

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS

The regular meeting of the Board of Water Commissioners was held on Thursday, January 8, 2009, at the Department Offices, 605 West Queen Street, Southington, CT. A recording of this meeting can be found on file tape #540.

Present: President Stephen C. Pestillo, Vice President Thomas J. Murphy, Secretary and Treasurer John C. Dobbins, Commissioners Erik E. Semmel, Robert M. Berkmoes, Superintendent Thomas R. West, Assistant Superintendent Frederick W. Rogers and stenographer Janice Eisenhauer.

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

The meeting was called to order by Commissioner Pestillo at 6:02 p.m.

### **2. Approval of minutes of the December 4, 2008.**

An omission was noted in said minutes as follows: under 6b, the sentence beginning "Commissioner Berkmoes made a motion" should be amended to include "effective 7/1/09," following 20% at the end of the sentence.

A motion was made by Vice President Thomas J. Murphy to accept the minutes as amended, seconded by Commissioner Robert Berkmoes and then voted in the affirmative unanimously.

### **3. Communications**

#### **a) Communications from the Public**

Vivian Dailida, President of the Board of Directors of Carter Height Condominium Association addressed the Board. She notes the increase in service charge for the private hydrant on their property and wishes an explanation. Thomas West, Superintendent along with Commissioner Erik Semmel and President Pestillo answered her questions and explained that this charge is for the maintenance of water pressure levels adequate to provide sufficient fire protection for the 30 units on the property. He explained that fees haven't been raised in since 1994, while water department overhead has risen substantially. She understood and asked for an explanation in writing for her files to justify this expense to the property owners. Superintendent West will see that it is done.

There was no mail received.

#### **b) Communications from Administration**

Assistant Superintendent Frederick Rogers greeted the Board at the New Year and expressed his gratitude for the stenographer.

#### **c) Communications from Board Members**

None.

**The Board decided to take Committee Reports out of order.**

**5. Committee Reports**

**a) Executive Committee**

None.

**b) Infrastructure Committee**

There was no meeting. Superintendent Thomas West reported that he continues to await information from the Town regarding upcoming projects planned for the next two years. They will provide a list of streets to be paved in the next few years. He understands that West Center St. is on the agenda a few years out.

Commissioner Murphy had some questions about River Crossing on Welch Rd. The main is on but there is not much activity there. There are still issues to be decided about how this project will be done and how it will be funded. Superintendent West feels that a separate 824 is not necessary since it was covered by the previous 824's, but there will definitely be a separate wetlands permit associated with this. Superintendent West will follow up check with the Town Planner.

The committee set up a meeting for January 29, 2009 at 4:30 p.m.

**c) Wellhead Protection Phase 2**

Commissioners Thomas Murphy and Pestillo had some questions for Superintendent Thomas West regarding progress at Well 1A. There has not been a lot of activity during the month of December. Stantec has placed the steel reinforcement in preparation to pour the concrete pad for the generator. They removed more contaminated soil at the end of the month and all contaminated soil has been removed from the site. There a red container that needs to be removed from the site. This is Stantec's responsibility. There is a pile of asbestos cement pipe that needs to be removed and it will be decided whose responsibility that will be. The electrical work has continued, the new meter socket has been hung on the building, some of the electrical work has been done inside and all of the conduits are in place. President Pestillo asked about the underground utilities and Superintendent West answered that that the gas remains to be done but the electrical service is in place. Commissioners Murphy questioned about the transformers and he was told that the two transformers were currently hanging on the pole near the building. Two poles are coming in. The improvements to the building will be reviewed for approval and budget considerations. The invoices have not been rendered therefore exact costs to date are not available.

**d) Technology Committee**

Superintendent West reported on the Water Department Server Replacement progress. He has interviewed Dom who used to be with Walker Systems and went out on his own and Mark Gandolfo. Both came in with attractive bids. Mark Gandolfo presents stellar references and his fee is slightly less. It appears that he will be the best choice. Superintendent West explained his billing system. He will get a flat fee up front and then his hours will be changed against that. There should be a savings of about \$600 per month savings depending upon the service time that is needed. There are 11 computers involved. Commissioner Murphy asked about the number of systems he will be responsible for. He asked specifically about the computers at the treatment plant and Superintendent West explained that those will not be

included as that system requires special expertise. Support for the SCADA system will continue with present provider. Service is still under warrantee at this time.

The Water Board will be able to use the town's web site at no cost. Superintendent West will go for the training with another employee to be named on procedures for use. If it turns out not to be a great fit, other arrangements can always be made. There is really nothing to loose. The Town Clerk oversees use of the town site.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **a) Update on Federal Grants, State Grants and SRF Loans**

The Ferguson Group will be in next week, on January 15 probably at 5 pm, to review the economic stimulus package and our account. There has been talk of some funds available through the Water Resources Act and there might be some money as part of the Army Corps restructuring package. EPA may be able to provide more funding in the STAG earmarks. The new administration does not seem to be in favor of earmarks. The Ferguson Group put on a web seminar yesterday about the economic stimulus package and it is very much in flux right now. It appears that it will be rolled out through the states and then to municipalities. There is presently no mechanism that will allow the states to make direct grants. It is likely that it will be another loan program and not so very attractive to this Board. Connecticut is in line with most States in allotting grants for drinking water and that is very limited. There is some speculation that loans with no interest, or negative interest may become available.

### **b) Medication Return Program**

Plans are moving forward for April. The Board is waiting for a letter from the Southington Police Chief approving police oversight on the collection day. This is critical. Several Registered Pharmacists and Pharmacy Technicians are on board. Commissioner Dobbins has done the background organization on this. There was a discussion about other arrangements, advertising and the expenses involved. The committee will meet following the police approval.

### **c) Cost Savings Initiative**

President Pestillo reported on his meeting with Superintendent West, Assistant Superintendent Fred Rogers to review budget expenses. The goal was to review each item on the budget. Do we need it? Can we get the exact same result with a less expensive option? Figures reveal that, based on real revenue, there will be a shortfall of \$185,000 from what was previously projected. Revenue is off considerably from last year, largely due to decreased consumption. There are few variable costs. Superintendent West offered that a savings of \$6000 - \$8000 will be realized now that we have reduced the scope of our contract with Dick Moffitt. With a change in provider for computer support a savings is anticipated. The expense of Ferguson Group will be considered and renegotiated. Costs were discussed at some length regarding opportunities for savings.

The storage space upstairs in the Water Department building was discussed. The town is not interested in using the space, because they feel that it should be finished and that would be at the town's expense.

President Pestillo asked for a spread sheet outlining expenses so that it could be reviewed easily. Superintendent Thomas West will take care of this.

The auditor will be at the Water Department next month and after that the expense figures for last year and therefore projections will be more clear.

Commissioner Murphy asked about freezing some expenses. Superintendent West answered that he had identified about \$80,000 that he felt could be at least temporarily frozen. He recommends that purchase of a truck, which was considered, continue to be frozen for this year. A Parco Valve at well #7 was planned but there is a different way to solve that problem and that can be frozen, there are some projects scheduled to be done staff around town and some of that work can be put off. Well #3 loop work that was on the agenda, to increase contact time, can probably be abandoned because the state law requiring that it be done will likely be changed. th

Commissioner Murphy questioned overtime expense. Superintendent West and Assistant Superintendent Rogers reported that more flushing during working hours is planned for the spring to save on overtime. A similar flushing plan in the fall proved to be successful with \$6000 saved. Staff has been used more often to repair leaks, saving on contractor's fees. It was necessary to hire an outside contractor for the leak at a hydrant on Aircraft Rd. Leaks have been less, but this is a variable expense and impossible to predict.

Communications services expense was discussed at some length. Services have been bundled a few years ago. Staff cell phones and the need for pagers was discussed. There is a Verizon lease that will be up for renegotiation in a few years. There are two T-mobile stations. Superintendent West will review the use of cell phones and pagers and eliminate those that are not needed.

Investment funds were discussed. There will be an attempt to ladder accounts in order to earn more interest. It is suggested that the Board shop this investment money with the banks to see if interest could be increased.

#### 4. FINANCIAL MATTERS

##### **a) Review of Water Billings & Outstanding Jobbing Bills & Approved Invoices**

Cash statement for the month shows a negative balance. Some bills will be held for incoming funds but the bond payment will be mailed tomorrow. Bills for usage have been sent out recently but collections are fairly flat, where an increase had been projected. Payments are trickling in. It is anticipated that the Board will be about \$100,000 short of projected funds, predominantly due to decreased usage.

There are 3 new outstanding jobbing bills. Two are RPD tests that were done on Little League fields. The meters are out and will not be replaced until the work is paid for. The other was work done at another site. A lien warning has been issued.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the Superintendent about arrears accounts receivable. He wonders if there are any large users involved and suggests more aggressive collections on these bills. Superintendent West will check with the attorney to see what can be done and what the billing software will allow. There was \$5000 in arrears accounts for the first quarter and the numbers are not yet tallied for the second quarter.

Assistant Superintendent Rogers reported that a new repair service has been used lately. He came highly recommended and the service has exemplary with the fee very fair, representing a savings. Response time and availability are excellent as well.

Invoices for cleaning of the carpet were explained by Superintendent West and Commissioner Semmel asked about the winter lawn mowing invoice. Actually it is a bill submitted late.

Commissioner Berkmoes made a motion to approve payment for all presented invoices. This was seconded by Commissioner Murphy and the motion carried on a voice vote.

## 5. NEW BUSINESS

### a) Level A Mapping of Aquifer Protection Zones

Superintendent West presented the completed map of the Aquifer Protection Zones for Southington and explained them in great detail. The map must be submitted to the DEP. He noted that some of Cheshire is included, the area that is supplied by Southington Water Company. Plainville is included on the north where Valley Water Co. has a well nearby.

This mapping is state mandated and it has cost Southington Water close to \$90,000 since the beginning of this project in the 90's. Superintendent West explained in great detail what the maps reveal and what the rationale of their detail is and how the information is arrived at. The maps are a three-dimensional view of the topography of areas around the wellheads. He explained how the information was obtained at the sites. The object is to control contaminants that may seep into the water from areas of contribution to the wells, or the aquifer protection area.

Planning and Zoning is charged with regulating potential pollution from businesses in the area. Residents are exempt from this regulation, as is agriculture. The goal is to control and eliminate pollution by chemical storage, pesticides, gas, oil and dangerous solvents of the soil, of the wells. Questions from the Board were answered by Superintendent West.

This has been a huge undertaking, but Southington Water Company's responsibility to produce these maps is done.

Commissioner Semmel suggested that the maps be added to the GIS.

Planning and Zoning has the regulations approved and in place for the enforcement of local Aquifer Protection Zones. Southington Water Co. is responsible to work with town officials to enforce the regulations because more than 10,000 people are served. Areas of town involved were discussed.

Commissioner Murphy notes that the Fire Marshall has a list of business that use hazardous waste which could be useful.

There was some discussion about charging for duplication of the maps.

The maps will be sent to the DEP very soon. It must be adopted by the State. There is no difficulty anticipated.

### b) 2007-2008 Audit

A copy of the audit is handed out to each Board member. A discussion of this will take place at the February meeting so that members will have ample time to review it before discussion.

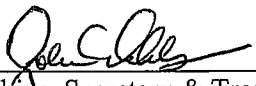
Commissioner Erik Semmel made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 7:37 p.m. This was seconded by Commissioner Robert Berkmoes. The Motions passed unanimously.

The Board exited Executive Session at 9:01pm.

Commissioner Semmel Made a motion to Adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Dobbins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.

Attest:

  
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John C. Dobbins, Secretary & Treasurer