

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

The regular meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was held on Thursday, February 11, 2010 at the department offices, 605 West Queen Street, Southington, CT. A recording of this meeting can be found on file tape #556.

PRESENT: President Thomas Murphy, Vice President Erik Semmel, Commissioners Angelina Santa Maria, Robert Berkmoes, Michael Domian, Cheryl Lounsbury, Superintendent Thomas West, Assistant Superintendent Frederick Rogers and Janice Eisenhauer, stenographer. A quorum is determined.

### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by President Thomas Murphy at 6:00PM.

### **2. Approval of Minutes of January 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Santa Maria to accept the minutes as presented. A second was made by Vice President Erik Semmel. There were no comments on the motion. A voice vote was in the affirmative. Commissioner Berkmoes abstained.

### **3. Communications**

a.) Communications from the Public  
None

b.) Communications from Administrators

Assistant Superintendent Rogers reported that he had been contacted by a representative at the Southington High School regarding a "shadow" program for students, with a goal of familiarizing them various jobs in the municipal and business community. He was interested in setting up such a program with the water department. Rogers is in favor of exploring this and he feels that the water department offers a wide range of career interests: administrative, management, engineering, operational. There is no insurance issue. He asked input from the board. Commissioner Berkmoes expressed his positive response to this request and suggested that an agenda and outline of tasks be prepared.

Superintendent West asked the board for permission to replace two vehicles in the fleet. One is a utility vehicle and the other is a truck. One is already scheduled to be replaced in the budget, the other is not. He feels that both are on the way to becoming a safety hazard due to deterioration and heavy use. He suggests the purchase of two smaller utility vehicles, more economical and adequate for their function. There was some discussion. The present vehicles will be turned in. West will explore this and return to the board with the appropriate numbers. Commissioner Santa Maria asked which trucks will be

turned in and how many have been purchased within the last few years.

West also discussed issues at Well #2. This well is losing specific capacity. This well normally pumps 500 gallons a minute and it is dropping, now at 460. This indicates that it is becoming plugged. He thinks it is prudent to address this before summer. He suggests that it be refurbished while it is down and he explained the needs and type of equipment in use there. This is not reflected in the budget, but the upcoming budget does ask for an energy upgrade, perhaps partially funded by CL&P. A timeline was discussed. West anticipates cost to be in the range of \$13,000 to \$15,000. Condition of other wells was discussed. Commissioner Berkmoes made a motion to add the refurbishment of Well #2 to the agenda of this meeting. This was seconded by Vice President Semmel and passed on a voice vote. It becomes item 7 d) under New Business on today's agenda.

c.) Communications from Board Members  
None.

#### **4. Financial Matters**

a.) Review of Water Billings & Outstanding Jobbing Bills & Approval of Invoices

Superintendent West reported on billings and collections and the new jobbing bills. There were some questions from the board on individual invoices presented for payment, answered by Superintendent West. Commissioner Santa Maria asked about the electric supplier and Superintendent West explained that Constellation is no longer the supplier. Commissioner Santa Maria made a motion to honor the invoices as presented for payment. This was seconded by Commissioner Domian and passed on a voice vote.

President Murphy called for a recess at 7:05PM and the meeting was reconvened at 7:15PM.

#### **5. Committee Reports**

a.) Executive Committee

Superintendent West did retrieve the rules of the Executive Committee dating back to when the committee was formed. The Executive Committee has the ability to generate a consent agenda to be voted on by the board at the next meeting. It can approve and amend special and emergency minutes, approve cash statements, jobbing bills, and approve water service for site plans and subdivisions where the water demand is less than 10,000 gallons a day. The Executive Committee consists of the President, Vice President and Secretary-Treasurer. Other powers include approval for purchasing of items between \$5,000 and \$25,000.

There was some discussion about amending this. West reports that it still works, but perhaps the amounts of

purchasing allowed might need updating since this hasn't been revisited since inception in 1999. President Murphy provided some background surrounding the purpose for this committee. During the years 1999-2000, there was a great deal of construction in town and a once a month meeting schedule was awkward. Heavy agendas required meetings to run very late and this was set up to simplify that process.

West commented that since this is a consent agenda item, if this is to be amended the entire board must vote on it. Individual items can be removed, discussed and voted on separately.

This consent agenda has not been used in recent years due to the paucity of building projects. There was a discussion about increasing the amount of purchasing power. Commissioner Lounsbury made a motion to increase the Superintendent's latitude of purchasing allowed to \$10,000 from the current \$5,000 and the Executive Committee's to \$10,000 and \$50,000. Commissioner Berkmoes seconded her motion. There were no remarks on the motion. It passed on a voice vote.

b.) Infrastructure Committee

Commissioner Berkmoes reported that a meeting was held last week. Some of the projects discussed were West Street and W. Center Street soon be upgraded by the town. West reported that the town is planning some drainage upgrades on a section of West Street and West Center and Middle Street. The committee wants to complete the work on Welch Rd. Approval is awaited from the Wetlands Commission on this. Curtis Street, crossing into Welch Rd was also discussed, along with several in-house projects.

c.) Technology Committee

No report.

## 6. OLD BUSINESS

a.) Update on Federal Grants, State Grants and SRF Loans.

The Ferguson representative is not present. A corrected proposed agenda was distributed to members of the board. Superintendent West updated the board on contract negotiations with Ferguson Group. Energy efficiency upgrades are popular projects receiving grants. West spoke about contacting Senator Dodd about the WERDA money available and its ties to the Hartford levee project. A trip to Washington D.C. is tentatively planned for March. Commissioner Santa Maria asked if the stream flow regulations can be claimed as a hardship to request grant relief.

b.) Update on DEP "Stream Flow" Regulations

Superintendent West reported on this issue. The hearing has been held at DEP. There was substantial opposition to these regulations, more than had been anticipated. CWWA

pulled together a substantial case for the opposition. The decision is awaited, probably to be rendered in the next 4-6 months. CWWA is also exploring a legislative avenue to oppose this.

Commissioner Santa Maria had some questions about these regulations. How does this affect people who have a well? West answered not at all. She asked if this only affects towns that border a river. West answered that it affects anyone, including private entities such as golf courses, ski resorts, even farmers, that divert more than 50,000 gallons of water a day from the ground or surface water.

c.) East Street Water Main.  
Referred to Executive Session.

d.) Pharmaceuticals Collection Day 2010  
Superintendent West reported. The subcommittee had its first meeting recently. The Southington Police Department has agreed to send an officer for the day. Clean Harbors will provide service for the same price as last year. Commissioner Santa Maria will secure the food for the volunteers. Marketed aggressively, Pharmaceuticals Collection Day will be Saturday May 1.

e.) Safety Valve Program  
Paul Roberts, representative of the Safety Valve Program, presented an interim report on the program in detail. He asked that the letter to customers, revised to reflect new board members' names be reviewed before printing. There were some questions from board members and Commissioner Santa Maria and Michael Domian asked that their name be corrected. Roberts will return with the corrected draft.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

a.) Presentation by Budwitz & Meyerjack on 2008-2009 Audit  
Michael Ziebka CPA from Budwitz & Meyerjack reported in depth to the board on the financial audit conducted for the fiscal year ending June, 2009. Water rate increases were discussed. He explained the financial report presented in writing, in some detail and recommended some cultivation of revenue. He noted the clean bill of health as has been the case in previous years. The report has been filed with the State of Connecticut and accepted. Superintendent West questioned him about financing issues and proposed projects. The arbitration process was discussed.

Scott Burleigh CPA, distributed the required overview of the audit, explained the items listed and answered questions. He spoke of the excellent quality of the bookkeeping practices and professional decorum of the Water Department staff under the auspices of Carol Mazzalupo, Office Supervisor.

Commissioner Santa Maria commented on how close the operating expenses and the revenue appear on the scale. There was some discussion about the public trend to conserve water.

b.) Tighe & Bond Rate Study

Superintendent West presented a statewide comparison survey prepared by Tighe & Bond showing water and sewer rates. Also noted is other interesting information pertinent to water rates and billing practices. Southington Water Co rates are comparatively low.

c.) Proposed service for 40-44 West Main Street, "The Hearth" Restaurant, by Dean's Stove & Spa, Inc.

Assistant Superintendent Frederick Rogers presented the project. He explained in detail the construction plans affecting the water service and noted that it meets all of the Water Department's regulations. Neil Cassarelli's approval is pending. President Murphy questioned the condition of a private hydrant on the property. A motion was made by Commissioner Berkmoes to approve this plan, upon the approval of the Southington Fire Department. The motion is seconded by Commissioner Lounsbury. A voice vote was in the affirmative.

d.) Well #2 Redevelopment

Superintendent West anticipates the cost of this project, as previously discussed, to be in the range of \$13,000 to \$15,000. If the pump needs to be replaced it will be an additional \$4500. Commissioner Lounsbury made a motion to approve up to \$25,000 to redevelop Well #2. This was seconded by Commissioner Berkmoes and passed on a voice vote.

**8. Executive Session Anticipated for Personnel and Negotiations.**

Vice President Semmel made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session, barring the public and press at 8:04PM. This was seconded by Commissioner Berkmoes and passed on a voice vote.

The Board entered executive session at 8:04 PM

The Board Left Executive Session at 9:46 PM.

Commissioner Semmel made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Berkmoes seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:47 PM.