

**MEETING MINUTES  
TOLLAND WATER COMMISSION  
HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER  
Council Chambers – Sixth Floor  
January 19, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.**

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

**Not in attendance:** William Pakulis

**Others present:** Jennifer Usher, Town Engineer

**1. Call to Order:** Eugene Koss called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Mr. Koss introduced the Commission members and Jennifer Usher, Town Engineer, to the public. He explained the procedure for the public hearing and asked that the public limit their comments to 5 minutes per person. He stated that written correspondence from the public will be allowed until the close of business next Wednesday, and should be addressed to the Town Engineer's office.

**2. Presentation of Projected Expenses and Proposed User Rates and Fees for FY 2010-2011:**

Glenn MacDonald advised the public that exhibits have been provided. He highlighted the key points that were included in the letters sent to the Water Commission's customers. The system has not had a system wide rate increase since 1981-1982. There is the main system, which currently has 479 customers, and there is the Skungamaug system with 48 customers. The rates in the two areas are different. The difference is because the water in the Skungamaug area is purchased from the Connecticut Water Company ("CWC"). He explained that the Commission presented a financial summary to the Town Council last summer. The summary showed that the water system has not covered expenses since f/y 2006. The Commission has not made any money since 2006. Effective July 2010, the CWC raised its rates 11% on the Skungamaug side. The Commission is still using old rates. We need to be able to cover expenses. We have seen increased rates, not just the water rates, but materials, repairs, etc. The Commission has a responsibility to do something. The increase will be an average of 15%. The proposed rates for the main system are well below the CWC's rates. The water system has been expanded and there is now a main line that runs down the old high school lawn. We applied to the State for approval a year ago, it was denied. We have reapplied and until we get the approval from the State, we cannot turn on that valve. When we can, it will be a financial benefit to the system. We will not have to pay the CWC's water rates. The Commission has looked at the last two years and the system has lost approximately \$50,000 per year. The forecast for year 2011 is a loss of \$60,000.

Mr. Koss added that although the Town of Tolland owns this water system, the Commission is charged with the responsibility of managing it. We cannot open the valve and serve north of the highway with the diversion permit we currently have. It is 220,000 gallons a day. When you get into the summer the system does not have enough margin of safety to adequately operate with additional customers. As part of State of requirements, several years ago we did a renewal of our diversion permit. Based on a forecast done for us by consulting engineers, we see the system needing substantially more than 220,000 gallons a day. Our reapplication is currently being reviewed by the DEP. Once an approval is granted for increased withdrawals, then the plan is to serve both parts of the system using our well field and back away from purchasing water from CWC.

**3. Public Hearing:**

Consideration of adopting the attached User Rates and Fees for FY 2010-2011 for customers of the Town of Tolland's public water system. The proposed user rates and fees would be effective with the next billing.

Rene Wagner motioned to open the public hearing; Seconded by Andy Netro. All in favor. None opposed.

Jennifer Usher read correspondence from **Beverly Amato, Administrator of Winding River Village, 1127 Tolland Stage Road** – In summary, Ms. Amato thanked the Tolland Water Commission for their role in coordinating the operation and maintenance costs of two town owned water systems without a system increase over a number of years. Winding River Village commends them. Winding River submitted their budget in September-October to HUD for approval. They tightened and cut many programs for the building this present fiscal year with no budget increase. They realize the CWC is increasing their rates and they have received the Commission's letter regarding the Private Fire Protection Fee Schedule. This rate will take effect during their current fiscal year, which has already been approved by HUD. They were not aware of this cost for the current year. They are asking that this cost be deflecting until Winding River Village's f/y 2012. This would give them the opportunity to budget the additional Private Fire Protection Fee into their operating expense. They do support the Commission's cause and are not in opposition to their mission.

**Diane Tyler of 232 Charter Road** – No comment at this time.

**John Stetz of 236 Charter Road** – The rate increase does not bother him. He is confused as to the miscellaneous charges relating to shut off/turn on. Ms. Usher explained that the town has three systems that run through the town. One belongs to CWC and the other 2 (Skungamaug and Main) are the Water Commissions. The CWC is contracted by the Commission to maintain daily operations for the Water Commission's systems. Mr. MacDonald said that the CWC is sub-contracted. To have a service turned off there is no charge. The resumption of service does have a fee of \$80.00.

**James Grant of 69 Virginia Lane** – The smaller the meter, the more you pay? Shouldn't the larger users pay more than the smaller guy? Mr. Koss commented that they do. The unit charges are higher because we are trying to recover fix costs of serving all the customers, as well as the variable costs. In the quarterly charge for the 3/4" meter they are not recovering all the fixed costs. Mr. MacDonald commented that all residential customers fall into the 5/8" - 3/4" meter size. Mr. Grant commented that he did not believe the system, as it is now, could handle any more. Mr. Koss said that the Water Commission was faced with renewing its diversion permit three – four years ago. They hired engineers to test the wells. That study demonstrated that they could pull more than 220,000 gallons a day from the two existing wells. The DEP reapproved the old diversion permit at 220,000 per day. They have raised some questions, more study work was done and the questions were answered. A new filing was submitted and is currently being reviewed by the DEP. Mr. Grant commented that in his area they have dirty water. This has cost him some money this year (replaced water heater). He believes the guys in the field don't know what is causing this. Mr. Koss said he appreciates his comment regarding the water quality. They have tried several things in the past. The Commission is not forgetting that issue. The members want to provide good quality service at a reasonable price.

**Richard Munichiello (Town of Tolland's Fire Marshal) of 15 Alfred Drive** – He would like to make some public statements because he believes he has been lax in conveying the message. He questions the annual charges billed quarterly (ex. \$650 per hydrant). These are not public hydrants in your front lawn that they are talking about. There are no charges for those. The town absorbs those costs under a specific line item. His job is to protect the residents and business community's assets within the town. Part of doing his job is presenting cases for sprinklers. Sprinklers use about 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the amount of water that a building would use if it were in a fire condition and attacked by hand lines. We are now going to charge someone for a private hydrant that he encouraged them to have on their property (ex. Big Y plaza). He would like to know why the customers are being charge for the hydrants, if the customers paid to have the hydrants installed, and if there is a problem with them they will maintain them. He has been told the charge is for maintenance. He is not sure what type of maintenance, other than turning a valve and flushing the system on an annual basis. What is this charge for? He has done some research and will provide a report to the Commission by next Wednesday. A building that has a sprinkler system or fire hydrant is there for the protection of that taxpayer. We want to maintain that asset, so we encourage them to have sprinklers / hydrants installed. It makes the fire department's job easier. They are a more responsible citizen of the Town of Tolland by installing a hydrant / sprinkler. Why should they be taxed additionally? Perhaps a reasonable charge would be \$100.00 a year. The person, who should be paying less, is the person who is reducing the risk by installing hydrants and sprinklers. He would like to see a list of the actual expenditures associated with a fire hydrant to justify the charge of \$650 a year. He stated that the town's Fire Chief is in agreement with him.

Dick Symonds motioned to close the public hearing and allow one week for public comments to be submitted in writing; Seconded by Glenn MacDonald. All in favor. None opposed.

**4. Adjournment:** Dick Symonds motioned to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Glenn MacDonald at 7:19 p.m. All were in favor. None opposed.

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