

MEETING MINUTES
TOLLAND WATER COMMISSION
HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
Council Chambers – Sixth Floor
April 4, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.

Members Present: Eugene Koss; Richard Symonds, Jr.; Glenn MacDonald and Rene Wagner

Not in attendance: Andrew Netro and William Pakulis

Others present: Jennifer Usher, Town Engineer; Jack Keefe and Art O'Neill of Connecticut Water Company ("CWC") *exited meeting early*; Steve Amedy *exited meeting early*

1. **Call to Order** - Richard Symonds, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m.
2. **Changes to Agenda** - Changes in order as reflected below.
3. **Village at Crystal Springs – User Rates, Steve Amedy** - Mr. Amedy provided the Commission members handouts. He was present to discuss a rate hike at the Village at Crystal Springs. The annual water bill, per resident, averages \$241 at the Village. Currently, they have a \$54.39 shortfall per unit. He would like to bump the rate up \$54 - \$55 dollars a year. He is not sure how to go about doing that and requested the Water Commission's input. He also asked if there was 35% in the reserves. Mr. Symonds asked Mr. Amedy if he's compared his new rates to the Water Commission's new rates. Mr. Amedy said no, and that he believed his new rate would need to be higher. Assuming that they maintain the reserve, they will need a \$54/\$55 (22%) increase. Mr. MacDonald commented that he didn't believe having such a large increase all at once would be realistic for the customers. The Water Commission's recent increase was for 15%, and the CWC increased 12%. Mr. MacDonald said the Commission knew they couldn't get it all in one bite that is why they did a 15% increase. At some point, it will need to be reevaluated, and another increase may have to occur. Mr. Symonds suggested that Mr. Amedy take a look at the Commission's new rates. Mr. Amedy said that maybe he should do a 15% increase now and then follow up with a 7% increase later. Mr. MacDonald agreed that he go at it in two bites. Mr. Amedy said he would go for 15% now. Jennifer Usher and Steve Amedy will work out the rate together. Mr. Koss suggested paying detailed attention to what the cash flow is once the new rate kicks in to see if the outcome is as expected.
4. **Public Comment (2 minute limit): Joe McCartney of 127 Kate Lane** – He handed the Commission members pictures he took of water in his kitchen sink (dark, dirty water). He said the water is always darkish in color and that this has been an ongoing problem. Mr. MacDonald asked how long this has been happening. The customer responded by saying the past 2 – 3 years. He could understand it if it was during flushing's, but it's not. Jack Keefe, CWC, recommended digging up the tap and seeing where it is located on the water main. If it is down low, anything that settles will be drawn out. It is suspect, because Mr. McCartney is the only customer complaining in that area. Mr. McCartney said he has been adapting, but

now he needs to figure out what is happening. Mr. Keefe said it most likely is manganese, and would take a long time to get it out of the system. The customer said that if the Commission is willing to pay for a filter, they wouldn't need to dig up the road. Mr. Koss asked if the Commission wanted to incur the expense of digging up the street to see how the tap was installed. Mr. Symonds said he would like to hear the other reports of the CWC before making that decision. Mr. Symonds told the Customer that the Commission is seriously looking into this and other issues before it.

- 5. Operator Report: Jack Keefe and Art O'Neill, Connecticut Water Company - Mr. Symonds** said that over the years he has been in town and on the Commission, manganese complaints are more and more. He asked Mr. Keefe if it would be worth treating the manganese. Mr. Keefe said that they could, but it would be pricy. A green sand filter is one way to get rid of the manganese. It would be inside of the building. Mr. Symonds said we would then need a bigger building; this would be a long term solution. Mr. Keefe inquired as to when they would be receiving their diversion permit. Once that is obtained, they could flush the system harder. Ms. Symonds said that maybe the permit could be requested for the purposes of solving a problem. Mr. Keefe believed the work at 127 Kate Lane would require a ½ days work, and at the same time they could perform a back flush. The members asked Mr. Keefe to provide an estimate for the work at 127 Kate Lane. Ms. Usher will also provide him with a listing of complaints received at her office.

Ms. Usher asked the CWC their input about hiring a consultant to look at the complaints, causes and to provide recommendations. Jack Keefe said they do have staff that can look at different things. Mr. Koss commented that he believed they needed an independent objective review of what is going on with the system. Mr. Keefe volunteered to get some firm names for them. Discussion occurred regarding the benefits of a green sand filter.

Mr. Keefe handed out pictures of the fill line that froze and cracked over the winter at the tank. He said if the Commission wanted it replaced, it will cost some money. Mr. Keefe suggested installing a hydrant in its place, but warned that this option would be more money than repairing the crack. The members inquired who used this line. Ms. Usher said the Fire and Public Works Departments. It was decided that Ms. Usher would approach Mr. Werbner about splitting the cost of a 2 ½ inch hydrant installation three ways between the Fire Department, the Public Works Department and the Commission. Mr. Keefe believed the cost to be less than \$4,000.

Rene Wagner motioned that Jennifer Usher could sign off on the hydrant installation up to \$4,000 in aggregate with the Commission's share not exceeding one-third (1/3). Seconded by Glenn MacDonald. All in favor; none opposed.

Mr. O'Neill, CWC, reviewed the status of the delinquent accounts with the members, in summary: some accounts remain turned off, one has a payment arrangement, and one customer paid their balance, but the check was returned NSF (another letter was sent to this customer advising that the water will again be shut off in 15 days). Mr. O'Neill advised that they have the option of using a collection agency. Mr. MacDonald asked if the rate increases will be in the new bills. Mr. O'Neill confirmed.

It was discussed that Mr. Keefe and some of the Commission members will set up a trip to Killingworth to see a green sand filter.

6. Staff Report: Jennifer Usher, P. E., Town Engineer & Public Works Administrator

- A. Annual Cross-Connection Surveys** – Ms. Usher provided copies of the surveys to the Commission members and asked that they look at them.
- B. Sanitary Surveys – Status Update** – Ms. Usher commented that there is a letter from the CT DPH with a satisfactory response. So, this is all set.

7. Finances

- A. Financial Update** - Mr. MacDonald commented that we are still at a positive contribution to cash. He reviewed the financials with the members. They do not reflect the new rates or the 48 customers that were delinquent. We are in better shape. The next quarter will have the new rates.
- B. Unpaid Customer Invoices** - Ms. Usher commented that she has sample letters for putting liens on properties with delinquent accounts. Sending a letter to the customer would be the first thing to do. She will format a letter for the Commission members. The Commission members present agreed that the procedure of filing liens should be followed. Once Ms. Usher has prepared the letter, Mr. Koss will speak with Ms. Calabrese on the remaining steps that need to be followed in order to get the lien on the Town's records.

- 8. Regional Pipeline Agreement** - There were not comments on this item, except Mr. Symonds did ask that whoever reviews and/or revises agreements in the future, that they drop a date on the top of the Agreement. Ms. Usher reminded that there is a meeting on April 12, 2011 at 10:00 a.m., Conf. Room C with all parties to review the agreement. It was decided that the Commission members and Ms. Usher will meet prior to that meeting at 9:00 a.m.

9. Diversion Permit

- A. Status Update & Response to CT DEP NOI** - Ms. Usher printed out the Mitigation Report and the response of NOI that went to the DEP for the members. She said everything is in it that was discussed.

10. Old Cathole Road Water Main Extension Project – ARRA Funding Status Update –

Ms. Usher received an e-mail requesting certain information be gathered from a valve in a pit. She does not have time to do this and asked the members to have the CWC to assist with this. Mr. Symonds will ask Jack Keefe for assistance. Jennifer Usher will forward Mr. Symonds the e-mail with the requested information.

11. Other TWC Business – Status Review & Updates

- A. Overdue Accounts & Shut-off Procedures** – Ms. Usher commented that this was reviewed under 8B.

Jennifer Usher commented that this item will be on the agenda to keep a bookmark of things that need addressing at some point in the future. They will move up to their own agenda item when they are ready to.

Mr. Symonds asked about the task list that the Commission had prepared before. He asked specifically about resolving the sign issue. Does the Commission want to go ahead with it? He believes it is the Commission's responsibility to have the proper security signs up. He knows someone who can do the signs. Ms. Usher will get Mr. Symonds a sample of the signs so that he can obtain an estimate from the sign maker.

Mr. Symonds also asked about the list provided by the CWC consisting of several items that needed to be done. Some items CWC is doing, and the highway department was going to do the others. Do we need to revisit that list? Mr. Symonds will get the list to Ms. Usher and she will review it to see what items have been taken care of and what needs follow-up.

Mr. Koss asked if a conservation letter should be sent out. Mr. Symonds said to do it and get it out. Mr. Koss will finish preparing it and Mr. Symonds will review it.

12. Approval of Minutes

A. March 7, 2011 Regular Meeting - No action taken. No quorum.

13. Adjournment - Dick Symonds motioned to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Rene Wagner at 8:48 p.m. All were in favor. None opposed.

Michelle A. Finnegan
Water Commission Clerk