



**Unapproved
Town of Ridgefield
Water Pollution Control Authority**

**WPCA Regular Meeting
July 22, 2021 5:30 p.m.
66 Prospect Street
Ridgefield, Connecticut 06877**

WPCA: Amy Siebert, Gary Zawacki, Ron Hill, Maureen Kozlark
WPCA Absent: Kevin Briody
AECOM: Matt Formica
Suez: Jeff Pennell, Ryan Richmond, Jon Arneth

**These are not verbatim minutes of the proceedings but identification of
general items and specific actions undertaken.**

Meeting held via ZOOM Video Teleconference.

WPCA Regular Meeting called to order at 5:30 pm by Ms. Siebert

1) New Business

a) Approval of Minutes

- i) Motion to approve June 24, 2021 minutes by Ms. Kozlark, seconded by Mr. Zawacki, passing 4-0.

b) Annual Sewer Rates

- i) Discussed annual sewer fees referencing the Raftelis rate model.
 - (1) Motion was made to raise the sewer fees 4% as forecast in the rate model pending review with Mr. Kevin Redmond within a two week duration ; by Ms. Kozlark, seconded by Mr. Hill, passing 4-0. Ms. Kozlark was to reach out to Mr. Redmond for his input.
 - (2) It was noted that Ms. Van Ness and potentially Mr. Zawacki would contact David Day from Danbury for a status update about their WWTF upgrade and what they may be anticipating from their member communities in the near future and the long term.

c) St. Stephen's Church Sewer Request

- i) Discussif the proposa frome St. Stephens Church requestionna the WPCA supplie all the nécessarien Materials (pipe and mandole concrète Forms) to do the wok for théier parking lot upgrade. It was noted that the WPCA des not fun privauté projets and does not plan to do so here.

d) Fox Hill Dam (Norwalk River Dam Site #2) Potential Décommissionna Project

- i) Discussed the ramifications of removing the dam. Removal has the potential to increase water levels under flooding conditions in the area of the Fox Hill Pump Station. While the pump station is anticipated to remain functional, flood waters could potentially enter the station wet well under the 100 year and 500 year flood events; the station is not designed to convey that amount of flow and could result in sewer backups. It was noted that First Selectman Marconi had provided comments using the language provided by AECOM during their review of the project's Environmental Assessment Report for the July 20th public meeting. Ms. Kozlark will draft a letter from the WPCA to the DEEP documenting the impact to the Fox Hill Pump Station using similar language for the other WPCA members to review for submittal prior to the closing of comment period on August 20th. The letter will also include language in support of the need for financial support for the anticipated flood protection measures at the pump station. The WPCA requested that AECOM review if there are any impacts of the dam removal project on the Route 7 Pump Station.

2) Old Business

a) Route 7 Follow up on Attorney Response

- i) It was agreed that WPCA will review the responses at the next workshop meeting (date TBD).

3) AECOM

a) Route 7 PS, Force Main, and WWTF Decommissioning Construction.

- i) Mr. Formica briefly reviewed the project's financial status with the low bid and construction contingency resulting in a \$3.7M funding gap. A meeting with M&O Construction (M&O) was held on July 15, 2021, with Ms. Kozlark, Mr. Zawacki, Charlie Fisher, Mr. Pearson and Mr. Formica. M&O's Estimator Brian Kennedy and Superintendent Bill Weingart also participated. Potential items to reduce project scope and cost were discussed, based on the June 24 meeting. These included:

- Deletion of Final Paving of Town Streets from the Contract
- Deletion of WWTF Demolition from the Contract
- Deletion of the Fiber Optic Cables for Route 7 PS Status and Alarm Communication and the use of an alternate system
- Deletion of the demolition of Bottom 10 feet of the Existing Pump Station Wet Well and Dry Well

M&O also developed and prosed the following items:

- Eliminating a number of electrical enclosures and provided a building at the pump station
- Reduction in the trench width payment limits (from 9.5 ft to 6 ft).
- Improvements to the temporary trench patch and reducing the milling and paving width to 8 feet around the trench (variation on paving ½ the town street previously rejected)

A subsequent meeting was held in the afternoon of July 15th to discuss the earlier meeting with the same group, without M&O and with the inclusion of the Town's Jake Mueller. The scope reduction items were reviewed, as well as a summary of preliminary cost estimates and issues/items of concern. The group developed some preliminary recommended scope revisions. With these recommendations and M&O's offered savings, the project funding gap would be approximately \$3.2M.

It was noted that a follow up meeting with First Selectman Rudy Marconi was to be scheduled with the sub-group (or a portion thereof) to review M&O scope reduction offerings and determine a path forward on sourcing additional project funding. Ms. Kozlark indicated the meeting remained to be scheduled.

Ms. Siebert asked how firm the estimated funding gap was. Mr. Formica noted that some unknowns remain in the estimated scope reduction cost estimates which include:

- The future cost of paving by the Town: Paving cost was based on 2020 state paving prices provided by the Highway Department. The state paving contract was not bid in 2021 (due to Covid) and the timing of the town paving on the Roue 7 project will fall under the either the next state paving bids (expected in early 2022) or the following year's bids. Costs could be higher.
- M&O paving adjustments: M&O indicated that their final paving credit was offered with the anticipation that one of their other paving scope reduction items would be permitted. If not, they will need to adjust the credit offered as much of their required WBE/MBE participation is in the paving item and they would need to reallocate some MBE/WBE work, which would likely reduce the credit offered.
- The fiber optic removal credit offer needs some refinement depending on what the WPCA would like to add back in its place to provide alarm and monitoring functionality to the Pump Station. It was also noted that there is also a small credit for the deletion of the fiber optic equipment located at the Route 7 Pump Station, to communicate with the station PLC, that is not currently included in the credit offered. The WPCA discussed the need for an up-to-date monitoring system at the Rt 7 pump station, given its function.

With that, Ms. Siebert and others acknowledged that the funding gap is likely greater than \$3.2M. It was noted that tweaks to the rate model and some minor rate increases may be considered as well as additional funding being provided by the WPCA or other funding sources (possibly Covid relief funding). It was noted that an additional funding target number of \$3.5M should be used when the "financial" meeting is held. This meeting should happen in the near future with the WPCA, First Selectman Marconi, Kevin Redmond, and perhaps Raftelis' David Fox to begin to assess what the process and timeline will be for securing the needed additional funds. It was also noted that M&O bid holding period is due to expire in mid-September. M&O has indicated that they would honor their bid after that point provided that the Town continues to advance using them on the project but they cannot hold their price indefinitely due to the increases in labor and material costs.

- ii) The option of rebidding the project was briefly discussed. General concerns were expressed about the cost of materials and labor not coming down significantly, or at all, to make rebidding a cost saving effort. It was also acknowledged that there is the risk of the project bids coming in higher. It was also noted that there was the concern of rebidding impacting the availability of Clean Water Funds. These included both the original Clean Water Fund priority list eligibility and the potential to secure additional funding (\$30M) that the DEEP had put aside for some relief of higher bidding cost due to Covid. If the project were rebid now or in the future, concerns with meeting permits at both WWTFs as it relates to Clean Water Fund eligibility and enforcement was raised.

AECOM noted that they had some addition discussions about these concerns with Roland Denny at DEEP as follows.

- DEEP indicated that delaying a rebid would have no impact on the projects Clean Water Fund (CWF) eligibility as the project is already on the DEEP CWF priority list. DEEP noted that if the current priority list period runs out, the Town should request funding again. It was noted that this would not be the first municipal project to be delayed and be funded by a subsequent priority list.
- DEEP indicated that delaying a rebid should not be a concern as it relates to the Route 7 WWTF phosphorus permit. It was noted that the WWTF can meet its seasonal phosphorus load limit (due to the low WWTF flows); however, sometimes they have had concentration exceedances due to the WWTF not being designed to remove phosphorus. DEEP noted that the seasonal load value is the limit of most concerns and they could not envision enforcing the concentration permit exceedances if the load requirement was met.
- The impact of delaying the bids on the South Street WWTF was discussed. DEEP indicated delaying a Route 7 rebid would not have any impact on the South Street permit or administrative order until the flows from Sewer District 2 was conveyed to South Street. Only the South Street WWTF total nitrogen limit would be impacted with the additional loading from Route 7 WWTF being added to the South Street WWTF loading once the flows from Sewer District 2 are brought over. At that time, the nitrogen target would be prorated for that month/year and the credit purchase/sale would be assessed.

b) South Street WWTF Upgrade Construction

- i) The monthly construction progress virtual meeting was held today. Gary, Jeff, Ryan, and Diana participated. Construction has continued including:
- The replacement sludge mechanism for Final Settling Tank No. 2 complete and turnover is anticipated to occur in the near future.

- Modifications to the Control Building and Chemical Buildings are continuing, with extensive plumbing and electrical work ongoing in the Control Building. In the Chemical Building the electrical conduit and chemical piping work is advancing and the plumbing work is mostly complete.
- The Blower/Garage Building CMU interior and exterior CMU walls have been completed. The roof planks have been placed and are in the process of being grouted.
- The Septage Building wet well has been leak tested and the interior under-slab electrical and piping work has been completed.
- The UV/Reaeration Building the concrete wet well foundation and wall has been poured and along with the reaeration tank slab. The reaeration tank walls rebar and wall castings are nearing completion and a pour is scheduled for next week.
- In the Operations Building, most of the 1st floor HVAC equipment and associated electrical items including the boiler and air handling unit have been demolished so that the new equipment installation can be started in advance of the winter heating season.
- Eversource has set the new unity meter and has energized the new utility feed from the pole through the transformer with the new switchboard energized.
- Yard work continues including the installation of an electrical manhole to the west of the Septage Receiving Building and the installation of the second retaining wall along the back side of the property in the area of the future OC system and Influent Pump Station termination panels

AECOM noted that they continue to be concerned about Spectraserv's rate of progress to meet the revised completion date (and DEEP shares that concern), and that they had issued a letter to Spectraserv outlining their concerns. Spectraserv has provide response to the concerns raised in the letter, but also noted that they are experiencing delays in obtaining materials due to industry wide shortages. The have expended 63% of the contract time (with the 5-month extension) and 45% of the project budget.

- ii) Spectraserv's Progress Payment No. 22 that covers the month of June in the amount of \$1,327,980.18 was submitted and AECOM recommend it be approved. The hard copies of the payment estimate have been submitted to Ms. Van Ness for execution. After last month's meeting, the CWF payment request was submitted DEEP on the South Street WWTF, and the process to obtain grant and loan payments from the DEEP is proceeding as planned.
- iii) Change Order No.3 was discussed. Ms. Van Ness had distributed copies of the change order via email. The change order addressed eight items with a total value of \$53,424.21. Two of the item items were above the \$25,000 threshold that was established where prior approval of the WPCA was required. Both the local control stations and the centrifuge modifications had been previously approved by the WPCA, with AECOM to advance negotiations with Spectraserv. No objections to the change order were raised.

- iv) AECOM noted that they are working with one of their subcontractors, JK Muir, on preparing applications for energy rebates from Eversource for the installation of newer, more efficient equipment and systems as part of this project. The first application to Eversource, which covered new lighting and HVAC equipment, was submitted to Eversource and a Letter of Agreement from Eversource to the WPCA on those items is anticipated in the near future. As second application on the process equipment which is typically the larger of the rebates due to the larger equipment sizes in is being finalized and will be submitted on the WPCA's behalf in the near future.
- v) AECOM requested direction on the deletion of the fiber optic communication from the Route 7 Pump Station as there are fiber optic elements in the South Street WWTF Upgrade that would be deleted if it is taken out of the Route 7 scope of work. AECOM was looking for this direction so they could advise Spectraserv not to buy or install any equipment that would not be needed if the Route 7 fiber was deleted. The WPCA indicated that they were not sure they wanted to give up on the fiber yet as they would like to upgrade the technologies at their pump stations starting with Route 7 and then Quail Ridge. It was also noted that the saving offered by M&O Construction were not that significant. It was felt that input from others in the Town as discussed above was needed to make this decision. AECOM indicated that Spectraserv was aware of this potential deletion and that AECOM would hold providing direction to Spectraserv as long as possible.
- vi) AECOM provided an update on resident representative services, with Mike Funari stepping in, with 38 years of experience having recently work on both the Waterbury and Southington WWTF phosphorus upgrades.

Ms. Kozlark left the meeting at 7:00 for a previously scheduled meeting.

4) Suez

- a) Mr. Pennell presented the Suez Environmental report for June 2021 and met all permit requirements.
- b) **Route 7 Pump Station Wipes**
 - i) Discussed the problem with wipes at Route 7 pump station, which Suez had noted was a little better with the pumps now only needed to be cleaned once per week.
 - ii) The WPCA sent a letter to the 901 Ethan Allen property owner that is the source of the wipes stating the ramifications of continued discharging of wipes into the pump station. As a result of this letter the situation has improved. Suez and the WPCA will follow up on a regular basis regarding wipes in the pump station.
- c) **Copps Hill Pump Station**
 - i) Suez reported that a pump fell at the Copps Hill Pump Station and damaged the guide rail and pump based as a result of the failure/breaking of stainless-steel lifting chain.
 - ii) Motion to approve the pump station bypass, repair, and pump station materials disposal not to exceed \$20,000 by Mr. Hill, seconded by Mr. Zawacki 3-0.

5) Adjournment

- a)** Motion to adjourn Meeting at 7:06 pm by Mr. Zawacki seconded by Mr. Hill, passing 3-0.

Submitted by Diana Van Ness