

# SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

## TOLLAND WATER COMMISSION

### HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER Conference Room C– 4<sup>th</sup> Level

February 22, 2010

**Members Present:** Eugene Koss; Glenn MacDonald; Andrew Netro; William Pakulis and Richard Symonds, Jr.

**Others present:** Beverly Bellody, Human Services

**Not in attendance:** Rene Wagner

1. **Call to Order:** Eugene Koss called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. **Approval of minutes from February 17, 2010 Special Meeting**

Discussion: Dick Symonds commented that he would like the minutes to reflect the following changes:

1. page 4 (4<sup>th</sup> paragraph): Mr. Ericson said Connecticut Water's line comes up Old Cathole Road *should be* **Mr. Ericson said the line containing Connecticut's water comes up Old Cathole...**
2. page 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> sentence): Mr. MacDonald asked if they can legally do an extension *should be* **Mr. MacDonald asked if the Commission is legally authorized pursuant to the Consent Decree to do an extension...**

Dick Symonds motioned to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2010 Special Meeting; Seconded by Andrew Netro. All in favor. None opposed. William Pakulis abstained.

A package was provided to the Commission members from a review of the files housed in the Town Hall. Mr. Koss commented on the contents. The various documents included copies from the Town's Code, which set out the Water Commission's powers and duties; the Annual Report for the last fiscal year; water quality reports, Dave Smith's last report to the State in compliance with the various orders of the Consent Decree and the By-Laws. Also included was a memo from Linda Farmer to various Boards/Commissions asking for assistance by identifying any requested staff support that is time sensitive or high priority, due to staff support changes. They will do their best to assist in a timely fashion.

3. **Customer billing and or meter reading dispute(s)**

Eugene Koss started by saying that there has been four (4) complaints/inquiries from residents. Ms. Bellody commented that she received a call from the resident at 30 Kate Lane. They'd like to know what the process is going to be and commented that they still don't believe they should pay the \$300 bill. Mr. Koss said the Commission never would intend to ask or order them to the entire bill. They would pay the undisputed portion. Mr. Symonds believes they would like some idea as to what the process is. Beverly Bellody is not sure if they have received a bill since the one in dispute, which was billed in October. Mr. Koss will discuss with Jack Keefe, Connecticut Water Company ("CWC"), whether or not this account is on hold, and will give him the script (containing four points) that they can use to relay to customers who have complaints/inquiries. Mr. Koss will also call this particular resident. Mrs. Symonds believes that the wording needs to get to Jack Keefe, CWC, so he can get cranking along. Mr. MacDonald asked if we

are going to have the resident pay the undisputed portion. Mr. Koss said yes. Mr. Netro thinks the time this is taking is ridiculous and it keeps being dragged on. Let's just do it.

#### **4. Staff support**

Mr. Symonds commented the town is proposing a 28 hour position to replace some of the lost administrative support services. They are proposing a 28 hour per week position in the budget, but would like to make it a 35 hour position. Mr. Werbner has indicated that he is looking at both the Water Commission and the Waste Water Commission to see if there is assistance needed. The difference between 28 hours and 35 hours would be approximately \$8,000-10,000 per year. There are a number of budget issues, the reserves are going down, and we will have some increased expenses because we are lacking engineering services now. So some of the services that we will require, we will have to pay for. The town is looking for a new engineer. We do have time to deal with this. Steve Werbner is not going to make any decisions until the budget has been passed. The opportunity is there. Thursday morning, we will be looking at the finances.

William Pakulis recalls that prior discussion was not about whether or not we could spend the money, it was who was going to give that person direction, what is the job function. That was never resolved.

Mr. Symonds commented that it would be through the new Town Engineer. They would hold that responsibility for us. Mr. Pakulis asked if that is what we want to continue to do. He believes we should get our own support, hire our engineering support outside of the town. The debate for a long time with this Commission is whether or not we should go out and get our own support. The town engineer gets spread around everywhere. We talked about going out and hiring as part of our RFP. Mr. Koss remarked that it would be very expensive. Ms Bellody commented that there are firms out there who do work for Water Commissions.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that if the town is pursuing an in-house engineer, we should use that resource for now. If that does not work out in the long run, if we find we are not getting what we need, then we are back to the table again. We can negotiate with the next maintenance contract that is coming up.

Mr. Koss commented that Lenard Engineering had agreed to work for us on a retainer basis.

Mr. Symonds said there is an opportunity for us. MacDonald believed that the Commission would have the use for someone. Symonds reiterated that this is just to let us know where this stands. It's down the road. If we are serious about it, now is the time to think about it, while we are doing the budget.

Ms. Bellody commented that by reviewing all the files, it will give the Commission a better handle of what will be needed. Mr. Koss thought that 10 hours might be a reasonable range for staff support, but after the review would have a better understanding. Mr. Pakulis is not debating the need of staff support. It's how we get it.

#### **5. Budget**

Mr. Koss mentioned that Mr. MacDonald has agreed to help on this. Koss, Symonds, Bellody and MacDonald all agreed to meet with Chris Hutton to review the financials. Mr. MacDonald said they will get the items that Mr. Joslin used to get, and piece together at least what has been done historically. Ms. Bellody said that Cindy, or her department, could print certain reports for the Commission as they need them.

Glenn MacDonald is interested to see how the town tracks the big projects, because the capital expenditures are nowhere near what were spent on Cathole Road. Bellody believed the reason is because it is coming from several different funding sources. MacDonald wants to hear how they do that. He

would like to hear about the cash side. He wants to get a better handle on if there is a specific account, or how the town accounts for it. He has questions. How does the town keep track. How can we get reports and get them in advance of meetings. If he has a question, who is he calling? He wants to work together. Ms. Koss commented that we are ahead of schedule, compared to preceding years. By the time we get to April, we'll understand what we need to do.

Mr. Pakulis commented that we've suffered with the capital plans. That is a lot of work for an engineer. This is the type of stuff we should go out and hire support for. Ms. Bellody agreed that it is a lot of work with the contracts, recordkeeping, etc.

It is Mr. MacDonald's intention to have an update on the financials by the next meeting. They are meeting this Thursday at 9:00 a.m. with Chris Hutton. The Commission asked Ms. Bellody to confirm the time with Ms. Hutton.

#### **6. Meter removal, testing and replacement program**

Mr. Koss commented that there is nothing new. He is waiting to talk to Jack Keefe, CWC, to see what the cost of the meter is. It is his understanding that there are 149 more meters installed, similar to the four meters that are cause for the current problems. Mr. MacDonald commented that the rate of replacement is 50 meters per year. That means they are all scheduled to be replaced during the next three years. The Commission questioned if they wanted to wait three years to get potentially bad equipment out of the system, or could it afford to accelerate that. The Commission is awaiting word from the CWC on the price to pull and replace.

Mr. Koss commented that not only will we get an increasing number of complaints as we pull these out, the longer you leave one of these meters in, the more money we will lose. Mr. Netro thinks if we step this up to do 150, it is going to be real expensive. We've only had four meters bad. We don't even have a procedure set up yet to deal with those. We are opening another door that we don't need to this year. We ought to get our ducks in a line. Get three sentences out to these people saying this is the way they should handle it. Mr. Koss agreed that we should work on fixing the current four, but just reminds the members that there are more meters out there like this. The Commission is waiting for Jack Keefe to get back to them with the cost of pulling them all.

#### **7. Diversion Permit, status, conditions**

Mr. Koss commented that the Commission is awaiting the final report from UConn. This had previously been taken care of by Mr. Joslin and Mr. Smith. Discussion occurred amongst the members regarding the approval in tonight's packet. It was agreed that the members would review same and be prepared to discuss at the next meeting.

#### **8. Old Cathole Road Water Main Project**

Eugene Koss commented that this is a process. Jim Ericson needs to file the paperwork, on behalf of the Commission, regarding completion of the project; he needs to make determinations on pressure and consult with CWC to confirm the analysis. With the exception of planting the grass, the contractor's job is done.

Mr. MacDonald asked, thinking ahead, if it still was their intent to provide water to Clearbrook and Farmbrook. Mr. Symonds said absolutely. Mr. MacDonald asked what needs to be done in order to do that. Mr. Koss commented that we need to know the engineer end and the legal end. Dick Symonds said that we suggested that be done as soon as the engineering impediments were overcome. We have some of the data now, but no one has looked at it yet. Mr. Koss will call Denise Ruzicka and ask her to look at the two conditions in the documents sent to the Commission on September 8, 2009 and tell us what they mean.

**9. Water Supply Plan Revision - update**

Mr. Koss began discussion by stating that Jim Ericson was taking the recalculations and putting them in a final draft. Koss will ask him if it has been completed.

~Mr. Symonds mentioned that the Commission needs to submit their Annual Report. It was submitted last year. We have until Thursday to do it. If he is provided the information, he will prepare it. Mr. Koss believed that they could easily turn last year's into the new version. The changes would be: the number of new customers (499 residential/22 commercial/1 municipal) and that the drilling to interconnect has been completed. Mr. Symonds will revise.

**10. Adjournment**

William Pakulis motioned to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Richard Symonds at 8:48 p.m. All were in favor. None opposed.

**Michelle A. Finnegan**  
**Water Commission Clerk**