

**EAST LYME WATER & SEWER COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 28, 2024
MINUTES**

The East Lyme Water & Sewer Commission held a Regular Meeting on May 28, 2024. Chairman Dan Cunningham called the Regular Meeting at 7:00 PM.

PRESENT: Dan Cunningham Chairman, Dave Murphy, Dave Bond, Dave Zoller, Carol Russell, Michelle Williams

ALSO PRESENT: Attorney Mark Zamarka, Town Counsel
Joe Bragaw, Public Works Director
Ben North, Chief Operating Officer
Matt Garneau, Utility Engineer
Kevin Gervais, Director of Finance

ABSENT: Ken Roberts
Roger Spencer

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Dan Cunningham called the Regular Meeting for the Town of East Lyme Water and Sewer Commission to order at 7:00 PM. The Pledge was observed.

Adding an item to the agenda

****MOTION (1)**

Mr. Cunningham moved to add item "3A. Executive Session – Pending Litigation Re Addabbo Sewer Assessment" to the agenda.

Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

Motion passed.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Cunningham called for a motion to approve or any discussion on the Meeting Minutes of April 23, 2024. Mr. Murphy requested corrections on Vote line of Motion (1) from 6-2-0 to 6-0-2 and, Motion (5) removal of "Version 2 of".

****MOTION (2)**

Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 28, 2024, with noted corrections.

Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

Motion passed.

3. Delegations

Mr. Cunningham called for delegations. There were none.

3A. Executive Session – Review DEEP Memorandum

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT
2024 JUN -5 A 10:28
COUNCIL CLERK

Mr. Cunningham called for a motion to enter Executive Session – Pending Litigation Re Addabbo Sewer Assessment and invited Mr. Bragaw, Mr. North, Mr. Garneau and Attorney Zamarka to attend.

****MOTION (3)**

Mr. Murphy moved to enter Executive Session at 7:06 PM

Mr. Bond seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

****MOTION (4)**

Mr. Murphy moved to exit Executive Session at 7:13 PM and return to the Regular Meeting with no action in the Executive Session

Mr. Bond seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

4. Correspondence Log

Mr. Cunningham went over the correspondence log.

5. Billing Adjustments

Mr. Cunningham called for billing adjustments.

a. 75 Pennsylvania Ave

Mr. North mentioned that this is a commercial building and that the commission needs to decide on the 1 in 10 Request. This location had a leak after the meeting and under the concrete floor. He also noted that there were a lot of complications and a lot of effort in getting this leak fixed. The calculations were based on the last two comparable seasons and water usage only since this location does not have a sewer connection. Mr. Bond asked if this leak was picked up by the new meter. Mr. North confirmed that it was.

****MOTION (5)**

Mr. Murphy moved to accept the 1 in 10 policy reduction of bill for 75 Pennsylvania Ave to \$784.51.

Mr. Zoller seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

b. 22 Islanda Ct.

Mr. North went over the request for this multifunction property. There were pictures and receipts pertaining to the leak fix. Mrs. Williams asked if the submeter impacted the high bill and Mr. North answered that the submeter is not part of this request/decision. Mr. North pointed out that the calculations were done based on the data collected on the town's meter reading.

****MOTION (6)**

Mr. Zoller moved to accept the 1 in 10 policy reduction of bill for 22 Islanda Ct. to \$2,114.45

Mr. Murphy seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

6. Approval of Bills

Mr. Cunningham called for the approval of bills. Mr. North added Invoice TB1000403 for Tighe and Bond for PFAS Preliminary Engineering Report (PER). He said that Tighe and Bond is almost finished with the PER and it seems that they will be able to stay within their budget. Mr. North explained that this is the first step in the process of securing funding for PFAS removal. The PER will analyze sites, alternatives, treatment options, water quality and getting OPCC assessment on cost. The PER will be used to solicit engineering firms to select an engineer through a Qualitative Bid Selection (QBS) process. Mr. North went on to explain that an eligibility application was already submitted to the state for Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) funding – federal funding earmarked for PFAS removal.

****MOTION (7)**

Mr. Murphy moved to approve the Tighe and Bond Invoice No. TB-1000403 for \$20,815.00

Mr. Zoller seconded the motion.

Vote: 6- 0- 2.

The motion passed.

7. Finance Director Report

Mr. Gervais reviewed his reports. No accounts are over budget. Both water and sewer expenditure are in the 90% range. Mr. Gervais noted that when the new system, MUNIS, goes live it will fix the refund account which now shows as a negative expenditure instead of coming out of the overall revenue account.

8. Project Updates

a. Well 5A WTP Lagoon Improvement Project

Mr. Garneau went over a visual presentation that contained photos of different phases of the project. The first photo showed Well 5 Lagoon in its previous configuration. The Lagoon appeared at full capacity at 8 feet of water. The next picture was taken three weeks ago during ongoing construction – Mr. Garneau mentioned that the lagoon size is being tripled – a sand base and clay barrier were being installed at time of photo. This barrier will make the water flow into the ground and not horizontally. The next picture was taken on the same day as the meeting: the finishing touches were being added to the lagoon – they were installing “riprap” stone on the outside to prevent erosion. The remaining items left to finish are the addition of lawn seed and a permanent fence for security. The deadline given by the contractors was June 1st and Mr. Garneau anticipated that the majority of the project will be complete by that date.

Mr. Cunningham asked what the capacity is for the lagoon and Mr. Garneau responded that it is forty-five thousand gallons now. The prior capacity was ten thousand gallons. Mr. North mentioned that after the drilling of the new well that production had increased and therefore the amount iron also increased so the filters need backwashing twice a day – first thing in the morning and then, in the afternoon.

Mrs. Williams asked if the department had considered the well project cost to go up because of PFAS removal. Mr. Garneau answered that this well does not contain traces of PFAS. He also mentioned that both wells with lagoons do not have PFAS.

b. Niantic Pump Station Rehabilitation Project

Mr. Garneau went over the picture presentation of the Niantic Pump Station – He reminded the committee that the pump station pumps had vibration issues. After a full vibration study was performed, it was determined that the pump bases and piping needed to be replaced as they were the cause of the vibration issues. In addition, the station had two original pumps that needed replacement as part of this project. The project finished earlier modifications performed almost 10 years ago and now all pumps are powered by variable frequency drive pumps on sturdy concrete bases to solve the vibration issues. The pump station has been online for a couple of weeks operating successfully and with greatly-reduced vibration. Mr. Garneau reported that restoration of the parking lot still needs to be performed.

c. Well 2A/3A/3B WTP Upgrade Project

Mr. Garneau went over the “before” picture that showed all the issues that needed addressing in the water treatment plant (currently serving well 3A and 3B and 2A in the future). Building maintenance items included corrosion on piping and filters, inefficient lighting, some corrosion on the structure itself and deteriorating insulation. Two weeks ago, the filters were sandblasted and painted green (raw water), blue (treated water) and tan (backwash water). All old insulation was ripped out and replaced with high efficiency spray foam as well as fireproofing barrier over the insulation and steel. Currently, water treatment operators and mechanics are working on chemical feed and containment installations. Previous chemical containers were concrete with expensive painted liners that were completely deteriorated. Instead of replacing the paint, polypropylene custom-fitted containers were installed that will prove to be much more resilient. Also, Fiberglass-Reinforced Panel (FRP) walls will be installed behind the chemical feed systems to protect the insulation and anything else from chemical damage.

Mr. Zoller asked about the atmosphere control in the building. Mr. Garneau answered that they will be installing two dehumidifiers to bring the humidity to below fifty percent and won't allow condensation on the pipes to enhance longevity of the building and equipment systems. He also mentioned if funding allows, the current electrical-resistance heaters will be replaced by a heatpump system to reduce electrical costs.

d. Annual Leak Detection Report

Mr. Garneau talked about the results of this report that was received in April. The leak detection company kept staff abreast throughout the process, which in turn allowed the department crew to investigate the leaks quickly. All leaks on the reported list have been fixed. The leak detection and fixes have been much more precise now resulting in less production of unmetered water.

Mr. North reported that because of the yearly leak detection efforts, the production of water in May this year was at fifty million gallons compared to 70 million gallons during the same period last year.

Mr. Bond asked about the cost effectiveness of a leak detection service. Mr. North responded that it costs \$13,000 to do the report for the whole town. Mrs. Williams mentioned that it is worth since we saved about 20 million gallons since last year.

9. Discussion and Possible Action to Allocate Funding for the Niantic Pump Station Rehabilitation Project

Mr. Noth explained that the project is now complete. As part of the project, there were some unforeseen extra costs incurred: all the breakers for the MCC panels had to be replaced, an old VFD that had failed during initial operation, an extra week under the pump station bypass, and fuel and OT costs to fuel and routinely inspect bypass operations.

****MOTION (8)**

Mr. Murphy made a motion to approve and transfer \$39,095.05 from funds available in the Sewer Assessment Funds to the "Niantic Pump Station Rehabilitation Project Account" No. 85-70-007-700-710 to cover additional costs incurred in the completion of the Niantic Pump Station Rehabilitation Project.

Mr. Zoller seconded the motion.

Vote: 6- 0- 2.

The motion passed.

****MOTION (9)**

Mr. Murphy made a motion to approve and transfer \$7,6967.79 from funds in the Sewer Assessment to the Sewer Operations Account 06-01-300-100-102 to replenish overtime incurred during the Niantic Pump Station Rehabilitation Project.

Mr. Zoller seconded the motion.

Vote: 6- 0- 2.

The motion passed.

10. Chairman's Report

Mr. Cunningham reported the Water and Sewer and Town 2025 Budgets were approved.

Mr. Cunningham commented on the New London increase in the billing rates in comparison with the East Lyme increases. They will be increasing their water rates by 45% and sewer rates by 60% in the next three years after a consultant was brought in to do a rate study. He noted that the industry is seeing cost pressures from several external sources, including much-needed improvements on water quality and infrastructure improvements on both water and sewer utilities. East Lyme has been steadily raising its rates due to these headwinds as well.

11. Staff Updates

a. Water Department Monthly Report

Mr. North elaborated on item "4" of the report – the department's goal is to flush all hydrants in the system each year, and so far, 210 have been flushed (or about a quarter of the system). The main line valves are being exercised during the flushing (156 valves have been exercised). The EL water system has 1529-line valves – the goal is to have them exercised once every five years so that the water department will be effectively able to isolate the system during water main breaks.

Mr. Bragaw mentioned that one of the reasons the department can accelerate the hydrants flushing is because of the new process of meter reading. This is the first year that the process of

meter reading went from manual meter reading to mostly automated. Mr. Murphy asked how many are still left to be replaced and the reasons. Mr. North responded that he would have more detailed information at the next meeting.

b. Sewer Department Monthly Report

Mr. North mentioned that the numbers on report were estimates based on working with Waterford's numbers because the system was on bypass for most of the month.

12. Future Agenda Items

a. Well 4 and Well 1A/6 PFAS Removal Project

Mr. North mentioned that this item was discussed under "Item 6" and that more information on this once the PER is complete.

b. Capital Projects Subcommittee

Mr. North said that a meeting will be scheduled soon for this subcommittee.

13. Executive Session Bridebrook Diversion Permit Mediation Strategy

Mr. Cunningham clarified the executive session on recommendations from council to more specifically enter executive session to "Review a Memorandum of Understanding proposed by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) pursuant to the Water Diversion Permit for the Bridebrook Water Treatment Facility and related DEEP mediation proceedings and assertions in in which DEEP staff are demanding potential changes to the operation and maintenance of the Bridebrook Water Treatment Facility" and **invited Mr. Bragaw, Mr. North, Mr. Garneau to attend.**

****MOTION (10)**

Mr. Murphy moved to enter Executive Session at 8:30 PM

Mr. Bond seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

****MOTION (11)**

Mr. Murphy moved to exit Executive Session at 8:51 PM and return to the Regular Meeting with no action taken in the Executive Session

Mr. Zoller seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

14. Discussion and Possible Action on a Motion to Authorize the Water and Sewer Chairman to Enter and Agreement with the CTDEEP RE Bridebrook Diversion Permit

Mr. Bragaw and Mr. North noted the on-going discussions with DEEP regarding the Bridebrook Diversion Permit MOU and recommended that the commission authorize the Water and Sewer Chairman to sign the mediation agreement and MOU with the DEEP to continue negotiating activities.

Mr. Murphy moved to authorize the Water and Sewer Chairman to enter into agreement with the DEEP to continue discussions regarding the Bridebrook Diversion.

Mr. Zoller seconded

Vote: 6 – 0 – 2

The motion passed.

15. Adjournment

Mr. Cunningham called for a motion to adjourn.

****MOTION (12)**

Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn this Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Water and Sewer Commission at 9:05 PM.

Mr. Zoller seconded the motion.

Vote 6 – 0- 2

The motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Tania Ranelli
Recording Secretary