

MEETING MINUTES

TOLLAND WATER COMMISSION

HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER Conference Room A– 2nd Level

March 10, 2010 – 7:00 P.M.

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

Others present: Beverly Bellody, Human Services; Robin Kupferschmidt-Putira

Not in attendance: None.

1. Call to Order: Eugene Koss called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Richard Symonds motioned to amend the Agenda to move the Public Comment item to #2; Seconded by Rene Wagner. All in favor. None opposed.

2. Public comment

Robin Kupferschmidt-Putira of 30 Kate Lane – Mr. Symonds asked the resident to give a review of her problem. Ms. Kupferschmidt-Putira said that she had the meter installed September 3, 2009. She had received two (2) letters from the Connecticut Water Company (“CWC”) soliciting. She decided to have it installed. Her bill went up 3 ½ times the normal consumption. Her bills had always reflected the same water consumption and were always within a few points each quarter. She had made 16 calls between the CWC and Dave Smith, the previous Town Engineer, most of which went unanswered. The Commission reviewed her billing. She commented that she had gotten rid of her pool; it was the wettest year in history and she was on vacation for 2 ½ weeks during the quarter in question. She does not believe she is responsible for the bill. Dick Symonds commented that they have looked into the situation and they believe that the problem has to do with meter reading; between the meters itself and the remote read. Some have been problematic. Mr. Koss commented that the CWC was awaiting instruction from Town staff. She realizes the issues with the Commission staff, but would like to get this resolved. Mr. Koss commented that the members were upset that she did not get clear responses from the staff and CWC. He believes the CWC were looking for direction from Town Hall, which was absent because someone was in the process of quitting. The Resident does understand the issues going on with people leaving and the deaths that have recently occurred. She is just trying to get her little world together. Mr. Koss said the meter tested 100%, well within the standards of law. It was a failure of the device outside her house. Mr. Koss explained to Ms. Kupferschmidt-Putira that the CWC is a contractor to the Town which operates the service and takes care of the billing and meter reading. Mr. MacDonald advised that 4 homes are having this issue and the Commission owes them responses. The residents should pay the amount they don’t dispute. We need to deal with the contractor on how many of these we have and what we are going to do about the outstanding balance. Mr. Wagner questioned if the meters in question are all in the same area. They are not, but they are all similar vintage meters. Mr. Koss verified that it has been confirmed that it is equipment failure with the outside reader.

Richard Symonds motioned that the disputed amount that occurred due to the discrepancies in the meter readings be rescinded, and that the customer pay their normal average quarterly bill. We will rescind the additional amount. Seconded by Glenn MacDonald. All in favor. None opposed.

The Commission will inform the customers by:

- Contacting them by phone (Mr. Symonds will contact the customers);
- A letter will be sent stating how the bill will be calculated; and
- They will receive a revised bill from the CWC.

Mr. Koss added that the CWC has already figured the averages for the amounts due.

Ms. Kupferschmidt-Putira thanked the Commission members. Mr. Symonds told her to expect a letter and adjusted bill.

Mr. Koss commented that Jack Keefe sent a chart that showed which meters have been replaced in the last three years. They have been asked to go back to the records from Aquasource and find the boxes with the information. It is believed that they exist.

3. Add to and/or amend agenda

Mr. Koss commented that items 3 and 9 have been taken care of.

4. Election of Officers

Mr. Symonds commented that Mr. Koss and he have both reviewed the By-Laws. Formerly, the Commission is suppose to have a secretary and also have/need Committees. Mr. Koss pointed out that they would have an annual meeting and he assumes it would be in June/July. Mr. Symonds believed that Mr. Koss has been the Vice-Chairperson for some time and has a good handle on the administrative things. He thinks he is appropriate for the job of Chairman.

Andy Netro motioned to nominate Eugene Koss as the Chairman; Seconded by Richard Symonds.

Andy Netro motioned to nominate Richard Symonds as the Vice-Chairman; Seconded by Rene Wagner.

These elections will be through the end of the fiscal year. Future elections will be at the Annual Meeting at the beginning of each fiscal year.

Discussion occurred as to whether the Commission needed a secretary or not. Mr. Symonds believes the important thing is that a Chairman is in place.

Mr. MacDonald motioned to postpone the decision to have a secretary; Seconded by Richard Symonds.

All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Symonds believes the position of secretary should be looked at, as well as, some committees (ex. budget; administrative procedures). There are a number of technical things that need to be done. He and Mr. Koss offered to do those things. Mr. Koss agreed with the suggestion of budget and administration committees.

5. Approval of minutes from February 22, 2010 Special Meeting

Richard Symonds motioned to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2010 Special Meeting; Seconded by Andy Netro. All in favor. None opposed. Rene Wagner abstained.

6. Old Cathole Road Water Main Project – status of Tolland Middle School (former high school) connection and interconnection with Rt. 74 Skungamaug system

Mr. Symonds asked if the water main had been hooked up. Ms. Bellody confirmed that it had. Mr. Koss said the main extension is installed and everything is connected. The only customer right now is the former high school, now middle school. The remainder is not connected. Mr. Koss said there is a wrinkle to the diversion permit. Mr. Symonds explained that the connection is not totally clean. The town manager received a letter from the State asking for certification that the wells have been appropriately disconnected. Beverly Bellody chimed in stating that according to Jim Ericson's Monthly Project Summary Report, this has been taken care of. The letter and certification may have crossed paths. Ms. Bellody will follow-up with Mr. Ericson.

Mr. MacDonald asked what the status was. The middle school is connected Mr. Koss replied. The next piece, to go further downhill and under the river and into the Rt. 74 Skungamaug river system, has not occurred yet. There are some things that need to happen. The water pressure issues need to be looked at, the design of the system and the issue with the diversion permit. The Commission reviewed production records. Ms. Bellody pointed out that the Annual Report states that the current metering system is scheduled to be completely replaced in the Spring, when seasonal conditions will allow for the installation of a meter pit near Well #1.

William Pakulis motioned to contract Lenard Engineering to write a specification to replace the meter and make recommendations so that the Commission can go out to bid to get two or three quotes. Seconded by Rene Wagner.

They talked about a timeframe to get this done and Mr. Pakulis suggested 30 days.

Mr. MacDonald questioned what type of capital they were talking about to replace the meter. Rene Wagner commented \$10,000+. Wagner, Netro and Pakulis volunteered to review the request with Lenard. Koss or Bellody will follow-up with Lenard with the specifics.

Mr. MacDonald asked how this work would be paid for. Mr. Pakulis believed it would be an operational expense.

All in favor. None opposed.

7. Water Supply Plan Revision – update

Mr. Symonds commented that they are missing one of the two copies of the Water Supply Plan. He asked if any of the members had it. None of them had it. Mr. Symonds will look for it again at the Town Hall.

8. Diversion Permit – revisions update

Mr. Koss commented that the UConn study will be publicly released next week. Mr. Wagner asked what has happened with the CWC Contract for this. Mr. Koss commented nothing has been done since the passing of Mr. Joslin. Mr. Symonds commented that the issue needs to be addressed and it might be a workshop item.

9. Customer billing and or meter reading dispute(s)

Discussed in item 3.

10. Operational/Administrative matters - update

Mr. Koss commented that Jim Ericson of Lenard had given Beverly Bellody a proposal for continuing engineering services. Mr. Koss asked the Commission members what they would like to do. Now that the next project is the meter, we are going to continue using the retainer and write a new agreement with them anyway. Do we want to consider some kind of expansion of that given the town maybe hiring a new engineer in a month or two? The members agreed to hold off for now. We have established contracts in effect now. Mr. Koss commented that Mr. Ericson has made it clear that they would love to work with us. They want to earn our business. Beverly Bellody commented that they have been very helpful and responsive.

Beverly Bellody brought up the payment of the water bills and asked if the Commission members wanted her to bring the water test results to the meetings for them to review. Mr. Symonds commented that it would be a good idea to verify the site locations. Bellody said she will file them and bring them to future meetings for member review.

Mr. Koss mentioned that Ms. Bellody received notification that the State might be opening a competition for projects from municipal water suppliers. He dashed off approximately 5 items, going all the way to a water main going down to Gehring and Weigold Roads. He will send the members copies of that for discussion at the next meeting. Ms. Bellody commented that the Clean Water Fund Application is very difficult. She said you will need a staff person for that.

Mr. MacDonald would like to have discussion about the Security System on the Agenda. He was walking his dog and all the gates were open. Is fencing going to be an option? Mr. Koss commented that it is a water supply and it needs something. Mr. MacDonald mentioned maybe motion lights. Mr. Pakulis said there can be a short term fix, but there needs to be a long term fix.

Mr. Symonds asked Mr. MacDonald about the budget. He asked if the projects should be listed out with a dollar range. Mr. MacDonald said we'll need to quantify the items we need to do. He received a report from Ms. Hutton that dates back two years. He is in the process of reviewing.

Beverly Bellody brought up Mr. Werbner's inquiry re: a staff assistant/secretary in the development office and whether the Commission was willing to pay for a portion of the position. Mr. Symonds said he spoke to Mr. Werbner and he explained that he had the position in the budget for 28 hours. He'd like to make it 35. The difference in hours would go to the Sewer/Waste Water and Water Commissions. For the additional 7 hours, it would be \$8,000 - \$10,000 more a year. The position would need to be accepted in the budget. We have a flexible opportunity. Symonds, Wagner and Koss agreed that the Commission needs the help. Mr. Koss asked if the Commission would agree to 7 hours of staff help a week? Mr. Pakulis said the Commission needs to decide if they want to take the \$10,000 a year in clerical support out of the budget in light of where the Commission stands. The problem with the debate has always been where this person will get their direction, supervision and workload? The members discussed the budget.

Mr. Pakulis thinks the Commission should put in a line item of \$10,000 in the budget. All the Commission members agreed.

Mr. Pakulis motioned that the Commission authorizations the Town Manager to allocate up to \$10,000 of administrative support for the Water Commission. This is our intention to put a \$10,000 line item in our budget for administrative support; Seconded by Richard Symonds.

Mr. Symonds thinks we should ask for an exact figure. Ms. Bellody commented that in the long run the Commission may be able to save money.

All in favor. None opposed.

Ms. Bellody will advise Steve Werbner of the Commission's decision.

Mr. Netro suggested going out and inspecting the tank and the pump house to see what things look like. He would like to go in the pump house and see the meter. Mr. Pakulis said that someone who knows the 'going-ons' of the building should be present. Beverly Bellody believed taking pictures at that time would be a good idea. Mr. MacDonald suggested doing it as a workshop and having the CWC people take them through. Mr. Symonds said they'd have to file a Notice. If there are more than 3 members present, it becomes a meeting. The Notice can state 'to tour facilities'. Mr. Pakulis believes the reason to do this would be for capital, budgeting and grant purposes. It was determined that a site visit will occur early next month.

11. Set goals for the next year None.

12. Adjournment

William Pakulis motioned to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Richard Symonds at 9:25 p.m. All were in favor. None opposed.

Michelle A. Finnegan
Water Commission Clerk