

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

May 18, 2022 10:30 a.m.
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: Jeffrey Godley, 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
Manager of Electric Engineering, Randall Surprenant
Manager Water/Wastewater, Richard Stevens
Water Foreman, Mauricio Duarte
Project Manager, Joshua Rehrig
Finance Director, Ron Yuhas
Accounting Manager, Yi Xiang

2. SAFETY MOMENT

General Manager Mark Biron reported the number of deaths on US Roads soared to a 16 year high in 2021 as a result of people driving more, and using less precaution. He reminded everyone to practice defensive driving and pay attention to speed limits. Chairperson Hedrick also noted distracted driving is a result of increase use of cell phones while on the road.

Commissioner Scully inquired if the electric crews have been safety briefed in regards to the 5G attachments being installed on poles. He said he is aware of Eversource's 5G safety briefing, and asked if the Utility has one comparable. General Manager Biron will follow up to be sure the crews are provided a safety briefing.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on April 13, 2022.

Motion carried.

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Zuliani** seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on April 20, 2022.

Motion passed with 3 ayes and 2 abstentions (Commissioners Mathanool and Scully).

4. 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 April 2022.

Motion carried.

5. COMMUNICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Sam Spano – 300 Thames Street, Groton, CT – email submitted 05/17/2022 (attached)

6. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

None.

7. REGIONAL WATER UPDATE

A. Poquetanuck Cove Interconnection – General Manager Biron stated GU is waiting on materials to be delivered before work can begin.

8. MONTHLY FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Manager Xiang reviewed April 2022 monthly financial highlights

Electric

Total Electric Revenue for the month of April is 19% more than budget and 17.3% more than last April. The positive variance is driven by the PPA/TCA of \$666K collected beginning April 1, 2022 to cover the increasing purchased power cost. Total kWh sold for the month is 3% less than last April.

Director Gaudet commented that because of the PPA, comparing revenues and kilowatts sold is not accurate. The actual volume variances is in kilowatts sold not revenues.

Commissioner Zuliani inquired if the format is changing.

Director Gaudet and Manager Xiang confirmed that the format is remaining the same.

Operation & Maintenance Expenses for April are 4% below budget. Net Income for the month is \$230K more than budget. The favorable variance of Net Income is driven by over budget revenues plus below budget O&M Expenses.

Director Gaudet stated the excess Rate Stabilization Fund (RSF) equity distribution will be reflected in May’s financials.

Commissioner Zuliani inquired about the frequency of equity distribution. Director Gaudet stated it is annual. Commissioner Godley noted that adding the funds to the RSF reduce the burden on increasing rates.

For the month of April, customer conservation charges are \$73K and conservation expenditures are \$58K. As of April 30, 2022, \$2.2M 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

April Water Revenue of \$892K is 6% or \$50K more than budget and 1.5% or \$14K less than last April. The positive variance is driven by commercial and industrial sales which exceed the budget by 11.2% and 13.5% respectively.

Operation & Maintenance Expenses for April are 6.7% below the budget and net income for the month is \$66K more than budget. The favorable variance is driven by over budget revenues plus below budget O&M expenses.

Sewer

April Sewer revenue of \$334K is 2.9% below the budget and 4.1% or \$14K less than last April. The negative variance is driven by Industrial Sales which is 5.6% less than the budget.

Operation and Maintenance Expenses for April are 3.5% less than the budget and Net Income is on target. Below budget revenues is offset by the below budget O&M Expenses.

9. PROJECTS / INITIATIVES UPDATE

- A. Water Filtration Plant Ribbon Cutting – Manager Bouges informed the Commission on the details of the Ribbon Cutting event that will include tours of the Water Treatment Plant.

General Manager Biron informed the commission there may be some additional PCB remediation that needs to be completed. Commissioner Zuliani asked if there would be any ramifications for recovering state funds. Director Gaudet said there will be no ramification in recovery of state funds, and additional remediation would be funded by Groton Utilities. He said the expense is not budgeted. Chairperson Hedrick added the PCB remediation will be 100% complete but in order to meet the EPA requirement, the Utility will need to come to the Commission for additional funding.

- B. Projects Update

Transmission – Manager Surprenant updated the Commission and stated the drilling continues; the Right of Way has been cleared and re-work is scheduled to begin in early June and the replacement of pole structures will start on June 11th and continue through the end of July. Commissioner Scully expressed surprise that Eversource provided an outage in July. Manager Surprenant said Eversource will isolate the section.

WWTF Facility Plan – Director Gaudet stated as part of the June GUC, there will be a Public Hearing. The Public Hearing will be announced in the paper on June 1st. Wright Pierce will present the WWTF Facility Plan during the Public Hearing. GU applied for, and is expected to receive, some grant funding from DEEP for the design.

10. OLD BUSINESS

- A. WWTF Odor Update – General Manager Biron reported that a few odor complaints that came in, did correlate to evolutions. He noted that there have been some roof leaks identified in the mixing building.
- B. Tri Town Trail Association – Water Foreman Duarte said the study is still in progress.
- C. Purchasing Policy Draft – Director Gaudet would like a combination meeting with City Council. Chairperson Hedrick would like to schedule a joint meeting at the end of June. Commissioner Zuliani believes a joint meeting would emphasize the support of the Commission, and their backed agreement with Management’s proposal.

11. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Commissioner Zuliani inquired if there is a requirement for GUC representation at the CT Green Council invitation. He said he is aware that two Commissioners present may warrant a public meeting. Chairperson Hedrick provided background on the acknowledgement of the award for the Town of Groton, and explained that public events are not considered a meeting as long as Utility Commission related topics are not discussed.

- B. Commissioner Scully inquired about lawn care in front of the Plant. General Manager Biron said it was mowed this morning.
- C. Commissioner Scully asked about some purchase orders to Phasor as stated on the Directors Report and why are they completing testing when we recently purchased test equipment for our own test person. Manager Surprenant will look into it.

13. ACTION ITEMS

- A. **GUC-WPCA 22-05-21** Consideration of and Action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to issue a Purchase Order to Springbrook Holding Company, LLC, P.O. Box 200566, Dallas, Texas, a sole source provider, for an amount not to exceed Sixty Five Thousand One Hundred Twenty One Dollars and Thirty Seven Cents (\$65,121.37) to purchase annual maintenance and support from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 for the Springbrook financial accounting system to be paid from the proposed FY 2023 Utilities Finance and Accounting 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 22-05-21.

Motion carried.

- B. **GUC-WPCA 22-05-22** Consideration of and Action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to issue a Purchase Order to Communications Plus, 84 Salem Turnpike, Norwich, Connecticut, state preferred vendor, for an amount not to exceed Two Hundred Fifty One Thousand Four Hundred Eight Dollars and Sixty Two Cents (\$251,408.62) to purchase State sponsored digital radios as part of The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Division of Statewide Telecommunication (DESPP) System, CT Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) to be paid from the Electric Division FY 2022 Approved Non-Bonded Capital budget, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur.

Commissioner Zuliani moved, **Commissioner Mathanol** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-05-22.

General Manager Biron met with the State communication engineers and determined call groups. This radio system will be in conjunction with the City of Groton Police Department allowing Utility radios to have 911 capability, as well as coverage in areas where there are currently dead spots. Manager Biron added that being connected to the CLMRN provides flexibility and the only thing the Utility will maintain is the radios. He also noted there will be some trade in value from existing radios.

Chairperson Hedrick mentioned being connected maintains resiliency and redundancy within the City of Groton and Groton Utilities.

Motion passed with 4 eyes and 1 abstention (Commissioner Godley).

- C. **GUC-WPCA 22-05-23** Consideration of and Action to authorize Groton Utilities Management to waive the bidding requirement of Groton Utilities Policy No. 1004, Policy and Procedures Governing the Purchasing Practices of Groton Utilities and issue a purchase order to Integrated Security Group, 19 Tuttle Place, Middletown, Connecticut, a sole source provider, for an amount not to exceed One Hundred Sixty Five Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$165,000.00), for the

purchase and installation of the initial phase of physical access control devices and video surveillance cameras for the Groton Utilities Water Treatment Plant to be paid from the Water Division FY 2022 Approved Non-Bonded Capital Project for WTP Technology, and furthermore that the City Council be apprised of this action with the recommendation that it concur.

Commissioner Godley moved, **Commissioner Mathanol** seconded that the Groton Utilities Commission / Water Pollution Control Authority approve Action Item GUC-WPCA 22-05-23.

General Manager Biron explained that the quote is to add badge readers and cameras, for security to meet minimum regulatory security requirements.

General Manager Blanchette said the quote is on target to utilize funding available.

Motion carried.

14. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

15. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, at 11:34 am. **Commissioner Godley** moved, **Commissioner Scully** seconded a motion to adjourn.

Motion carried.

Attest:

Keith Hedrick
Chairperson

City of Groton Utilities Commission
Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2022

From: sam spano <syclonesam@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 2:43 PM
To: Director's Office <directorsoffice@grotonutilities.com>
Subject: UC Meeting May 18, 2022

Sam Spano 300 Thames St

There have been Eight odor days since the last UC meeting on 4/20/22. These were Sat 4/23 PM, Sat 4/30 PM, Sun 5/1 PM, Wed 5/4 PM, Thus 5/5 PM, Sunday 5/15 PM, Monday 5/16 AM,PM and Tues 5/17 AM,PM. The 4/30 event was not called in because it was intermittent. The 5/1 event was called in but customer service did not notify the on call Mgr. The other six events were called in to customer service and messaging went thru the correct channels as far as I can tell. There were two complaints called in on 5/16 and 5/17 one in the AM and one in the PM as the problem was not resolved those days. This is despite operators being at the plant when the AM calls went in.

Again, I am pretty certain there have been more odor days but it depends on the wind direction. For the most part I smell it at my house with a SW wind coming from over the plant even if it is only intermittent. However, there have been some days this past month where the wind was blowing to the north and several where the wind was blowing hard to the south especially last week. Steady north or south bound wind at least gives me a break, but I would not want to be at either the Fort Griswold River or Thames View Parks.

For reference purposes there was One odor day in the same time period a year ago.

The operators were also still at the plant when I called in the 5/5 event in the early PM. It is my understanding that it was discovered that day that the settling tank roof which was sealed/repared in late 2020 is leaking again. Apparently professional roofers are scheduled to fix the roof hopefully sooner than later.

So here we are now more than 34 months since the odor problems began on July, 8 2022. We are now fast approaching the three year anniversary of when these problems began! Things have not gotten better and are now considerably Worse than a year ago. I am Very Concerned about this upcoming summers warm/hot weather.

One more thing. I expect an answer this meeting to my question - 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!