

**TOLLAND WATER COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**April 15, 2009
HICKS MEMORIAL MUNICIPAL CENTER
Conference Room A
7:00 p.m.**

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

Others present: Dave Smith, Town Engineer; Stu Harkins, Connecticut Water Company

Not in attendance: Stewart Joslin, Chair

Call to order: Eugene Koss called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

1. **Approve minutes from March 11, 2009 Regular Meeting** – Dick Symonds motions to approve the minutes from the March 11, 2009 meeting.

Discussion: Dick Symonds comments that the minutes overall were very good. Although, he would like to see the following changes:

Page 2: Stu believes that it is for meters. **The words “it and for” were added, along with an “s” on meter.**

Page 2: It was decided that the meeting would be set for Wednesday, March 25th at 3:00. **The word ‘down’ was removed after the word ‘set’.**

Seconded by Rene Wagner. All in favor. None opposed.

Approve minutes from March 25, 2009 Special Meeting – Approval of the March 25, 2009 Special Meeting minutes was tabled. Dave Smith will forward the minutes to the members.

2. **New agenda items**

Dick Symonds suggests requesting updates/reports from the staff on various items discussed in previous meetings.

3. **Update on recent billing issues:**

- a. Dave Smith comments that Stu Harkins, from the CWC, is present to discuss approximately a dozen billing accounts that had spiked consumptions during the last billing cycle. All the accounts are residential and have no connection geographically.

Stu comments on the CWC system for meter reading. The meters are read, everything gets downloaded, and reports are generated through Clinton and come back as a proof. The proof gets reviewed and anything abnormal, such as volume amount, would typically raise a flag. Comparisons are done quarter to quarter. Once accounts are flagged, an investigation begins. The meters are re-read and a door-tag left requesting, that the customer call to set up an appointment. Some people call for an appointment, others make the repair

themselves.

The Members discussed two particular accounts that were flagged by the CWC:

The first resident's account ("Resident #1") did not spike gradually. It spiked immediately. It increased 10x. Stu recommends that they perform a PT (Periodic Test). Have the meter tested to see if it flows okay at low and medium. Dave comments that the resident is watching the meter on a daily basis and he believes it is back on track. If there was a problem, it appears to have been fixed. Stu explains the resident's history of consumption. The resident claims that they were doing nothing different to cause the spike.

Stu goes on to explain that CWC has a 1x waste adjustment policy. They will offer a one-time waste adjustment for odd cases like this. They look at the history and probably give a credit of up to 50% of the bill.

Dick clarifies that there are really two issues here: The 11 accounts, which Stu confirms are all under control and nothing is abnormal. The second issue is the resident who had the spike in consumption. Dick suggests the Commission possibly adopt the CWC policy.

Andy Netro thinks owners should govern their own water usage and we should not take responsibility for. If the meter is working properly, they should pay the bill.

Stu mentions another resident ("Resident #2") in Tolland that is disputing a high bill. They did have a PT last year, the meter was changed in January of this year and the meter tested fine per the specs. The difference in this case, the previous quarter had an estimated read, because the house was being sided. Historically, Stu believes estimating could be the problem for this resident. It could have been low. It was the old meter through the 4th quarter and now there is a new meter for the first quarter, which is showing the reading as being down. Eugene Koss confirms that the meter was removed and tested fine. Stu agreed.

Rene Wagner questions what interest customer's pay on a bill paid late. Eugene comments that the Ordinances would need to be reviewed for that. He is not sure what the Ordinance is. He thought when they approved the rates for the system, which we inherited; late charges were part of that. The rates charged by municipal utilities are approved by the local governing board.

Back to Resident #1: the meter has not been tested. Bill suggests the CWC complete their investigation. We can then talk about this issue next month, and then decide if we want to follow a policy or adopt one. Stu confirms that they will switch out the meter and test the old one. Eugene agrees that the meter should be pulled out, swapped and tested. In addition, maybe the CWC could do a walk through with the residents and be helpful with suggestions. Dave suggests moving this along so that we can get back to the resident. Once Stu gets the test results from the meter back, he will let Dave know the outcome, and give his recommendations.

There was discussion regarding possible scenarios as to what could increase water usage. It was suggested that it might be a good time of year to send out notices/conservator kits.

Stu is going to send Dave a copy of the CWC's form letter re: waste adjustment policy and

circulate to the members. The Commission Members will then review and decide on whether or not they should adopt a similar policy.

- b. The status concerning the hydrant/sprinkler billing issue was questioned. Dave commented that he would take Andy and Eugene up on their offer to help. Dick thinks this should be a top priority.

4. Act on Management Co. bids:

Eugene Koss asks if we are ready to move forward with this. It was suggested that discussion on this item be tabled and put on the Agenda for next week's meeting, when Terry and Al Braig will be present. There was discussion as to the correct naming used in the contract. It was agreed that the name could be amended in the contract. Eugene comments that we had agreed to pursue negotiating the contract with them.

5. Update on Water Supply Plan development:

Dave comments he still needs to gather some information for Jim Erickson. By the end of this month, Jim should provide a progress review to us for comments. It then can be looked at officially at the May meeting for submission to the State. In the way of help, Eugene asks Dave to let them know if he needs any. Andy offers his services. Eugene believes additional help may be useful.

6. Update on Diversion Permit:

Dave sent a letter to Marla seeking some information and never heard back. Next Thursday, Steve and Dave are going to speak to the Assistant to the Commissioner about the highway garage, and they will mention that they are awaiting feedback on this. If this is supposed to be built by June, they need time to do it.

Dave says that the mapping project is ready to be approved. They have contacted Linda Farmer suggesting that she start the process with P&Z. It has come to Dave's attention that the fisheries have a concern. They are concerned that the amount of information they have. It doesn't allow them to make a decision whether an increased withdrawal rate would have a negative impact on the fish population in the Willimantic River. Dave Murphy is going to look into their concerns and get a sense as to the magnitude of the questions. Discussion was had about the Town of Willington and their project (Fenton River).

Glenn confirms that pursuant to the Consent Order, we've met all our obligations. Dave responds yes. He also states, that our Consent Order allows us the withdrawal rate we used to have, until such time that a diversion permit is secured.

Dave updates on the Old Cathole Road project: On Tuesday of next week, the State Health Department is suppose to be preparing a list of all the projects that they would like to fund with American Recovery and Rescue Act. Old Cathole Road is being considered to be fully funded under that program. Contract signing is being held off due to the fact that it may be paid for. Dave believes that the State funding issue may resolve itself by next week.

Dave will talk to Steve about the diversion permit issues.

Dick comments that discussion of report issue's should be on the agenda next month.

7. Adjournment

William Pakulis motioned to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Dick Symonds at 8:53 p.m. All were in favor. None opposed.

Michelle A. Finnegan
Water Commission Clerk