

1 **DRAFT**

2 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

3 WALLINGFORD ELECTRIC DIVISION 100 JOHN STREET

4 Tuesday, March 5, 2019

5 6:30 p.m.

6
7 **PRESENT:** Chair Robert Beaumont; Commissioners Patrick Birney and Joel Rinebold; Director
8 Richard Hendershot; Electric Division General Manager Tony Buccheri; Office Manager Tom
9 Sullivan; Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager Neil Amwake; Office Manager William
10 Phelan; Recording Secretary Cynthia Kleist; **Public:** Youness Bahiaoui.

11 Chair Beaumont called the Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the Pledge of Allegiance was
12 recited.

13 **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

14 **2. CONSENT AGENDA**

15 a. Consider and Approve Minutes of February 15, 2019.

16 b. Consider and Approve Minutes of February 19, 2019.

17 **Motion to approve Consent Agenda**

18 **Made by: Birney**

19 **Seconded by: Rinebold**

20 **Vote: 3 ayes**

21 **3. Items removed from Consent Agenda – None**

22 **4. Discussion and Possible Action: Water and Sewer Divisions – Billing Issue –**
23 **Bahiaoui**

24 In his February 4, 2019 letter, Mr. Bahiaoui, who was present at the March 5, 2019 PUC
25 meeting, stated that he was frustrated with a recent water bill noting this bill showed excessive
26 water usage which was not normal. Mr. Bahiaoui explained in his letter that his water bills
27 average between \$120 to \$165 per quarter and pointed out he has a single-family home in
28 which he resides with his wife and two children. He noted that during this billing cycle, his
29 family was not home for two months.

30 Mr. Bahiaoui also stated in his letter that after the water meter was changed, his bill was lower
31 than before at \$110, which meant to him that the old meter wasn't working properly. Mr.

1 Bahiaoui explained in his letter that he didn't change anything in his home besides changing the
2 water meter and didn't have any water leak or any water problems.

3 Mr. Bahiaoui said at the meeting that no one had access to his home when the family was
4 away. He said the home is only 800 sq. ft. and he has no garden or swimming pool. He asked
5 when the water is used, where it would go, and noted since the meter was changed, his water
6 usage dropped down. Mr. Phelan said this was another instance where the Division itself was
7 unable to pinpoint an exact cause of this high water bill. He noted subsequent water meter
8 readings were performed at the location and the readings indicated consumption had returned
9 to normal.

10 Mr. Phelan said he spoke to Mr. Bahiaoui on the telephone and indicated to him that he didn't
11 want to remove the meter until Mr. Bahiaoui received the reading for his next bill. Mr. Phelan
12 said the impression of the customer once the meter is removed and replaced with a new meter
13 and then the bill returns to a normal level is that something was wrong with the original meter.
14 Mr. Phelan said the January, 2019 bill was based on the same meter in which a prior high bill
15 was received. He said if Mr. Bahiaoui looks at his bill, he would see the same meter number.
16 Mr. Phelan said the statement by Mr. Bahiaoui that the bill went down once the meter was
17 changed was not accurate.

18 Chair Beaumont noted the amount on the flanking bills was within 34 cents of each other. Mr.
19 Phelan noted that if one looks at Mr. Bahiaoui's billing history, he has never had this type of bill
20 before. Mr. Phelan said he couldn't objectively come up with a cause and noted this situation is
21 seen seven or eight times a year. He said the meter was put through an objective flow test on a
22 State Certified testing bench and based upon these results, he couldn't find anything wrong
23 with the meter. He said in fact, the meter was 15% under recording at the low flow rate (1/4
24 gallon per minute). Mr. Phelan said typically, the flow test is a very slow flow test and is not
25 indicative of the type of water usage in a home, but it is indicative of a leak, i.e., toilet leak,
26 shower dripping, etc. He said he couldn't state specifically, where the water would have gone,
27 but noted he confirmed the readings and the meter accuracy.

28 Mr. Bahiaoui noted he didn't have a leak. He pointed out the water in the bathroom doesn't
29 keep running. He said when the meter was changed; he asked the technician to check for signs
30 of leaks or water damage and noted the technician didn't see any of this. Mr. Phelan said that
31 at the time the follow-up check readings and the meter change-out, the consumption was back
32 to normal. Mr. Phelan said unless there is an early indication and can get in there right away,
33 there is sometimes a better opportunity to identify a problem, but in this case, this couldn't be
34 done.

35 Mr. Rinebold asked about the 12,500 cubic feet of usage, and wondered if it were possible a
36 leaking faucet or toilet could have caused this type of flow undetected. Mr. Phelan said it is
37 possible a leaking toilet could cause this type of usage and more. Mr. Birney asked about a
38 timeframe of when the high water usage was detected to when it would arrive at the business

1 manager's desk. Mr. Phelan said the timeframe would be approximately one week. Mr. Birney
2 asked how much time was spent on this issue. Mr. Phelan said his staff spends a tremendous
3 amount of time reviewing all exceptions. He noted an exception report is generated based upon
4 every route that is read by the Electric Division and pointed out that once the route is read, a
5 report is produced with built-in parameters of what customers are high and low based upon the
6 percentage of usage over and above their normal usage as compared to the same quarter of
7 the previous year. He said staff will look at the high usage accounts and confirm it's not
8 seasonal. Mr. Phelan said based on staff's knowledge of the account history, the high
9 consumption user will be determined, a notice will be sent indicating something may be wrong.
10 Mr. Phelan said the Division sends out approximately 100 to 200 high consumption notices a
11 month.

12 Mr. Birney applauded the Division. for spending time on this issue. Mr. Phelan pointed out there
13 are many times when the Division identifies a problem and pointed out they have had
14 customers call and express their gratitude that a problem was found. Mr. Phelan said this
15 program has been in place all during his tenure. Chair Beaumont asked if this bill has been paid.
16 Mr. Phelan said he advised Mr. Bahiaoui that he should make a payment on the normal bill
17 amount which was done, and is around \$110 to \$115. Mr. Rinebold asked Mr. Phelan what he
18 would do for the next billing cycle assuming the meter was accurate. Mr. Phelan said typically, a
19 payment plan with no interest has been worked out to provide the customer some sort of relief.

20 Mr. Bahiaoui said he works hard and didn't use this amount of water, because if he did, he
21 would pay for this. Chair Beaumont said he was glad the meter was left in place over the next
22 billing period and pointed out that meters don't normally go off and the right themselves. He
23 said if the meters don't work properly, it is because something is broken. Chair Beaumont said
24 he has never known of a meter that corrected itself.

25 **Mr. Rinebold made a motion based on evidence of the case and the meter testing**
26 **that was undertaken, to authorize Mr. Phelan to put together a payment plan. Mr.**
27 **Birney seconded the motion.**

28 **Vote: 3 ayes**

29 Chair Beaumont noted if the meter had come out and tested badly, this would be another story.
30 Mr. Bahiaoui wondered if the meter test was always accurate. Mr. Phelan said the method in
31 which all meters are tested is through a State Certified calibrated tank and the tanks are turned
32 off once a certain gallonage is reached. Mr. Phelan noted that based on the shutoff, meter
33 readings are taken to determine the amount of water the meter said went through, vs. the
34 amount of water in the tank. He pointed out the calibrated tank is the actual unit measured
35 from. He said the test is done at certain pressures and gallons per minute level. Mr. Phelan said
36 the people performing these tests have been doing this for 20 years and they know their job.

37 **5. Discussion and Action: Sewer Division – Budget Transfer – Injuries and**
38 **Damages**

1 Mr. Amwake explained these are continual conversations with the Risk Dept. He noted there
2 have been two employees in the Sewer Division who have had surgeries and are paid Worker's
3 Compensation when they are out on work related injuries. Mr. Amwake said prior to the end of
4 the fiscal year, it is expected that two more Sewer Division employees will have surgeries for
5 work related injuries and be out on Worker's Compensation. In his Feb. 22, 2019 memo, Mr.
6 Phelan explained that the Division projects that additional funds will be required in the injuries
7 and damages account to complete the fiscal year. Mr. Phelan's memo noted that a budget
8 transfer increasing Account# 46100925 (Injuries and Damages) by the amount of \$44,500 is
9 requested. He noted in his memo that funds for this purpose will be made available through a
10 corresponding decrease to Account #46100462 (Operation Labor & Expenses) where funds
11 remain due to personnel vacancies in the Division's budgeted treatment positions.

12 Mr. Rinebold asked if there was anything the Division could have done to lower the risk. Mr.
13 Amwake commented on the Water Division and the Sewer Division noting that each Division
14 has a health and safety team which meets monthly or bi-monthly and there is also a
15 Management Safety Committee within the Water and Sewer Divisions which rolls up to him. He
16 said the risks are always being assessed. Mr. Amwake said at the end of the day we do
17 operations, people slip and fall and people are out there 24/7 in all types of weather and
18 accidents happen. Mr. Amwake pointed out the majority of injuries in the Water and Sewer
19 Divisions are slips, trips and falls.

20 **Mr. Birney made a motion for the reasons stated in Mr. Phelan's Feb. 22, 2019 memo**
21 **and for reasons stated on the record tonight, to approve the budget transfer. Mr.**
22 **Rinebold seconded the motion.**

23 **Vote: 3 ayes**

24 **6. Discussion and Action: Electric Division – Resolution – Griffin**

25

26

RESOLUTION

27

WHEREAS, the Board of Public Utilities Commissioners of the Town of Wallingford
28 wishes to congratulate:

29

Cynthia L. Griffon

30

"Cindy"

31

32

After thirty-six years of service with the Town of Wallingford Electric Division; and

33

34

WHEREAS, the Commissioners do hereby express their gratitude and appreciation to
35 Ms. Griffin for her continued efforts over the years on behalf of the Wallingford Electric
36 Division; and

1 In his Feb. 27, 2019 memo, Mr. Hendershot also explained he was requesting to be able to
2 authorize the Customer Relations Supervisor (Electric Division), and Assistant Office Manager
3 (Water and Sewer Divisions) to be allowed to make eligible adjustments up to a value of \$25
4 and increase the authorization amount for both Office Managers (Electric, and Water and
5 Sewer) from \$25 to \$100. He noted the General Manager would stay at \$250 and the Director
6 would stay at \$500.

7 Mr. Hendershot noted these changes are requested so as to improve the efficiency of office
8 operations, and as such, eliminate the need to bring minor billing adjustments before the
9 Commission. Mr. Birney asked about the 24 month to 12 months. Mr. Hendershot explained
10 that 24 months in this day and age is a long period of time, noting an adjustment could be
11 made and now, for two years, it can't be done again. He said something could come up in this
12 timeframe, explaining there was a snafu and the customer was a day late getting the payment
13 to the drop box or the Post Office and getting a post mark and receiving a penalty and a late
14 payment when the payment history was good.

15 Mr. Hendershot pointed out on the water side the customer may have four chances to pay on
16 time, but on the Electric Division side, they have 12. He said the Division believed that having to
17 do this 24 times was a bit onerous. Mr. Rinebold asked if this was intended to improved
18 customer relations and increase administrative efficiency. Mr. Hendershot said this was a
19 positive step towards both of these concepts.

20 **Mr. Birney made a motion to approve the Authorization of Certain Adjustments to**
21 **Customer Bills. Mr. Rinebold seconded the motion**

22 **Vote: 3 ayes**

23 **PUBLIC QUESTION & ANSWER PERIOD – 7 p.m. – NO PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE FOR**
24 **THE PUBLIC Q & A.**

25 **8.Executive Session pursuant to Section 1-225(f) and 1-210(b)(5)(B) of the CT**
26 **General Statutes regarding Amtrak Right-of-Way Agreement**

27 **Motion to go into Executive Session at 7:05 p.m. to discuss Amtrak Right of Way**
28 **Agreement without further motions until a motion to come out of Executive Session.**

29 **Made by: Birney**

30 **Seconded by: Rinebold**

31 **Votes: 3 ayes**

32 **PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Beaumont, Commissioners Patrick Birney and Joel Rinebold,
33 Director Rick Hendershot, W/S General Manager Neil Amwake, and W/S Office Manager Bill
34 Phelan.

1
2 Came out of Executive Session at 7:22 p.m.
3 Discussion and Action: Approve AMTRAK License Agreements for Utility Installations.
4 Motion to approve the Amtrak License Agreement for Utility Installations per the
5 Recommendation of the Water and Sewer Division General Manager and Assistant Town
6 Attorney.
7 Made by Mr. Birney
8 Seconded by Mr. Rinebold
9 Votes: 3 ayes
10 **8A. Mr. Birney made a motion to Waive Article 1, Section 1, for Executive Session**
11 **pursuant to Section 1-225(f) to discuss updates to the CMEEC Arbitration. Mr.**
12 **Rinebold seconded the motion.**
13 **Vote: 3 ayes**
14 **Present: Chairman Robert Beaumont, Commissioners Patrick Birney and Joel**
15 **Rinebold, and Director Rick Hendershot.**
16 **Came out of Executive Session at 7:53 p.m.**
17
18 **9. Motion to adjourn at approximately 7:54 p.m.**
19 **Made by Mr. Birney**
20 **Seconded by Mr. Rinebold**
21 **Votes: 3 ayes**
22
23 Respectfully submitted, Respectfully submitted,
24 Cynthia A. Kleist Joel Rinebold
25 Recording Secretary Secretary