



Stamford Water Pollution Control Authority Board Meeting
Wednesday, December 4, 2013 – 5:30 PM
Stamford Government Center
4th Floor Board of Finance Conference Room
888 Washington Blvd, Stamford, CT
Full Meeting Minutes
(The meeting was videotaped.)

Attendees

Ernie Orgera	Chairman, WPCA Board
Michael Handler	WPCA Board Member
Tim Abbazia (absent)	WPCA Board Member
Cristina Andreana	WPCA Board Member
Daniel Capano	WPCA Board Member
Donald Huppert	WPCA Board Member
Mitchell Kaufman (absent)	WPCA Board Member
Dan Schwartz	WPCA Board Member
William Brink	Executive Director, WPCA
Rhudean Bull	Administration Manager, WPCA
Prakash Chakravarti	Supervising Engineer, WPCA
William Degnan (absent)	Plant Supervisor, WPCA
Stephen Pietrzyk	Regulatory Compliance Officer, WPCA
Marie Sabo	Laboratory Director, WPCA
Mark Turndahl	Accountant, WPCA
David Yanik	Controller, COS
Daniel McCabe	WPCA Legal Counsel
William Ward	WPCA Legal Counsel
Lynda Roca	CompUtil
Jonathan Gottlieb	Rippowam Corporation

Call to Order, Pledge and Roll Call

E. Orgera called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call. A quorum was present (5 Board Members). D. Capano joined via phone at 5:37 PM.

Public Participation

E. Orgera acknowledged that several members from the public signed in and wanted to speak. R. Bull stated that Ms. Dorothy Jatzen was first on the list to speak. Ms. Jatzen requested that their participation be postponed until the agenda item is discussed, as they are awaiting another member with pertinent information. The Board agreed. D. Huppert made a motion to take the agenda topics out of order; seconded by C. Andreana. There was no discussion. **Vote: 5-0-0.**

Minutes Approval

D. Huppert motioned to approve the November 6, 2013 SWPCA full Board meeting minutes; seconded by C. Andreana. There was no discussion. **Vote: 5-0-0.**

Billing Update

a. Receivables & Arrears

CompUtil monthly report handed out. L. Roca reported on the total work order for the month of November – 1,178; stated that the reminder letters—approximately 4,800—are ready to go out for those accounts \geq \$5.00; She also reported that the collection rate is at 78.33% for Oct bills and the collection rate is at 96-97% for older bills. She went on to say that they collected \$5.5M last month alone and over 19,500 bills were sent out in the month of October.

B. Brink briefly updated the Board on an Official Payments meeting that was held earlier via teleconference call. He reported that the hopes of getting credit card payment in place for the October billing didn't happened, as some things were lagging, communication failures are occurred (O.P. to CompUtil) with exporting of files. He stated that a test file from Computil will be provided on Friday, December 6, 2013 and that the goal is to be operable in two weeks and/or end of month. He reported that processing of payments for Sewer Assessments & Connection will be available as well and that Official Payments has done similar type work with the Tax Department.

b. October 2013 Cycle Billing Collection To Date

M. Turndahl reported that \$10,782,540 was billed with the October cycle billing; of the amount billed \$7,596,388 or 70.45% collected to date. He discussed the Aging A/R by fiscal year billed, as well as the billing collection rates and arrears.

c. Audit Update

M. Turndahl stated the audit work is completed but the Financial Statements are not. The Management Statement is being review by O'Conner & Davies. Note: Period 4 – because of the rate increase income for SWPCA \downarrow \$1.1M year over year, there will be a new reserve of \$425K for bad debt.

d. November Accounts Receivable

M. Turndahl reported on the November receivable balance as of 11/30/13--\$5,357,271; principal only to be \$5,305,486; account balances over 120 days that is past due: \$3,092,069.

e. A&W Collections Report & Update

Bill Ward reported that as of 12/4/13, 1125 accounts have been referred to A &W to date; Ackerly & Ward anticipates an additional 50 accounts to be referred this month. A&W continues to experience a large uptake in payments, taking in approximately \$2.4 million since January 1, 2013 and \$60,301.86 for the month of November. He reported that there were 103 foreclosures started, 47 are paid in full, 23 in payment plans, 5 stayed due to bankruptcy filings and 28 active foreclosures.

f. R. Bull discussed the complaint received via the BOR Ops Committee of a customer paying \$600 in legal fees for a \$500 bill. She asked Atty Ward to explain A&W's account charges.

W. Ward explain that the original demand on this particular acct was \$231.57, saying that \$275-350/hr is the normal billing rate, yet the charge for SWPCA customers is \$225/hr. He went to say that this customer refused to pay his bill even after he'd been contacted by A&W and that the charges are a result of several attempts to retrieve the outstanding amount. He mentioned that had the customer responded to the first demand letter from A&W, he would have been charged the \$225 fee. He reminded that Board that A&W does not get involved until customers ignore bills, reminder letters, etc. He explained that people even sometimes try to avoid the legal fees by paying through the lock box, which is a problem. R. Bull reported that the SWPCA has addressed this problem by placing the neglected charge on the bill and resending to those customers for payment.

Discussion: Stright Sewage Disposal Company, Inc.

The Stright Sewage Disposal Company, a septage hauler, was issued a Notice of Violation on April 16, 2013 for discharge of septage and fats oils and grease into the sanitary sewer lateral serving the business and residence at 84 Knickerbocker Avenue. In 1994 Stright built a commercial garage large enough to accommodate their septage

hauling trucks and installed an 8-inch diameter pipe through the garage floor, creating an open drain, connected to the adjoining home's private sanitary sewer lateral which connects to the WPCA's sanitary sewer line in the street. Neighbors have reported to the SWPCA that they routinely observe septage hauling trucks drive into the garage; the overhead doors close, and then they smell strong septic sewer odors throughout the neighborhood and inside homes following these activities. They believe that Stright has been routinely emptying their septage trucks into the floor drain inside the garage.

The SWPCA has investigated these complaints and was able to confirm that Stright has indeed been illegally discharging septage at 84 Knickerbocker Avenue which violates City ordinances. Besides the impact of odors on the neighbors, the septage contains solids, fats oils and grease, rocks and stones which clog the sewer. One resident experienced a sewer back-up into their basement which was attributed to the septage blocking the sanitary sewer. By discharging septage at their business location, Stright has also avoided paying for septage disposal at a proper septage disposal facility, at either the Stamford WPCF or other permitted wastewater treatment facility.

The Notice of Violation requires Stright to cease discharging septage at their business location, and to permanently seal the floor drain. Stright has done neither, and as a result, is being fined \$90 a day. These fines have not been paid, and to date total \$19,350. Stright has also been banned from discharging septage at the Stamford WPCF until they pay the fines and seal the floor drain.

The Board is being asked to consider legal action against Stright, which will be discussed in executive session.

A few of the neighbors attended the meeting to speak on this issue.

M. Handler asked about involvement with CTDEEP & SPD; B. Brink responded that CTDEEP & SPD have looked into this matter and are considering taking action from their ends. E. Orgera asked if they are discharging elsewhere to which B. Brink replied that since Stright has been banned from discharging at the Stamford WPCA they are now discharging in Norwalk. S. Pietrzyk stated that he has had on-going dialog with the City of Norwalk and they do not allow out of town discharging, therefore, Stright is in violation of their policy/rules. He went on to say that Stright is not registered with Greenwich or any other WWTF in CT and that this issue is longstanding. C. Andreana asked if Stright has responded to any of the SWPCA correspondence to which B. Brink stated, yes; we send all correspondence via Certified Mail but Stright denies the situation altogether.

C. Andreana made a motion to take the Public Participation agenda item out of order; seconded by D. Huppert. There was no discussion. **Vote: 5-0-0.**

Public Participation

There were five (5) members of the Public present. Dorothy Jatzen, Jennifer McKeon, Bobby Johnson and Phyllis Pugliesi of Knickerbocker Avenue read off statements regarding Stright's discharges into the sanitary sewer lateral serving the business and residential area of Knickerbocker Avenue.

Johnathan Gottlieb was present from Charter Oaks Communities.

Note: At 6:19 PM, S. Pietrzyk exited the Board meeting.

Discussion & Vote of New Officers

E. Orgera reported he would be staying in his position presently however, his appointment is not yet permanent and therefore, it would be proper to select new officers at this time. D. Huppert made a motion to nominate M. Handler. E. Orgera seconded the motion. There was discussion to hold until D. Capano arrived. No vote taken.

Safety Report

M. Sabo, reported that there was not a site safety team meeting in November and that the December meeting is scheduled for the coming week. She stated that at the employee safety training held on November 19th the safety topic was eye safety and proper eye PPE, as the SWPCA's eye injuries totaled 21% in the last year and a half. She reported on the FY13/14 incidents stats to date; that new hire safety orientation was conducted on 11/4 for a Synagro employee; that slow progress on improvements in the arc

flash safety program and that staff is awaiting an example template for plant documents. She concluded the report listing items currently being addressed, as well as the upcoming issues of cold weather.

Sub-Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee

C. Andreana stated that she invited the auditors to the Nov. 20, 2013 meeting and that D. Yanik conferenced in. She stated that the meeting consisted of going through the SWPCA's Financial Statements. Since then they have provided a DRAFT report for the Board's review. There were a few questions for the auditors but all in all the meeting was a success and no surprises; the audit was the only agenda topic discussed.

M. Handler made a motion to hold the Technical Committee report until D. Capano arrived; seconded by D. Huppert. There was no discussion. **Vote: 5-0-0.**

Discussion and Vote: Stamford Housing Authority Request Regarding Connection Fee Adjustment

This discussion was placed on hold at last month's meeting, as D. McCabe needed to meet with the Housing Authority to discuss, individually, the many variables listed below prior to offering an opinion.

- demolition of older developments and building new developments at other locations
- transfer of bathroom credits from old property to new property
- change the current way of assessing a unit: defined by number of bedrooms not bathrooms, which according to the HA, seems a more accurate way to reflect actual usage and net demand
- Board's concern of setting precedent

D. McCabe started the lengthy discussion explaining that the Stamford Housing Authority was charged a very large connection fee which they did not receive until after the development was completed. The Housing Authority met with P. Chakravarti and requested there be a change in policy. D. McCabe stated that there was \$200-300K in fees that were never paid on the original property, to which J. Gottlieb stated that the bills were possibly bounced around before getting to them; they realize that this is no excuse and they accept responsibility. He reported that E. Orgera and R. Bull met with J. Gottlieb and their lawyer in July to listen to their proposal of working towards a resolution that will reflect actual demand and the transfer of credits from the demolished properties to the new properties in a different location.

D. Huppert stated that there is a problem with demolishing Vidal Court, as a portion of said property was given to Stamford Hospital and credit goes with property, not the owner; that Stamford Hospital will be looking for their portion of the credit. J. Gottlieb stated that in this case, Stamford Hospital has already developed the portion, as they built a parking lot and that if there is an issue, they [Housing Authority] will seek statement from Stamford Hospital saying they would waive claim to any future credit if they redevelop the site. D. Huppert expressed his concerns about setting precedent stating that extensive study of the situation is required, as he is hesitant to set a precedent and have another developer come in requesting other swaps in the future. He suggested taking a good look at the situation and take vote at next month's Board Meeting.

M. Handler suggested that the Finance Committee take this on, doing an analysis of past billing, etc. and discuss at the January meeting. J. Gottlieb would be invited back for decision. D. McCabe stated that J. Gottlieb was wonderful to work with.

Note: D. Capano arrived at 6:47 PM.

E. Orgera thanked J. Gottlieb for taking the time to come to discuss a resolution. E. Orgera asked for clarification on calculating charges for bedroom vs bathrooms. Many spoke at once, however, it was concluded that, although the method we currently use [calculating by bathroom units] may not be perfect, it is far better than calculating by bedroom and would cause tremendous problems to change. C. Andreana

stated the Finance Committee meeting will take on this issue, discussing with staff in detail the calculations for number of bathrooms vs. number of bedrooms. P. Chakravarti stated that at one of the previous Financial Committee meetings a discussion was planned to review a modification calculation, as, in his opinion, calculations based on square footage would be a better assessment of charges for properties. There was more discussion before the Chairman moved on to the next agenda item.

Sub-Committee Reports “cont’d

b. Technical Committee

D. Capano stated that at the Nov. 19, 2013 meeting Jeff Smart conducted a presentation for the smart manhole cover. He stated that for problem areas there will be a type of radio transmission—advanced warning before a spill occurs—that costs approx. \$1400 - \$1500 each. He went on to report on Plant odors saying that currently, things are in good shape and that he has not smelled any odor in weeks. He reported of doing a chemical addition by the Headworks building until the Oxidation-Reduction Potential (ORP) probes arrive. B. Brink added that the ORP will pace the chemical addition.

D. Capano reported that Wright Pierce came and took a look at Sludge Bldg. noting that there is one area with high H₂S which seems to be pressurized and pushing H₂S out causing odors on Harbor View. He stated this issue caused prior fire damper rusting—the dampers could not be opened—and repairs will be made by the Plant staff. He discussed the service contract for the Sludge Drying Facility briefly. B. Brink stated that with respect to odors, he does not smell anything at Plant.

D. Capano opened up the discussion on RFP#616 and B. Brink discussed the selection of Engineers regarding RFP#616, listing the names on the short list for the different Tasks. After some discussion, M. Handler asked B. Brink if he’d voted on the tasks with the selection committee. B. Brink replied that he had however, he did so last due to his past relationship with Wright Pierce. D. McCabe stated that B. Brink’s voting was appropriate. C. Andreana stated that it should be noted that B. Brink does not have a relationship with WR currently.

D. Capano discussed the pilot of Wi-Fi Proof of Concept Project, saying this will not cost the SWPCA a dime—at least not for the Pilot program—except possibly for installation. He said that if it did end up costing the SWPCA any funds, he would do the work himself. He explained that there would be two installation locations; the control room & multimedia room. There is no cost for the pilot program of his design. M. Handler asked what the cost is for installation for the access points he mentioned, to which he replied, ~\$1200, but that the entire Plant will need six (6) access points, doing away with communication problems. He mentioned that for the communication integration, the employees would be able to clock in and out at job sites. M. Handler asked the cost if we wanted to integrate the Pilot. D. Capano stated that this entire project would cost <\$10K to do a whole system and will save hundreds of thousands down the road; he didn’t want to expand further saying he would present a full proposal to the Board in February. C. Andreana briefly mentioned her concerns with security and/or hackers. D. Capano stated the system would be very difficult to hack into.

He report on the Capital Projects briefly mentioning that Carriage Drive project is about 40% complete, Perna Lane and Wedgemere are in design and Stantec has submitted a draft for Dyke Lane. He report briefly on an issue with the UV system lamps saying it had been straightened out. B. Brink expounded further to the Board’s satisfaction.

Discussion & Vote of New Officers “cont’d

D. Huppert stated that he would like to repeat that he nominated M. Handler as Chairman; this time, the motion was seconded by E. Orgera. Discussion portion of the agenda item held. M. Handler stated that it would be a privilege and a hard job to take over from E. Orgera; that when he first arrived to the City, he had no idea what the WPCA was and certainly had no concerns for being its chairman. However, he has since changed his opinion and would welcome serving as Chairman. He stated that E. Orgera chaired the Board doing one of its most difficult times and he would humbly take his place. R. Bull noted for the record that, in accordance with SWPCA Ordinance, the vote is to be conducted at the June meeting with changes effective at the July meeting. E.

Orgera commented that the reason for the vote now is that the Mayor has not yet designated a permanent Dir. of Operations and believes that the Board needs to have permanent Chairman. E. Orgera went on to say that as outgoing Chairman he was proud of the work of the Board and the Staff who handled the many problems and issues at the SWPCA and turned everything around, pointing it [WPCA] in the right direction. He stated that some beautiful hires were made; he mentioned B. Brink, said he is a great hire and thanked him for all he's done to date. He stated the Staff is fabulous; thanked R. Bull, saying she took the ship on her own for quite some time when there was no Executive Director for 18 months, mentioning there were many controversies, that the DEEP was involved as well as members of the community and the many City Boards and that we weathered it all. He mentioned that he was not leaving the Board immediately but feels there should be a new Chairman. He called for the vote. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

C. Andreana made a motion to nominate D. Capano as Vice-Chairman; seconded by D. Huppert. There was no discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Update: Darien Interlocal Agreement

B. Brink stated that the agreement was fully executed by all parties and went into effect December 2, 2013. Darien is current on payments, FY12 payments up to date as well as FY13. R. Bull reported that invoice /bill for FY14 has been completed and mailed out.

Executive Director's Top Issues Report

B. Brink presented a handout of the top issues and discussed each briefly. The report is attached as part of these minutes. M. Handler asked that Stright be added to the top ten issues and remove Darien Agreement.

D. Capano made a motion to take agenda item #s 13 & 14 out of order leaving item #15 for last; seconded by M. Handler. There was no discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Old Business

Regarding the *"Update on Establishing Policy to Implement Flat Rate (Residential Average or \$224.40) for Properties Located on Sewered Streets but Remaining on Septic"*, D. McCabe respectfully requested this item be continued next month, as his report is not complete.

Regarding the *"2013 Connection Charge Program Update"*, P. Chakravarti was to provide the final dollar amount for the program and D. McCabe was to report on letter submitted to SWPC from Whitman, Breed, Abbott & Morgan, LLC.

P. Chakravarti reported that the Board approved \$2,416,795.44 but that since then discussions were held with some property owners. He stated that of those discussions only one property—Marshall Commons on Ludlow Street—assessment was decreased by~ \$63,000; two old buildings demolition was the cause, an issue similar to that of the Housing Authority. He reported the other issue could be with the BLT's assessment saying that all total the reduction would be as high as \$244,339, the worst case scenario.

D. McCabe reported that he read and analyzed letter which centered on a Supreme Court Case regarding the Town of Ridgefield and the Housing Authority. He stated that the augment made via the letter does not apply to the issue at hand; he read from Attorney General Case saying that he believes we can distinguish ourselves from that case easily. He went to discuss the case concluding saying that he would respond to Counsel directly.

New Business

P. Chakravarti stated that BLT Property Group served the SWPCA this afternoon with papers to appear in court.

R. Bull provided the Board with a new Board Meeting Schedule stating that a vote to accept the schedule will be required at the January meeting.

Executive Session

At 7:34 PM, C. Andreana made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal strategy regarding notice of violation to Stright Sewage Disposal Company, Inc.; seconded by D. Capano. There was no discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

B. Brink provided notes for meeting’s end, as everyone else departed after the vote to enter Executive Session. For the following two votes, note that no time is provided.

M. Handler made a motion to exit Executive Session; D. Huppert seconded. There was no discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

M. Handler stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Adjournment

Afterwards, D. Huppert made a motion to adjourn the meeting; seconded by M. Handler. There was no discussion. **Vote: 6-0-0.**

Stamford WPCA Top Issues (12-4-13)

No.	Issue	Action Description	Impact	Status	Schedule
1	Odor Control	Place odor control scrubbers on line. Retain odor control consultant to evaluate odor control and provide guidance in optimizing operation of odor control scrubbers.	Minimize odors	All chemical odor control scrubbers are on line. Carbon scrubber for dryer RTO bypass on line with temporary ductwork. Odor control has improved dramatically.	Replacing louvers and dampers on odor control ductwork inside sludge dewatering building to improve air balance inside building. Work to be completed this winter.
2	Sludge Drying and disposal	New service contract for Sludge Dryer Operation and Beneficial Use of Dried Sludge	Operations	Executed 6 month contract extension (to 3/30/14) to allow for negotiation of new 5 year contract with selected vendor (Synagro).	Presented draft agreement to union on operation of dryer by Synagro (with non-union personnel). Will present draft agreement with Synagro to Technical Committee at its December meeting.
3	Internal Controls Over Financial	Address Auditor’s comments on internal	Financial	Preparing Management’s	Reviewing collection procedures for

	Reporting	control deficiencies.		Discussion and Analysis for FY 12-13 Audit	delinquent Sewer Assessment and Connection Charges. Implement procedures by 12/31/13.
4	Darien Agreement	Agreement expired 11/30/10. Execute new agreement	Financial	Agreement has been executed and Darien's payments are current.	
5	WPCF evaluations and improvements	Engineering evaluations required in response to USEPA Admin Order. Study, design, and construct WPCF improvements to replace aged equipment and increase operations and energy efficiency.	Regulatory and Operations	Selected Consulting Engineers to evaluate upgrade of Plant Headworks (Task 1) and Improved Flow Split to Final Clarifiers (Task 2)	Meeting with Engineers in to develop scope of work. Execute contracts with selected Consulting Engineers by end of January 2014.
6	Sewer Connection Charge	Review Sewer Connection Charge Rate per Sewer Unit	Financial	SWPCA Board has approved a proposed connection charge rate increase.	Schedule public hearing on proposed connection charge rate increase for SWPCA Board's January meeting.
7	Payments to City for Insurance	Review insurance coverage on future and past claims (Wallach's Point)	Financial		Schedule meeting with City Risk Manager in early December.
8	Personnel Safety	Implemented new hard hat policy. Wearing of hard hats required at all times except when in office areas, control rooms, plant laboratory, arriving and leaving plant site. Comply with requirements for arc flash protection.	Operations	New hard hat policy effective 9/1. Policy remains in place while being grieved by labor union. Perform arc flash assessments.	Met with labor union to resolve hard hat grievance. Retain a consultant to develop a compliance program for arc flash protection by 1/31/14
9	Stamford Housing Authority	Collect outstanding connection charges.	Financial	Referred to Dan McCabe	Dan McCabe to present update on his meeting with the Housing Authority at WPCA Board's December meeting.
10	Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS)	Implement CMMS for SWPCA operations (WPCF, collection sewers and pumping stations).	Operations	Implementing CMMS using ICOM3 for sewers and pump stations.	Select CMMS for WPCF by 12/31/13