It is in the utilities best interest to purchase in bulk now, due to the volatile market, long lead times and need for storm preparation.

Commissioner Scully inquired how many transformers will be purchased.

Project Manager Rehrig stated a total of 33 will be purchased.

**Motion Carried.**

**13. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None.

**GUC-WPCA 22-06-25-** Consideration of and action to authorize Groton Utilities Member Delegates to the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC) to support the Great River Hydro Project at an appropriate involvement level to allow the project to move forward

**Commissioner Mathanool** moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-06-25.

**Motion carried.**

**14. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, at 11:58 a.m. **Commissioner Mathanool** moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded a motion to adjourn.

**Motion carried.**

Attest:

Keith Hedrick  
Chairperson

City of Groton Utilities Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
June 15, 2022

From: sam spano <syclonesam@yahoo.com>  
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2022 12:44 PM  
To: Director's Office <directorsoffice@grotonutilities.com>  
Subject: UC Meeting 6/15/22

Sam Spano 300 Thames St

There have been Ten odor days since the last UC meeting on 5/18.22. These were Wed 5/18 PM, Fri 5/20 PM, Sun 5/22 PM, Sun 5/29 AM, Mon 5/30 AM,PM Thurs 6/2 PM, Sun 6/5 PM, Mon 6/6 AM, Fri 6/10 PM and Mon 6/13 AM. All these events were called into GU customer service. There were two calls placed on Fri 6/10 as the event was quite bad and went into the evening. The Sun 6/5 complaint was not passed onto the on call manager that day by customer service. It seems these calls are dropped about once a month. This only happens with calls placed to the after hours call service. Customer service during business hours always does a good job relaying the calls to the managers.

Again, I am certain there have were more odor days but it depends on the wind direction. Also,I did not call in a couple of other days not listed above where the smell was mild/intermittent. For the most part I smell it at my house only with a SW wind coming from over the plant.This month however there were a couple of events were the wind was almost slack.

For reference purposes there were Four odor days during the same time period a year ago.

So here we are now more than 35 months since the odor problems began on July 8, 2019. Next month will be the third year anniversary of when these problems began.Things have not gotten better and are in fact considerably Worse. Usually there is a break during the cooler fall/winter/spring weather. This break did not happen this past year. Again, I will state I am very concerned about the hot summer months of July and August yet to come.

At the past two meetings I have asked the question thru my correspondence- Who was it in GU management that authorized the removal and disposal of the Three Mini- Bio Scrubbers? In fact at the April 20 meeting the Chairperson followed up and asked GU for a report to be prepared for the May 18 meeting regarding the Mini- Bio Scrubbers. In reviewing the tape of the May 18 meeting I did not hear any discussion in regards to this subject at all. For the Third Time, I am asking-Who was it in GU management that authorized the removal and disposal of the Three Mini- Bio Scrubbers?

Again, I Thank the Commissioners for Your Help in Advance