

**Town of Montville Water & Sewer Commission**  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 1, 2023-- 6:00 PM**  
**Town Council Chambers – Town Hall**

**1. Water and Sewer Commission**

**a. Call to Order**

Chairman Longton called the regular meeting of the Water and Sewer Commission to order at 6:00 p.m.

**b. Pledge of Allegiance**

All stood and pledged the flag.

**c. Roll Call**

Present were Commissioners Kevin Lathrop, Chuck Longton, Town Councilor Alfred Mandler (6:31 p.m.), and Anthony Siragusa. Commissioner Brian Quinn was absent and notified Chairman Longton on the same. Mayor McDaniel noted Commissioner Mandler was in the building attending another . A quorum was present.

Also present were Superintendent Derek Albertson, Wright-Pierce Professional Engineer Therlin Montgomery and Mayor Ronald McDaniel.

**d. Alterations to the Agenda -- None**

**e. To consider and act on a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 3, 2023**  
**Motion** by Commissioner Siragusa; seconded by Commissioner Lathrop to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 3, 2023. Discussion: none. Voice vote: 4-0; all in favor. Motion carried.

**f. Communications pertaining specifically to matters which concern the Commission -- None**

**g. Remarks from the Public Regarding Items on the Agenda with a three-minute limit**  
Chairman Longton asked three (3) times for remarks from the public. There were none.

**h. Report from Operations/Administration Division**

Superintendent Albertson submitted an Operations/Administrative Report for April 2023, as follows:

**1.0 Compliance/Process**

**1.1 Water Pollution Control Facility**

The Montville Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) is required to meet state and federal standards for effluent discharged to the Thames River. The WPCF adheres to the federal standards in the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Required (monthly, quarterly or annual) reporting is signed (certified) by the state-licensed Operator IV (Superintendent) in responsible charge of the facility. No local or formal complaints were received regarding the collection system or the WPCF.

Average daily influent (average) flow to the WPCF was approximately 2.0 mgd with a total treatment volume of 70 mg for the month. Each day, approximately 65% of the treated effluent was recycled (sold) Rand-Whitney Container Board (RWCB). The large rain event (3 inches) on April 22 did not adversely affect process control within the WPCF nor did it indicate a significant I and I issue (only 25% increase in influent not > 200% increase).

Process control within each unit process (preliminary and secondary treatment) was much improved with high removal efficiencies (> 95%; above the permit-required 85%) for BOD<sub>5</sub> and TSS. Discussions were held with RWCB regarding their DRM exceedances for BOD and the

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effect on the plant’s influent. Total Nitrogen (TN) loading was discharged in the treated effluent well below the permit (loading) level with high removal efficiency.

Waste activated sludge (WAS) was calculated to have an approximately 4% total solid (TS). The thickening (dewatering) was more efficient leading to lower volumes of the biosolids being sent off site for disposal. The newly installed grit chamber has been adjusted to remove less organic matter and more inorganic material prior to the secondary process. The amount of grit removed is higher in volume than that originally reported from the manufacturer.

### 1.2 Water Supply

The Montville Water Supply (WS) met required state and federal standards. No regulatory requirements/concerns are present.

Firefighters from several departments spent battling a large fire at the scrapyard on April 22. The fire broke out around 2 a.m. at Connecticut Scrap on Pequot Road. Firefighters from about six surrounding towns were at the scene. The fire (the third in two years) was contained to the scrapyard by 8 a.m. No significant demand was made to the water supply rather “draft water” was used from four locations. Jon Lilly and Kevin Loiler (water operators) responded to ensure the water supply was available. Options were presented to the owner recently regarding extending public water to that area for fire control.

As previously reported, an increase in non-revenue water (NRW) was observed after January 11. No pressure drop was or cloudy water reports were received from ratepayers. No leaks were located. Acoustic testing (day/night) did not identify uncontrolled releases with the most recent testing performed on April 25. No hydrant or valve failures were identified. Two-day and two four-day and 30-day water audits (purchased versus sold water) were completed. Approximately 30% NRW was calculated (typically 5 to 8% loss) with a financial shortfall of 10%. A meter review program identified aging/failing meters for replacement. A meeting with GU was attended on April 26.

## **2.0 Staff**

### 2.1 Health and Safety

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on April 18 released updated guidance on COVID-19 vaccinations, in what the agency described as a move to “simplify” future immunizations. Much of the FDA’s simplification involves recommending only a single dose of the bivalent COVID-19 vaccines created by Pfizer and Moderna for most people.

The influent surveillance monitoring for COVID showed a higher (than national average) for the virus concentration until late March at which time the county showed a significant drop (below national average). The free monitoring is ongoing and will include the new variants (of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19). Additional virus monitoring may occur in the future. The effective virus concentration reported by Biobot is different from the results reported on the CDC’s Covid Data Tracker; the CDC results are normalized using flow/population, whereas Biobot normalizes to a fecal strength indicator measured in our WPCF composite influent wastewater sample. The Biobot-CDC wastewater program is set to last through July 2023, and will provide communities and the CDC with free, comprehensive data on Covid-19 (and its variants) and Mpox to inform public health efforts.

### 2.2 Succession Planning

Several key staff members (i.e., Lab Director, Senior Maintenance Mechanic) will be retiring within a year. It is important to advertise these positions as soon as possible to ensure coverage. A useful succession plan is being initiated. Effective succession planning is a utility’s insurance policy for sustainability. This becomes clear when critical positions become vacant- a good succession plan means there’ll always be a talented and properly trained employee who can take over before operations fall into disarray. One employee was injured on the job in April. HR is working with the insurance company to coordinate remedy.

### 2.3 Training

Staff continued to receive training to (state or professional organization sponsored) meet CTDEEP and CTDPH requirements for (wastewater /water certification) training credits. The

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Superintendent attended low-income assistance, cybersecurity, and process control classes in April.

April is Citizen Science Month and Earth Month. Additionally, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day was celebrated on April 22. The theme for Earth Day 2023 was “Invest in Our Planet”. Outreach to area schools was made to increase awareness of the sewer system/plant and water supply.

The Montville Resident Alert System was initiated on April 12 for *Red Flag Warning* for Montville- no open-burning of any kind. The Superintendent (State Drought Coordinator) attended a webinar (Preparing for Drought in Connecticut) on April 12 to further understand how drought conditions are defined. By mid-April, most monitored stream flow in Connecticut was dropping considerably. As climate change continues, the whip lash weather patterns (dry to wet) will be more frequent and intense.

### **3.0 Equipment**

#### **3.1 WPCF/Collection System**

Routine maintenance was performed at WPCF. All lab equipment was calibrated on April 21 to conform to federal/state requirements. The independent check showed (again) an effective laboratory run (by Gerry Miner, Lab Director) to meet the demands of state and federal permit testing. As indicated, third-party lab checks will be completed over the summer. Previous spiked blanks were detected properly. A representative of Travelers inspected the hot water boilers at the WPCF on April 26.

Over \$4 million dollars in improvements have been completed within the facility in the last four years (mostly funded from an existing state grant), including the main pumps, grit chamber, SBR air diffusers/piping, chlorine disinfection and water recycling. Additional work has been conducted in the conveyance system. Proposed work includes the distribution boxes (and associated equipment) as well as a failing pipe support bridge. All pump stations were inspected and cleaned.

On April 20 and 21, WPCA staff spoke with Jason Westbrook, Eversource Engineer with their *Transmission & Distribution Right-of-Way* (Real Estate) Department regarding their upgrade of a 1080 transmission line in the vicinity of the Orchard PS. Mapping was provided to ensure no potential damage to the line would occur with work in that area.

### **4.0 Projects**

A summary of existing projects is provided in an attached project summary table.

#### **4.1 WPCF/Collection System/Water Supply**

The d-box replacement (engineering) report was finalized in April with a complete review of all drawings. The proposed work calls for both the existing distribution box and splitter box to be combined into a new (preliminary treatment) structure that allows for solids removal, septage delivery and return of activated sludge. Carlos A. Esguerra (CTDEEP Supervising Environmental Engineer, Bureau of Water Protection and Land Reuse, Water Planning and Management Division) was met to discuss grant/financing options for the expected \$3 million construction project.

The pipe support bridge above the Stony Brook was re-examined to assess whether a temporary fix for identified weathering is an option. The Superintendent met with members of CorrTech (inspector) and the WPCA Engineer (Wright-Pierce) in April. The main corrosion issue is related to (road salt) exposure with the old 50-foot Pipe Bridge for the 16-inch (water) and 21-inch (sewer) pipes structurally compromised. Solutions include the replacement of the entire pipe bridge or installation of a modular (pipe) support structure.

One line (3-phase) diagrams were completed of the blower room to identify aging equipment and initiate consolidation of MCC panels. Additionally, a cursory safety inspection of the electrical runs was completed. Performance reviews of the recently installed equipment (i.e. influent pumps, recycle pumps, chlorine dosing system, blowers and diffusers) was conducted; while one header did separate from another in SBR-6, it was quickly repaired and no further problems were identified.

CCTV inspections enable observation of the condition of pipes firsthand and address defects that could result in costly repairs in the future. Targeted inspections of some of the 1,650 manholes in the collection system were made. Several manholes were repaired in April.

The Partridge Hollow PS had a pump failure on April 16 which resulted in a limited surcharged condition of the sewer main. The resulting high level of water in the wetwell should have activated an alarm. The situation was corrected; both pumps were made operational and the wiring mechanism improved to ensure alarming was present.

On April 20, P & H Construction began relining of the RWCB lines from the water station on Maple Avenue to 119 Maple Avenue on April 21. WPCF staff coordinated with RWCB personnel to ensure recycled water and their effluent was managed efficiently. Reportedly, the event improved 2,700 linear feet of the line. The five or six (purple/recycle) water hydrants will be effectively sealed off due to the relining and therefore, removed. The water supply extends to that area for effective fire control.

As previously indicated, a replacement project is proposed for Cook Water Tower. The glass fused to steel construction is state of the art and represents a low maintenance option to conventional steel tanks. Additionally, the mixing equipment will reduce the amount of TTHMs in the stored water as well thermal stratification issues.

#### 4.2 Regulatory Oversight

No regulatory oversight or action is ongoing for the WPCA. No existing *Consent Decrees* or *Consent Orders* currently exist. No formal reporting was required other than the typical monthly permit submittals. No complaints have been received from the appropriate regulatory bodies.

Permit renewal activities will begin in April 2024; as stipulated, a permit renewal package must be formally submitted to the CTDEEP six months prior to the federal NPDES permit expiration date (October 31, 2024). The Superintendent has completed numerous permit renewals. As part of the permit support, the Superintendent and Lab Director conducted an inventory of equipment and disposable items for the upcoming disinfection season (beginning May 1).

The Montville WS received notice of the routine (2023) sanitary survey inspection. Inspection(s) and a questionnaire were conducted to comply with CTDPH mandates. The WPCA Engineer was met on April 26 to discuss the work required for compliance with the state mandate with a formal filing completed on March 20.

The USEPA announced the first part of requirements for the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) in December 2021 as part of the original 1991 Lead and Copper Rule. The three-year compliance window includes an initial assessment of service lines (inventory) by the end of 2024. The line inventory will include data collection (from GIS, billing and historic connection details). Gaps will be identified. Sampling and/or more invasive (digging) can be employed to determine whether a lead line is present. On April 4, The USEPA reported that an estimated 9.2 million lead pipes carry potable water throughout the U.S. and said it was allocating some of the funds from the bipartisan infrastructure law to replace them.

The USEPA recently proposed a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) and health-based Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) for six per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in public drinking water supplies, which includes an enforceable maximum contaminant level (MCL). The proposal includes MCLs of 4.0 nanograms per liter (ng/L), or parts per trillion (ppt), for PFOA and PFOS individually. This almost unimaginable standard is going to be difficult for most utilities to meet. Our water supply is being received from GU who will be responsible for the PFAS control. The Superintendent expects the MCL announcement to impact the wastewater sector (i.e., sludge disposal costs). PFAS will once again be mainstream news, and the distinction between drinking water and wastewater is likely to make little difference in public perception.

### **5.0 Development**

Several inquiries for potential development projects have been presented to the WPCA for review/comment.

## 6.0 Financial

The WPCA operates with an *Enterprise Fund* which is operated like a private sector business account except with a target zero-balance (year) ending. In other words, it is understood that a utility is a customer service business. The FY 2023 WPCA Sewer and Water Budgets began on July 1.

The FY 2024 Water and Sewer Budgets and CIPs were approved by the WPCA during the March 6 Meeting. The Budgets were presented and approved at the April 10 Town Council Meeting.

As is typical in spring, the septic receiving was observed to increase with approximately \$25,000 in revenues. As indicated, the majority of the treated effluent is recycled and sold to RWCB.

GU proposed rate increases. The proposed increase would represent an approximate 7.1 % (typical) increase. A Montville WS rate increase is necessary. An internal study was conducted to determine an appropriate rate increase for quarterly water supply accounts (\$45 / quarter with 6,000 g maximum). No water supply rate increase has occurred since 2014. The study considered the current reserve funds and the typical revenue received as compared to the costs increases associated with the two GU rate increases, inflation, and new water tower (as well as the unaccounted-for water we are experiencing now). The study is preliminary and is offered for internal review. The study indicates a need to include an increase in the quarterly rate by \$25- \$35 with a reduction of a minimum water allotted. Commercial accounts will also be adjusted accordingly. As is typical, an engineering study may be required to confirm our findings to compare to area utility rates. I will make an improved technical memorandum for the WPCA. Notification will be made on the WPCA website. A formal notification for approval will be made to the Town Council. The last time the WS rates were increased was via Resolution 2014-50 (July 1, 2014).

### 6.1 Accounts Review

Asset management is the process for maintaining a desired level of customer service at the appropriate cost and lowering asset risk. Current rates (and ancillary fees) appear to be adequate at this time to cover costs for wastewater activities. Water billing is falling short of costs and a fund balance contribution is warranted.

Next fiscal year, the Superintendent will employ the Engineer to conduct a rate survey. Of note, septic receiving has been encouraged with Calendar Year total revenue of approximately \$300,000 (up 13% from 2022). RWCB billing was observed to have increased approximately 17%.

### 6.2 Assets

The WPCA will enhance its understanding of the WPCF and Water Supply assets with the permanent/inspection attributes positioned on the water and sewer GIS platforms. As previously noted, the cost of depreciation is provided in utility spread sheets, but it is not an “out-of-pocket” expense. This data is an important portion of the four part approach to asset management: planning, financial foresight, capital visibility, and data collection/review. Old assets can be sold on third party websites (i.e. Municibid) leading to revenues.

### 6.3 Grants/Funding

As indicated, some current wastewater projects are funded by State funds including two bonds and one grant (CTDEEP \$5 million *Grant-in-Aid for Sewage Treatment Facility Infrastructure Improvements and Upgrades at the Montville WPTF- State Grant Agreement 2017-170491*, approved via March 2014 Town of Montville Resolution No. 2014-25). The bonds were for infrastructure improvements within the plant including the new chlorine system, new recycling pumps, seal replacement at SBR-1 decanter, and grit removal system. Additionally, the aeration diffuser systems for SBR-1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 will be replaced. A review of the approximately \$4.5 million in grant monies (slated for the WPCF) indicated adequate funding for the proposed projects.

Based on a review of the WPCA’s *Eligibility Application* the CTDPH DWS had determined that the Cook Water Tower replacement project was ready to proceed and that DWSRF funding will be available. After advertising, the bid opening was conducted on March 13. Three bids were received as summarized in the attached table. Appropriate vetting of the responders is being

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conducted followed by formal interviews. The DWSRF Program is now accepting Eligibility Applications from eligible public water systems seeking funding for projects during SFY 2024. Monies may be available to Montville WS for the water extension in the vicinity of the fire location.

On April 21, Sen. Dick Blumenthal announced that Connecticut will soon receive \$73.5 million from the USEPA to help upgrade and maintain essential drinking water infrastructure across the state.

#### 6.4 Energy

Overall, there has been a continued decrease in plant energy (kWh) demand observed associated with the lower (and more consistent) DO settings in the process tanks and the new (more efficient) turbo blowers and air diffusers. On average, monthly energy bills showed a 15-20% drop in overall plant demand. Eversource reported in April that their rates should drop in 2023. Overall, natural gas prices have dropped in 2023, but Eversource gas prices are above average. Steve Pearson (VFS LLC *Green Energy Customer Financing Executive*) was met on April 24 to discuss a new gas supply contract, a lower cost alternative to supply natural gas to the fuel cell. Daniel Joyce of Balanced Rock Energy was met on April 25 to discuss a new source for electricity brought to the plant. As a place to start, the current supplier was contacted for indicative pricing.

The majority of the electrical energy is supplied to the plant by the Doosan Fuel Cell America, Inc. fuel cell (onsite generation, serial number 10587), Eversource (transmission) and *First Point Power* (generation). The power generation was formerly supplied by *Constellation Energy*. Approximately 70-80% of the energy demand was supplied from the fuel cell. The Doosan *PureCell Model 400* Fuel Cell unit began producing power onsite in June 2020 resulting in a large drop in grid power demand. Of note, the Doosan Corporation formally changed its legal entity name to HyAxiom, Inc. The HyAxiom 460 kW fuel cell exhibited great performance during 2022 (96% operational time) in 2022. The unit is the best performing in Connecticut. The onsite generation has led to significant savings by reducing the transmission costs because most of the power used is generated onsite.

A *Municipal Beneficial Accounts Services Agreement* was established between N Silver Brook Holdings, LLC and the Montville WPCA for their off-loading of solar (electrical) energy resulting in additional electrical energy savings within the “pre-meter” supply.

Superintendent Albertson remarked his monthly report was self-explanatory but noted for the record that the plant did better in April than in March. Removal deficiencies, BOD and TSS contaminates, were higher than in March. Commissioner Siragusa inquired about the pipe support on Stony Brook; the Superintendent remarked an engineer from Wright-Pierce was present with three (3) options for the same.

#### i. Report from Mayor.

Mayor McDaniel remarked he did not have any substantive information to report on the Department. He noted for the record the passing of Attorney Matt Auger who represented the Town in negotiations with Rand-Whitney and other projects. Attorney Auger was described as a great lawyer and human being; condolences to his family and friends was expressed.

#### j. Report from Engineers

Superintendent Albertson read into the record a portion of his monthly report concerning the pipe support bridge on Stony Brook, i.e., 4.0 Projects, 4.1 WPCF/Collection System/Water Supply, P.4 -- ***The pipe support bridge above the Stony Brook was re-examined to assess whether a temporary fix for identified weathering is an option. The Superintendent met with members of CorrTech (inspector) and the WPCA Engineer (Wright-Pierce) in April. The main corrosion issue is related to (road salt) exposure with the old 50-foot Pipe Bridge for the 16-inch (water) and 21-inch (sewer) pipes structurally compromised. Solutions include the replacement of the entire pipe bridge or installation of a modular (pipe) support structure.*** A meeting occurred with Wright-Pierce and a structural inspection company in April.

PE Therlin Montgomery reported that a structural inspection company, CorrTech, looked at the bridge and provided a report that indicated two (2) of the three (3) main beams attached to the water supply are severely damaged with rust/corrosion. The third beam was added in 2000 to allow support of the water pipe and is in good condition. These beams house the pipes but have no effect on the flows nor do they support the road bridge. Three (3) options for repair and/or replacement of the beams were presented and included in a proposal from Wright-Pierce to evaluate these options and a structural inspection report from CorrTech. Copies of the proposal and report were provided to the Commission: The three (3) options are as follows: 1) Strengthen the existing beams by adding reinforcement to make them structurally sound; 2) Installation of supplemental beams above or below the existing beams as a permanent structure; and 3) Replacement and installation of new beams with that would require a temporary support during the construction. Coating for the new beams would also be done to prevent future corrosion. PE Montgomery remarked that each of these options will be evaluated and reported on at the next Commission meeting concerning the effectiveness and the cost for each. He also noted for Commissioner Siragusa that there is no connection with the State bridge.

k. Old Business -- *None*

l. New Business -- *None*

m. Reports/Referral from Planning & Zoning -- *None*

## II. Water Commission

a. Report from Engineers

Superintendent Albertson reported on the April 22<sup>nd</sup> fire at Connecticut Scrap. There was no demand on the water supply as surface water bodies was used with draft tubes. This was the third fire at the scrap yard in three (3) years and two (2) fires within the last five (5) months. The fire began around 1:00 a.m. and finished by 8:00 a.m. Options for a public water supply extension to the scrap yard was presented to the owner at their cost but there has been no feedback as of yet. The Superintendent also reported the acoustics study of the water system was completed on Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> but no leaks were found and it concludes the study in the target area for potential releases. Investigation as to whether a meter is not turned, if there is a quiet meter that is not recording flow, or there is flow through a pipe with no meter will be determined. Superintendent Albertson will meet with the software group this Thursday and they will thoroughly assess the data.

b. Old Business

Commissioner Siragusa inquired if there would be discussion about a proposed water rate increase as discussed at the last meeting. Superintendent Albertson referred to section 6.0 Financial, P. 5 of his monthly report that addresses Groton Utilities proposed rate increases that would prompt a Town water supply rate increase and support of the new water tower. Reduction to the water allotment per ratepayer in comparison with the proposed water supply increase was discussed by the Commission in addition to the costs associated with the reduction that will be reviewed by the Superintendent and presented to the Commission. A comparison of SCWA's quarterly rate to a proposed Town water rate increase was suggested by Commissioner Siragusa; Commissioner Lathrop suggested consideration of a cap on the proposed rate increase. Mayor McDaniel noted the unaccounted water issue, a loss of 10% of revenue, needs to be resolved before a rate increase is considered. Use of reserve funds, not used since Superintendent Albertson came on board, will need to be done this year. A reduction in the water loss from 90 gallons a minute to 60 gallons a minute to an eventual flatline indicates an unmetered meter according to the Superintendent and was concluded by the Mayor all along. Superintendent Albertson reported the meters at the DOC will be recalibrated, the casino has not returned to its pre-covid water use, and there are no open sprinklers per the Fire Marshal. To rebuild the structure, the cost will come from the water per Commissioner Siragusa. Splitting the cost for ratepayer use and allotted supply may be considered.

c. New Business -- *None*

**d.**     Remarks from the Public

Chairman Longton asked three (3) times for remarks from the public. There were none.

**e.**     Remarks from Commission Members

Commissioner Mandler apologized for being late to the meeting. Commissioner Lathrop is looking forward to next month's meeting.

**f.**     Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Mandler; seconded by Commissioner Siragusa to adjourn the meeting at 6:38 p.m. Discussion: one. Voice vote: 4-0 , all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,

Gloria J. Gathers  
Recording Secretary, Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THE MEETING IS AVAILABLE ON THE TOWN OF  
MONTVILLE WEBSITE.**