

**WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT
WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2023**

1. Call Meeting to order

Chairman James Sugden called the Regular Meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

2. Roll Call

Members present: Keith Franson, Ed Wilk, Joe Masi, Mario Mancini, Mike Garassino, Marisa Mancini-Cavallo, James Sugden

Others present: Jerry Lukowski, Mark A. Raimo

3. Public Participation

Mr. Sugden: Not seeing anybody here from the public this evening, we'll continue on with Item #4.

4. Election of Officers

Mr. Lukowski: Nominations are to be from the floor. Nominations are in order for the Office of Chairman.

A motion was made by Joe Masi to nominate and reelect James Sugden as Chairman of the Water and Sewer Authority. The motion was seconded by Keith Franson. All in favor. Motion passes.

Mr. Lukowski: Any nominations for the Vice Chairman?

Mr. Sugden: Nominations for the Vice Chairman, Ed Wilk. Any other nominations for Vice Chairman? Going once, going twice.

A motion was made by Ed Wilk to be nominated for Vice Chairman. The motion was seconded by Keith Franson. All in favor. Motion passes.

Mr. Sugden: We have Secretary, I'll open up nominations for Secretary.

Mr. Garassino: We'll keep it the same. I nominate Keith.

A motion was made by Mike Garassino to nominate and reelect Keith Franson for Secretary. The motion was seconded by Ed Wilk. All in favor. Motion passes.

Mr. Sugden: I believe that concludes our election of officers this evening. Moving along, item #5.

5. Unfinished Business – None

Mr. Sugden: Unfinished business, we have none.

6. New Business

a. Proposed Water and Sewer Authority FYE 2023-2024 Budget.

Mr. Sugden: We've got a budget schedule here. Open that up for discussion.

A motion was made by Keith Franson to accept the 2023-2023 Budget schedule as presented. The motion was seconded by Joe Masi. All in favor. Motion passes.

b. Election of Officers

Mr. Sugden: We completed that under item #4, so that's redundant. Moving along to item #7.

7. Water and Sewer Authority Employee Analysis

Mr. Sugden: I'll turn it over to Mark Raimo and Jerry Lukowski at this time to talk about those things.

Mr. Raimo: So basically, I've been to the Union already to discuss the changes as we talked about at our last meeting. We have a tentative agreement we're entering into a memo of understanding between the town and the union. Specifically, more for the rearranging of the office. We're looking at training for staff so we can get better controls inside the office and better transparency, better communication with the town hall. We've done that. I would like to apologize, I tried to get the job description done for the Assistant Superintendent/Engineer. I just couldn't get it completed to get to the council this past Monday. We'll have it completed by the next town council meeting and then we will get that out for advertisement so we can continue. I did advise the town council of our discussions and that this is not a permanent fix but yet we're going to look at this maybe over a one-year period. And then we would reevaluate together to best move forward with the right organization structure. Jerry and I discussed a compensation and we came up to a reasonable number and, do you mind me mentioning, just to be up front and transparent, we settled on \$1000 per month for the few months while he's

working with Vinny, he would put in some comp time and after three months or so we were going to phase it out and he would just be compensated in the \$1000 a month with general oversight. Then at the end of the year we reevaluate, we could then look at the whole picture and see where we're at and ensure that its working or not working and what we need to do to move forward from there.

Mr. Garassino: That's the compensation for Vinny?

Mr. Masi: It would have to be. You bring Vinny in for any consulting –

Mr. Raimo: There is enough money in the line item to cover whatever we would do for Vinny.

Mr. Wilk: What was the \$1000 referred to?

Mr. Raimo: It would be a stipend for Jerry to cover the oversight as we transition through this. Anything that Vinny would come in would come from his same line item and we would pay out of that. There's enough money in the line item to cover both.

Mr. Wilk: I wasn't sure if it was for Gerald or Vinny's compensation. The way you said it.

Mr. Lukowski: Vinny did put a time sheet in for this week. For his current rate that he gets paid. I know we did Saturdays together for the transition. And he also worked on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of this previous week. He starts next week for Waterbury. So it'll be less during the week, and we kind of figured out and I put into my calendar, every other Saturday for a few months for the transition.

Mr. Raimo: Vinny did a great job at running the Water and Sewer Authority. But he was definitely old school so we see a lot of ways to improve efficiency and just ways he wasn't doing it. That is not a critique, he's done a great job of running this. I just think there's places we can improve for efficiency purposes and we'll explore that as we move on. Bring in some training and hopefully we elevate it and hopefully make it a little easier for everyone.

Mr. Garassino: Are you elevating Mike and –

Mr. Raimo: Mike is where he's at. There will be some overtime because obviously he's doing extra work. And it was Michele that we were looking at. So that was the part where I discussed entering into a MOU, white collar union. Because basically what happens is we're trading off positions. We're taking an employee out of the white collar union and we would have to be adding into the supervisors union and none of the unions like to lose membership. So, we had a few items that were going on, a little bit of trading back and forth and we were able to get an

agreement with the unions. I don't want to move too fast; I want to make an evaluation on how we move forward but we're going to move as quick as we can.

Mr. Masi: You need the right qualifications for the top two jobs. You can't just move somebody up into one of those two top spots because they gotta be degreed. They've got to have licenses.

Mr. Garassino: Talking about Michele, could she move up as a manager?

Mr. Raimo: There's some training that just became available through the CCMC which will give her qualifications such as the tax collector has which would be great on the collections side for her. She'll get a better understanding of the statutes for collections. She does have some background from the private sector where she ran a business with a family member, she has that background. During budget presentation we talked about actually working with the union, understanding the contract and CCMO which is a Connecticut Certified Municipal Officer. There's training that's involved with management so those are things that we can offer to her that is no cost to the town. Actually, I think it's a \$100 cost to have somebody sign up. So, we're gonna look at all of this and we do want to make sure that she fits in and she's willing to do the job. So, we have to put a process in place.

Mr. Garassino: Jerry, are you doing the day to day up there? How's the office? How's the Watertown Water and Sewer Authority running right now?

Mr. Lukowski: I do talk to them every day. I get out there at least every other day. Every other Saturday at the facility with Vinny, going through it. Two Saturdays ago, spent a lot of time on projects, the budget. And also, to me the SCADA system, which is the computerized system that runs everything within the town. Also, I've gotten out to the different meter stations. Mattoon Rd. And also, Unico which we've taken from the Fire District. And like a few of the things I've noticed especially at Mattoon Rd, its usually not that fluent that you would normally see, its kinda clean, so there's a lot of infiltration within the system and you can see it within the billing that we take about .9 mgd a day in for water and we push out 3 million gallons for sewage. There's 2 million gallons that's being infiltrated into the system. We've had five water main breaks.

Mr. Masi: I know Jerry, we had a big program in the 70's combating the infiltration. I don't know what the program is consistent in in terms of infiltration in the last bunch of years.

Mr. Sugden: Vinny's been doing inspections.

Mr. Lukowski: The one thing I noticed in that one budget line item, there's only \$5,000 a year to actually do anything or do any inspections which I think is low because we pay about \$3-5,000 a day in effluent that goes into Waterbury.

(The Board discusses Mattoon Rd. sewer pump station and possible solutions for the effluent)

Mr. Raimo: We have some businesses that are interested in coming to town and some that may need significant water and sewage usage, we're at max in our agreement for sewage disposal. If we could get some of that back, we have some opportunity for growth. A lot of this is preliminary but we are in discussions with quite a few businesses that would like to come to town and we're gonna need the water and sewage volume.

Mr. Lukowski: That's a good point. From what I understand, I love to hear history that's here at the Board, there's probably about 150 years of combined history, is what's the max for water and sewer? From hearing it at the closed-door session last meeting, to me my takeaway was three million gallons a day for water and three million gallons a day for sewage that we paid into the capital for both.

Mr. Masi: Frank did seem to indicate we were a little light on the sewage when he was talking and I was not aware of that. I thought we were covered for both ways, a matter of fact, a little bit over.

Mr. Lukowski: Light on the opposite side of light, its like kind of at the max, just below the max, or above the max for sewage. Which kind of hurts us for development in the town to get taxes into the town. And back to the part where I'd like to try to attack the infiltration.

Mr. Sugden: Sounds like we need to be a little more aggressive on our pipe lining.

Mr. Lukowski: This is a question I'll have to ask Vinny on Saturday, is have we done any pipe lining.

Mr. Wilk: I think we have.

Mr. Sugden: We have. I don't think we've done a whole lot but I know we have.

Mr. Lukowski: From what I understand with the tile, the clay, the pipe, the section that you put in, at times they would lay it loose in order to let storm water in, to let everything move within the system.

Mr. Masi: Early on when the price, there was a tremendous surge in pipe laying in the late 50's. Before that, the system was very small, the guys come back from the service with some knowledge, they get on the boards, they start to recognize what the problems were and they spread out the system for a while there they had trenches open all over Oakville. Two or three different contractors laying lines, all tile, in those days. Before that there wasn't a lot of pipe in the ground, a very small situation.

Mr. Wilk: I haven't found any that were loose. It was all cemented, tar.

(The board converses over times that pipe was put in town and the material to use to lay the pipe and options to line the pipes to increase capacity and stay within budget.)

Mr. Raimo: Just to put this into context, we're trying to get some feedback from you, because to be honest with you, we're going through Vinny's budget and I started to become frustrated because I'm like what's going on here? And then you think about it, it's very difficult to pick up somebody else's budget, figure out what they were doing. So we do have a lot of questions we have to ask Vinny but its very helpful to have some input from you so we have a direction on how to continue to move forward over the next year. Your input is valuable and we want to fulfill the mission.

Mr. Sugden: I'm definitely in favor of maintenance, whether it's inspection and lining, that's stuff that's definitely important.

Mr. Masi: If we're that close, we want to attract industry on that hill, we've got to do it, we've just got to bite the bullet. I just think that what we need is to get a good idea of what's reasonable and acceptable in terms of a yearly project. It should be something we do, perhaps, continuously every year.

Mr. Sugden: It needs to be every year. We need to put that sum of money and keep with it, we can't let it get behind because once you get behind then you're just playing catch up.

Mr. Lukowski: That'll be one of the things Vinny and I discuss this coming Saturday. I know we probably have a dozen studies in books that are on the shelves and file cabinets and they all point at a few different areas and probably back in the time it was too much money to do this. Out of seventy miles, maybe we don't do all seventy miles. But maybe there's five to ten miles that we have to line to gain the capacity within the system. And spend some funding that we have. It's kind of hard for me to say that \$5000 line item should be \$50,000 or \$150,000 at this time but maybe for the next meeting I might know a little bit more from talking to Vinny.

Mr. Masi: We could adjust the budget accordingly. Being the fact that were self-liquidating, were not hurting the general budget. As long as we cover the costs within our revenues.

8. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Lukowski: I don't know if you want me to transition into the Superintendent's Report, this is all kind of the same thing we're talking about. The good thing about me, is I don't know the history, and the bad thing about me is, I don't know the history. So, I don't know which minefield, I don't have one in there, I want to see exactly what Vinny would put into it for that. But I just have a few bullet comments to talk about. The first one is a video or CCTV. Not necessarily in the pipes but just at our pump stations and water towers. It's more along the side of, excuse me if I use some military terms, but for force protection of our critical infrastructure. You can see what's going on out west, they're shooting up a lot of electrical infrastructure and they're damaging it and unfortunately, they're doing that. We don't have that in this budget but we should probably have three or four cameras at each of our critical infrastructure points, our water towers and our pumps, our meter stations to make sure nobody is messing around. Unfortunately, you catch it after the fact, yeah, we have them on video. Usually what would happen, someone would show up a few days before to see if there's any security. A lot of times you go there, oh there's a camera, I can't really mess around. I know when I would go into the local bars, they would have no cameras, but now you go in any local bars and there's cameras everywhere so you gotta act civil when you go into the local bars. So, the same thing when going into a pump station or water tower, you don't know if that camera's being actively monitored. But just capturing that information to see what's going on to protect the infrastructure. I don't think it's a high cost. It's probably a low six figures to put cameras in all of our systems so that they could be monitored and taped and maybe the motion sensor, they can sense someone at the water tower at 2am. *(Mr. Masi: That could be phased in too right?)* Correct.

Mr. Franson: And also, it would help the safety of the employees. A lot of times they're at these locations at night on their own.

Mr. Lukowski: Correct. And if one of them gets hurt, then they fall down and slip on ice. Best thing during a water main break, the water's still warm and everything's flowing but as soon as you shut it down, everything ices up. The other thing within the budget that we looked at is, I know we talk in Water and Sewer, it's \$30,000 and \$30,000 for legal fees. During the budget brief we're looking at \$40,000 and \$40,000. Or \$80,000. Especially what we have going on with Waterbury at this time. *(Mr. Franson: Should we bump it up to \$50,000 and \$50,000?)* Or, 50 and 50 for another item. And I would hate that because at the MDC I saw that the legal fees were more than the Engineering fees and then I said I should have been a lawyer instead of an Engineer because they're spending more money on the legal side. But this time we have to protect ourselves with what's going on with Waterbury.

Mr. Masi: And if you have a situation where you have a short fall at the end, you can transfer funds.

Mr. Raimo: Same thing for the opposite, if you have excess it just goes right back into your fund.

Mr. Lukowski: Not in any particular order, I'll talk to Vinny about the Superintendents report, Westgate, which is the community just off the western part of town, the other side of the Fire District, normally we've been averaging 2.2-2.5 million gallons for that system. Last year we did 4.6 million gallons. I'm talking to Mike, who I think is great, they're thinking it's that they did a lot of flushing in the system, and there's a lot of air in the system that we got complaints from residents but I also said if we can have an air scoop to take the air out of the system instead of flushing the system because you create more air into the system as you're flushing the system.

Mr. Masi: That whole area, Westgate, and Winding Brook, that's all relatively new? So, it's not an old system.

Mr. Lukowski: You're right, there's about fifteen years' worth of information within the budget and you can see every so often there's 4 million gallons to flow and the next two to three it's like 2-2.5 million gallons and then there's 4 million gallons of flow. At the high point, that's where you wanna put the air scoop to get the air out of the system. That's one part of the system I haven't been to. It's more of a meter pit in order to service that part of the Water and Sewer.

Mr. Garassino: Is there two sewer pump stations there too?

Mr. Masi: There's a lower one, down the bottom of the hill.

Mr. Lukowski: On the SCADA system, I touched on it. But I think there's security upgrades that is needed. There might be older Microsoft systems that we're running off of on the SCADA but also just the point where I see the SCADA is always on and anybody can really go up to it within the office. And I want to make sure there's protocols that you have to enter into the system. It's on a smaller screen, I want to get a bigger screen in the office so anybody could see it if there's an issue within the office. Also, I know I'm not an expert in everything but the cyber security side of it, that no one can get into the SCADA system from the outside. Talking with Vinny, one of the things I'm worried about is the redundancy of the system. We just have the 36" main which is primary where we get all of our water flow, except portions of it, we get from the well fields in Woodbury, from the Fire District. I said to Vinny if the 36" main goes down, how would we be able to continue on with operations? In the budget you'll see there's an \$80,000 pump that we

would take a lot more water from the Fire District during that time period and we would have to use the pump to pump one water tank up and the next day go to the other water tank and take it from the Fire District, from those well fields that we have.

Mr. Masi: You realize that well field system they got is an antique? We did a study, the Water and Sewer Authority went out and viewed that whole thing years ago because we were very concerned about the fact that we needed to look at a backup. They got all the water coming down from their reservoir behind the fair, coming down the brook. They charge the gravel pit and then they pull from the gravel pit. So, if you're talking about a big need for water, you're not gonna get a big need fast.

Mr. Lukowski: I understand that part. I'd like to find that study. Because you're right. We're not gonna be able to take care of all of the water and sewer for Oakville and part of Watertown that we have but just to get us by for a few days until they repair the 36" main.

(The board, Mark Raimo and Jerry Lukowski discuss putting in a pump station on Frost Bridge Rd near the bus depot to pump water back up the hill to the Naugatuck Greenway where there is a low level of water, as a backup.)

Mr. Lukowski: There's a few more. I have access to the purchase orders and the invoices through the town system. Water and Sewer uses it to cut the purchase order and to do the invoice. Jennifer's gonna meet with me on Friday morning so I could approve the invoices that we have in the system. I really want to go a little bit slow on this, is paying the bills for Waterbury. I know the old rate, not this crazy future rate that they have. That's why I want to sit with her, but she's also new, about four or five months into the job and so in order to keep the business going and paying individuals that have been doing work for us. There's also something I always hear the staff talking about is the billing software, Neptune. We're looking at getting upgrades. I know that's in the budget to start that. On the pump system for both water and sewer, I'm scheduling with Mike to go hit all the pump stations that we have in the system but also, I think we should get an energy consultant out there to look. Tell me if there's a study that's been done. Jen Muir does a lot of studies throughout the state with her company, not that I want to go with her, but you can put a VFD on the pumps to pump slower when you don't need it in order to conserve energy. That would be something, not in this budget, but the future budgets that we have. And the other thing that we noticed too is on the over time, there's \$14,000 in the budget. In that time, I think we spent about 500 hours out in the field to date. It's around \$43,000. So I don't know what the historical side, with the small crew that we have of four individuals out in the field, when the break goes on, we want to shut it off into our system and we usually have a contractor to repair the water main breaks. Out of the five that we had over the past ten days, I would say two and a half are on the customers side where they have to do the repair but we get the call because there's water flooding someone yard or onto the

street to do that. That kind of covers what you would call the Superintendents report. I'll look at the last meeting. Does Vinny normally provide a one sheet with bullet comments? That's what I would have had so at least you could get some thoughts going before. I'll lean on the ladies in the office to walk me through that because I still have Highways, Engineering, Transfer Station within the town and there's a lot of great projects that are coming out over the next six months.

Mr. Sugden: That concludes item #8, Superintendent's Report.

9. **Minutes**

Mr. Franson: We have none. They're being transcribed.

10. **Correspondence/Information**

Mr. Sugden: We have none.

11. **Fund Transfers/Appropriations**

Mr. Sugden: We have none.

Mr. Lukowski: Just on the Fund Transfers and Appropriations, from what I understand, if I have to do a transfer, I have to come to Water and Sewer first? And then Town Council second?

Mr. Sugden: Yes.

Mr. Lukowski: This is something I haven't talked to Vinny about but talking to the ladies I just want to make sure I push that down to them too, we need two approvals from Town Council and the Board.

Mr. Masi: Yes, it has to get past us first.

Mr. Wilk: I just had a quick question, going back to the infiltration of our discharge. We discharge 3 million gallons to Waterbury and we only take in 1 million but does that take into consideration how much Watertown Fire District puts in?

Mr. Lukowski: That's correct. From what I understand from the Unico station, is 1/3 of our flow comes from the Fire District. And the other 2/3 come from us that add up to those 3 million gallons.

Mr. Wilk: So, where you are taking a million gallons from Waterbury, but they're also using how many gallons?

Mr. Lukowski: That's part of the equation that I want to ask. Did the Fire District also pay for the sewage treatment plant for their capital improvements?

Mr. Masi: I don't think so. Those plants were fixed way before the DEP forced Watertown Fire District hookup sewage in our system.

Mr. Lukowski: If they did, it could help us out with capacity, within their historical documents. Because then maybe if they bought into a million, we bought into three, it gives us four million to go through Mattoon.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Sugden: Anything else before we adjourn?

A motion was made by Keith Franson to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 P.M. The motion was seconded by Joe Masi. All in favor. Motion passes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Keith Franson, Secretary
Water and Sewer Authority

Approved: _____

