

Amended – 4-4-2016

**Regular Meeting Minutes
Town of Montville Water and Sewer Commission
March 7, 2016
Town Hall - Town Council Chambers – 6:00 p.m.**

1. Water and Sewer Commission

a. Call to Order

WPCA Chairman May called the regular meeting of the Water and Sewer Commission to order at 6:02 p.m.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

All stood and pledged the flag.

c. Roll Call

Present were Commissioners Deborah Schober, Anthony Siragusa, Robert Thorn, and WPCA Chairman/Town Council Liaison Timothy May. Also present were Administrator Brian Lynch, Superintendent Michael Didato, and Mayor Ronald McDaniel. Commissioner Gary Murphy was absent.

d. Alterations to the Agenda -- None

e. To consider an act on a motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2016

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 1, 2016, made by Commissioner Thorn; seconded by Commissioner Siragusa. Discussion, none; voice vote, 4-0; all in favor, **motion carried to approve the minutes, as written.**

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 May asked three times for remarks. There were none.

h. Commission Attorney on Matters Referred -- None

i. Report from Administration Division

Administrator Lynch submitted an activity report for February 2016 that was included in the packet as follows:

1. I received word from Josh, the new manager of Southeastern Connecticut Water, that SCWA would like to set up a meeting with us to discuss the concept of bother Water Utilities working together in both of our respective Exclusive Areas.
2. The bid opening for the new Sludge Transportation contract was last Thursday. We had four companies submit proposals. DW Transport of Montville was the low bidder. DW's price per load was \$276.00. This reflects an increase of \$22.00. I am starting to look into the costs associated with the WPCA becoming its own hauler.

3. I applied for and was granted an open permit that will allow the WPCA to work in any wetland areas that our sewer line goes across. After the recent sewer problem in the Fellows Road section of Montville, I felt it was in our best interest to have this permit in place. I asked Attorney Heller to apply for the wetlands permit and to represent us at the Wetlands Commission. This permit will now give us the ability to work right away in wetlands areas without having to wait for an approval.
4. I have a meeting set with Rick Stevens of Groton Utilities to open discussions of increasing the amount of water we currently are contracted to buy. We currently are contracted for 1.9 million gallons per day. With the casino controlling one million gallons per day, the corrections facility and with our water customers, we need to start looking into increasing the available amount.
5. I have enclosed the water and sewer budgets in your packets. I have tracked the revenues and expenses over the last few budget cycles, and feel that, at this time, I am comfortable in proposing a decrease across the board in our current sewer rate structure. I think that this is an opportune time to show our rate payers and commercial customers that we are being fiscally responsive to their needs. I want to point out that this change is for the next two years. After the anaerobic digester is built, we will have to re-evaluate the revenues again.

Administrator Lynch responded to Commissioner's questions stated that he would look into whether other districts could use the WPCA's relationship with SCWA as a template as proposed by Commissioner Thorn. He also said that the WPCA would not be taking over SCWA's systems. Administrator Lynch also reported that the upshot of talks with Groton Utilities about capturing more water would require some sort of MOU.

j. Report from Operations Division

Superintendent Didato submitted an operating report for February 2016 that was included in the packet as follows:

1. With the available data to date, the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) continues to be in full compliance of its NPDES permit.
2. There were no treatment plant odor complaints last month.
3. Sludge thickness averaged about 5.8%.
4. We had an average of 66 lbs/day of nitrogen in our discharge last month. Our 2016 average limit with the DEEP is 118 lbs/day.
5. Spent time on training the new sludge haulers (DW Transport) on our policies and procedures for loading, sampling, and testing.
6. Brian and I had a meeting with the engineers that are working on our trihalomethanes (TTHM) problem in our potable water. We are employing different flushing techniques to see what effect it will have "if any" on lab results and we are scheduling a meeting with them the DPH to discuss the same. **Update:** We had limited success. However, we still exceeded the limit by .001. More to follow.
7. Worked with Brian on the budget. I made dozens of spreadsheets with numerous calculation and computations to this end.

8. We had a few problems on our large aeration blowers. It is vital to keep these blowers operational and have done so.
9. Participated in discussions regarding the 12” ductile iron pipe crossing at Route 32 and Maple Avenue. Other options may be available that will not require the complete excavation across the pond. The new option being evaluated does not have the inherent problems that the Insituform process has. More to follow.
10. Nothing else unusual or outstanding to report for this month. Performed routine maintenance and operations with some small problems that have resolved.

Superintendent Didato reported further, upon a question by Commissioner May, that he is vetting a process better than that of Insituform for going across bends. More information will be sought regarding the alternative material that “does not bond” but “takes the form of” and must be done when the water table is low.

- k. Report from the Mayor -- None
- l. Report from special or sub-committees -- None
- m. Report from Engineers

Administrator Lynch commented about a minor issue with the diagrams for the anaerobic digester that has delayed the signing off of them.

- n. Old Business -- None
- o. New Business -- None

1. Discussion on the Sewer budget for fiscal year 2016-2017.

Administrator Lynch stated that the WPCA has been fortunate with revenues and is in good financial shape hence the reason for the proposed 9% rate decrease to customers. He said that Superintendent Didato has the plant in shape with supplies etc. Administrator Lynch also said that this year the union contract would be renegotiated and that he has spoken to the Town Finance Director concerning it. As far as capital projects, there are funds available for upgrades to the pump station and the anaerobic digester is near completion. In response to Commissioner Siragusa, Administrator Lynch said that the 9% reduction would remain at that rate for two (2) years stating that once the anaerobic digester starts up it would be at a commercial rate. He answered additional questions posed by Commissioners concerning the sewer budget and the proposed rate reduction given the past debt load of the WPCA. Administrator Lynch reported summarized the financial status of the WPCA including savings, funds committed for projects (anaerobic digester, headworks), ongoing maintenance of the pump station, and other maintenance items. Per Commissioner May’s query about updated controllers discussed at a prior meeting, Superintendent Didato said that the updates would occur over a 5-year period and capital has been set aside for them. Commissioner May gave kudos to Administrator Lynch and Superintendent Didato for being proactive with the generators, taking on the new blowers, and reducing electric costs. Administrator Lynch updated the Commission on the Oxoboxo sewer line extension and his meeting with DPH that found no existing failures. Per a question by Commissioner Thorn regarding capital improvement, Administrator Lynch mentioned the possibility of getting into the sludge hauling business—tanks will be looked at for the same. He also mentioned the more land in front of the plant that Superintendent Didato commented was a consideration based upon the facility plan to increase the size of SBRs.

Per a continuation of the discussion concerning the proposed 9% sewer rate reduction, a straw vote was taken as to action with a proposal for a 4-year reduction period instead of 2 years (Commissioners Siragusa and May), a concern regarding a loss of revenue (Commissioner Thorn), and the concern about a reduction that is then followed by an increase and a proposal for a rate window of 5% and/or 10% (Commissioner Schober). Mayor McDaniel commented that the budget is a projection that must be approved. Administrator Lynch explained that the purpose for the proposed public hearing was for setting the lower rate and for fees.

2. To consider and act on a motion to hold a public hearing on April 4, 2016, with the purpose of setting the new sewer rate fees for metered and unmetered users. Public Hearing will be held in the Council Chambers at 5:30 before the regular scheduled WPCA Meeting.

Motion made by Commissioner Siragusa; seconded by Commissioner Thorn to hold a public hearing on April 4, 2016, with the purpose of setting the new sewer rate fees for metered and unmetered users. Public Hearing will be held in the Council Chambers at 5:30 before the regular scheduled WPCA Meeting. Discussion: To amend the motion to "reduce" the sewer rates" and removing the word, "new." Motion to amend made by Commissioner Siragusa; seconded by Commissioner Thorn. Discussion, none. Roll Call vote, all in favor, Commissioners May, Schober, Siragusa, and Commissioner Thorn, 4-0. Motion approved. Original motion Roll Call vote: all in favor, Commissioners May, Schober, Siragusa, and Thorn, 4-0. **Motion approved.**

p. Reports/referrals from Planning & Zoning

Commissioner Siragusa reported that at the last Planning & Zoning meeting some of the zoning regulations for apartment complexes were changed that could equate to a possible increase in water and sewer fees. He also stated that existing apartment complexes now meet the revised regulations.

q. Payment of bills – None

II. **Water Commission**

a. Report from Sub-Committees – None

b. Report from Engineers -- None

c. Old Business – None

d. New Business

1. To consider and act on a motion to approve the Water budget for fiscal year 2016-2017 in the amount of \$1,509,725.00 (One Million Five Hundred Nine Thousand Seven Twenty-Five dollars).

SAR NO. 2016-71 THE TOWN OF MONTVILLE WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION HEREBY RESOLVES to approve the Water budget for fiscal year 2016-2017 in the amount of \$1,509,725.00 (One Million Five Hundred Nine Thousand Seven Twenty-Five dollars) and forward to Town Council for final approval. Motion made by Commissioner Siragusa; seconded by Commissioner Thorn. Discussion: Commissioner Siragusa asked about the water connection fees for residents. Administrator Lynch responded that the fees are not the same and he can get an explanation for him. He said that every year more water is being sold in addition to water testing and regulations for the same including hydrant repairs. All of these concerns depends upon the funds allocated to the WPCA by the Town. Roll Call vote: all in favor Commissioners Schober, Siragusa, Thorne, and May; 4-0. **Motion approved.**

- e. Payment of bills -- None
- f. Remarks from the Public -- None
- g. Remarks from Commission members -- None
- h. Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Thorn; seconded by Commissioner Siragusa to adjourn the meeting at 6:44 p.m.; discussion, none; voice vote, 4-0, all in favor. **Motion approved.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Gloria J. Gathers
Recording Secretary, Town of Montville