



TOWN OF BROOKLYN
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BROOKLYN, CONNECTICUT 06234

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Brooklyn Water Pollution Control Authority

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, August 30, 2023, 6:30 p.m.

via Zoom & at the Community Center

Upper Level, 31 Tiffany Street, Brooklyn, CT

To join this meeting, follow the below instructions:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87193917651?pwd=YmJ3Y2o1dUI5TWVZT2lSazh4RE84Zz09>

Meeting ID: 871 9391 7651

Passcode: 698494

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MINUTES

1. **Call to Order** – Derek Lindia, Chairman, called the Special Meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. **Attendance:** Derek Lindia; Dann Stuyanski; Charles Sczorski (via Zoom).

Also Present: Shelley Cates, Finance Director; Benjamin Gilmore, Killingly WPCF Superintendent; Joe Couture, Killingly WPCF Assistant Superintendent; Lisa Lindia; J.S. Perreault, Recording Secretary.
Austin Tanner arrived at 6:37 p.m.

There was one additional person present in the audience: R. David Lee.

Public Present via Zoom: None.

3. **Public Comment** – None.

4. **Approve Minutes**

a. **Special Meeting of July 26, 2023**

Motion was made by C. Sczorski to accept the Minutes of the Special Meeting of July 26, 2023, as presented.

Second by D. Stuyanski. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (3-0-0).

5. **Update from Killingly**

- Joe Couture gave an update on the transformers that were installed at the Tatnic Pump Station. They put it in a place where they hope moisture won't get to it. He has not received the bill yet, but he expects it to be approximately \$3,000. He said that they check on it weekly and he explained that there is more work that needs to be done there, which they will take care of once it dries out a bit. He will forward photos and information regarding coverage over the top to stop leaks. He suggested that if work were to be performed by the Brooklyn Highway Department, it may reduce the cost.

Mr. Lindia asked if there would be issues with snow melting. Mr. Couture stated that we won't know until winter.

- Mr. Couture spoke of possibly starting to submit a monthly report. He asked what information the Authority Members would like to be included. Work Orders appear on the billing from Killingly. There was discussion and, next month, Mr. Couture will provide copies of the Killingly report as an example.

6. Old Business

a. Update on sewer bac-up at Hank's.

Austin Tanner reported that Hank's insurance company (Utica) sees the Town as a third party and they are now dealing with WalMart directly.

Mr. Couture had sent the inspection report to Mr. Tanner so that he can speak with WalMart about doing something to eliminate the problem. Mr. Couture explained that they will do an inspection every 30 days at WalMart and stretch it out, over time, if not needed that often. The first thing they do, when the manhole is opened, is take a picture (for photographic evidence).

Mr. Couture explained that it has backed up twice since the back up last November. There was discussion regarding forwarding the bills to WalMart (documentary evidence over a period of time). Mr. Couture explained about the State policy regarding FOG (fats, oil and grease). Mr. Carpenter explained that a copy of the Ordinance should be submitted with each bill because the Ordinance restricts anything but human waste discharges. Mr. Lindia stated that he does not think that WalMart has installed signs in the bathrooms yet.

7. New Business

a. Update on Alternative funding. Will there be a need for a supplemental billing for October?

Mr. Tanner explained that it had been brought up before the Board of Finance, the Board of Selectmen and the ARPA Committee and, at this stage, there don't seem to be any opportunities. There was discussion:

- R. Dave Lee explained that there is no concrete information for the Board of Finance to act on. There has been no specific request for a specific amount and, he said, that they can't tell if there would be money available because the books have been closed.
- Shelley Cates explained that she had spoken to the Auditors who said that because the WPCA is considered an enterprise fund, they are supposed to be self-sustaining (all expenses are supposed to be covered by what is collected). Therefore, they said that increasing by what is needed to cover those expenses is what should be done.

Regarding whether the Town could lend the money, Ms. Cates explained that the Auditors do not recommend it.

Ms. Cates explained that she had taken another look at the budget to see if anything could be skimmed off, but she cannot see any way to reduce the budget.

Ms. Cates advised that the increase is what is needed to be done. She explained that there was \$8,000 of potential emergency money in the budget, which has probably already been exceeded with the Tatnic situation.

Ms. Cates stated that although the increase had been voted upon previously, the Authority had not voted on a budget as it was not, technically, a balanced budget (due to not knowing if there would be a need for a supplemental billing). Now that it is known that there will be a supplemental billing, she said that a balanced budget can now be approved. **See Agenda Item 8. Other.**

b. Discussion of sending out a flyer recruiting new WPCA members, along with any information keeping customers aware of current changes or additional billing.

There was discussion regarding an insert to go out with the supplemental billing with information about recruiting new members and directing the public to the website to get information regarding the budget.

Ms. Cates suggested that the Authority could put together an insert with the information they would like to be included. She suggested that the website be updated with any information needed.

c. 119 South Main Street – Customer asking for credit for non-occupied unit.

Mr. Lindia explained that the property owner has been asking the Tax Collector for a credit for a non-occupied unit. Discussion ensued.

- D. Stuyinski explained his opposition.

Motion was made by D. Stuyinski to continue billing at 119 South Main Street as they are now being billed.

Second by C. Sczorski. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (3-0-0).

Mr. Lindia stated that the Tax Collector will be informed.

Mr. Carpenter suggested that the next time someone applies for something, they be invited to attend the WPCA meeting to explain their circumstances. Mr. Lindia stated that the Tax Collector could direct them to the WPCA's email to put it in writing.

d. Discussion establishing Rules and Regulations and procedures for customers and builders.

Mr. Lindia explained that the Ordinance will need to be researched to see what is not covered regarding customer requests. Other town will be researched to see how they handle different situations. There was discussion regarding Certificates of Occupancy, connection fees/in-law apartments, communication between the Departments (Building/WPCA/Tax Collector). L. Lindia explained that she only has a list of numbers, but does not have addresses that correspond with them. Ms. Lindia stated that if she had a list of addresses, she could have Permit Link flag them. Mr. Tanner provided a list to Ms. Lindia. Mr. Couture stated that he also has this information at the Facility. Ms. Cates explained that they don't have a document in-house showing every account number and which address each is associated with to confirm that each address is being billed correctly (cross-check internal control). The information exists, just not all in one place. Information can be gathered from the Tax Collector.

There was discussion regarding those that install plumbing without getting a permit. These will be found during re-valuation.

e. Approve bills.

Motion was made by D. Stuyinski to approve the payment of the bills, as presented:

- 2022/2023 FY - Voucher #1647 (\$2,418.37) – Eversource
 - Voucher #1651 (\$163.52) – Checks for Bills
- 2023/2024 FY - Voucher #1054 (\$2,179.55)
 - Voucher #1117 (\$75,709.10) – Killingly Balance
 - Voucher #1120 (\$96.92)

Second by C. Sczorski. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (3-0-0).

f. Motion to move meetings back to the Clifford B. Green Meeting Center, 69 South Main Street, Brooklyn, CT, at 6:30 p.m., beginning with the meeting scheduled for October 25, 2023.

Mr. Lindia explained that the WPCA will meet once more at the Community Center (September 27) and then will resume meeting again at the Green Building on October 25th.

Motion was made by C. Sczorski approve moving the remainder of the 2023 meetings back to the Green Building beginning with the meeting scheduled for October 25, 2023.

Second by D. Stuyinski. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (3-0-0).

8. Other

Shelley Cates had two items:

- Ms. Cates provided Financial Reports for July. The budget will be included for the next meeting. \$273,000 was received (approximately 50 percent of the total amount of the bills which is about on-point to date). The supplemental will increase the Revenue coming in. Ms. Cates suggested that Review of Financials be added as a monthly agenda item.
- Proposed Budget was provided (same one proposed at the public hearing).

Discussion:

- C. Sczorski commented that he has a problem with this not being on the Agenda and that at the last meeting the WPCA had stated that we were going to explore all options for funding and he feels that after only a few weeks, people won't be confident that we have done our due diligence in looking for alternative funding. He suggested having a special meeting for approving the budget to give a chance for everyone to have input.

Mr. Lindia explained that Ms. Cates had explained that alternative funding is just not there. He said that the supplemental billing, as discussed previously, is needed as we did not succeed in finding alternative funding.

Mr. Tanner explained that the Town's Budget has already been passed, so unless it goes to a Town meeting to ask for money, it is hard to get it out of the present Budget. He said that if there are any better ideas, he would be happy to look into them.

Mr. Couture asked about Killingly Use Fee, Year-To-Date Transactions.

Ms. Cates explained that it looks high because some of it was from the prior year. It was paid in FY 22/23.

Ms. Cates explained that the 100 percent increase should have, potentially, been increased a little bit more over time so it didn't have to be such a large increase. She explained that she feels confident that we will know where we should be for next year. She explained that they will look for additional funding/grant opportunities to help with capital projects.

Mr. Sczorski asked about the 23/24 Capital Sewer Upgrades being budgeted \$22,000 less this year. Ms. Cates clarified that it is inclusive of the Killingly Capital amount (\$52,000) that we are charged and it was about \$8,000 specifically toward Brooklyn. Mr. Tanner explained that we realize it is not enough, but we didn't want to go over the 100-percent increase, it is just strictly operating which isn't a good position to be in.

Ms. Cates explained that a motion was needed to vote on the balanced Budget with revenue and expenditures. The rate (revenue) has already been voted on and this will be for the budget for expenditures to match the revenues planned on bringing in.

Motion was made by D. Lindia to approve the balanced budget, as presented.

Second by D. Stuyinski.

Discussion:

- Ms. Cates explained the implementations: Now we are taking in revenue, and not approving expenditures, but we have operating expenses. So, technically, we've been paying bills without a passed budget that will have to go with last year's budget and not to exceed that and then, we will have an unbalanced budget.
- Mr. Stuyinski questioned whether every avenue had been explored.

Ms. Cates explained that grants cannot be used to offset operating expenses. She explained, again, that per the Auditors, the WPCA is supposed to be self-sustaining and their recommendation is that the Town should not lend the money. She asked if there were any ideas/suggestions.

Mr. Tanner, again, explained that it would be hard to get it out of a budget that is already set.

Regarding ARPA, Ms. Cates explained that there are projects that have already been approved for funds that may, potentially, need more. They are looking at timelines.

Mr. Lindia feels that due diligence has been done and he suggested that Mr. Stuyinski could help out with finding funding for the future.

There was a suggestion to include the increase with the January billing.

Ms. Lindia explained that the revenue would not be collected before the payment that will be due to Killingly.

Ms. Cates explained about the interest that would be due to Killingly (like the last time) and that it would be increasing expenses without budgeting for it.

Mr. Stuyniski asked when the supplemental bills would go out.

There was agreement expressed by A. Tanner, D. Lindia and L. Lindia that, according to the Minutes from the August meeting, the bills would be sent out October 1st. Mr. Tanner stated that if there is not agreement tonight to send bills out on October 1st, a motion should be made to extend the time to find money because we are up against a timeline. However, he does not see much of an advantage to that without a clear avenue to get money.

Roll Call Vote: D. Stuyniski – yes; D. Lindia – yes; C. Sczorski – no.

Motion carried by voice vote (2-1-0). C. Sczorski was opposed.

- Mr. Tanner brought up discussion regarding flat rate vs. how many bathrooms, for businesses. He provided a list of businesses and suggested doing an RFP to do a study regarding rates. He feels that action should be taken to do things better next year.

Mr. Carpenter said, “Whatever is fair is for everybody.” Discussion ensued.

If they have a public water bill, you know how much water they are using. It would be fair for them to be charged at a high percentage (85-90 percent) of their water usage. To make it equitable, Mr. Carpenter suggested the following: Take a conglomerate of those businesses, add up the fees that we are collecting from them, then divide the overall fee by their water usage, and bring that calculation for a vote. A flow assessment is more equitable.

There was discussion regarding those that are not on city water. Mr. Couture stated that you need to come up with a standard for those.

Mr. Lindia feels that residential should be looked at for water usage also. There was discussion regarding number of beds/water usage.

Mr. Lindia offered to do the research with the water company for the next meeting.

Mr. Tanner stated he and Mr. Lindia will work together to collect the information and that, next month, it can be discussed whether or not to go for an RFP.

- Mr. Couture commented about Celebrate Killingly at Owen Bell Park on September 9th where there will be a partial setup of how the Facility operates.

9. Correspondence – None.

10. Public Comment

R. Dave Lee, Pierce Avenue, commented on the following:

- He is in favor of monthly reports from Killingly and also an annual report summarizing what was done specifically for Brooklyn.
- He is in favor of the new agenda item for monthly review of financial reports.
- He commented that conversations are informal and there is more of a dialogue with people other than Authority Members rather than Commission activity.
- He strongly recommended that a study be done not only of the rate structure, but also of the Organization and Operations which will not only get the WPCA back up to speed, but will be useful in the defense of the inevitable lawsuits that he suspects will happen.
- He noticed that there are no liaisons between the two Authorities. He feels there is a need for more communication.

Mr. Tanner explained that they have other people who are a consultant, a financial advisor and First Selectman, whom he feels all deserve a place to speak

Mr. Lee provided constructive criticism and stated that the Authority Members are the ones who should be bringing the issues up and relying on the experts for their opinions.

Mr. Lindia explained that although, he is not well-versed in running meetings, but he does know how a sewer company runs. He spoke of how they are all working hard to fix what has happened over the past seven years. He said that they want to do things right.

11. Adjournment (next meeting September 27, 2023 will be a Special Meeting)

Motion was made by D. Stuyinski to adjourn at 8:12 p.m.

Second by C. Sczorski. No discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote (3-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,

J.S. Perreault

Recording Secretary

Attachments: Expense Report July 1, 2023 – July 31, 2023
Revenue Report July 1, 2023 – July 31, 2023
FY 2023/2024 Approved Budget 8/30/2023
Revision #2 – 2023 WPCA Meeting Schedule