

2 PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

3 WALLINGFORD TOWN HALL

4 45 SOUTH MAIN STREET

5 ROOM 315

6 WALLINGFORD, CT 06492

7 Tuesday, December 7, 2021

8 6:30 P.M.

9 **MINUTES**

10

11 **PRESENT:** Chairman Robert Beaumont; Commissioners Patrick Birney and Joel Rinebold;
12 Director Richard Hendershot; Electric Division General Manager Tony Buccheri, Electric
13 Division Business Office Manager Marianne Dill; Water and Sewer Divisions General Manager
14 Neil Amwake, Water and Sewer Divisions Office Manager Brian Naples, Attorney Gerald E.
15 Farrell Sr. and Recording Secretary Bernadette Sorbo;

16 *Members of the public - Rebekah and William Millican*

17 Mr. Beaumont called the Meeting to order at 6:30 P.M., and the pledge of Allegiance was
18 recited.

19

20 **1. Pledge of Allegiance**

21

22

23

24 **2. Consent Agenda**

25

26 a. Consider and approve Meeting Minutes of November 16, 2021

27

28 **Motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 16, 2021**

29

30 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

31 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

32 **Votes: 3 ayes**

33

34

35

36 **3. Items Removed from Consent Agenda – None**

37

38

39 **4. Discussion and Possible Action: Customer Appeal - Rebekah and William**
40 **Millican - High Consumption and Billing**
41

42 Mrs. Millican stated that this is in regards to their prior water and sewer bill. Mrs. Millican
43 advised that their quarterly bill is typically under \$200.00. The bill that was received from the
44 last billing period was \$1,345.00. The Water and Sewer Division thought that the increase was
45 due to a leak in the toilet. Mrs. Millican advised that they did not have any leaks and the new
46 quarterly bill that was issued went back down to \$177.00. Mrs. Millican stated that nothing was
47 fixed, they do not have an irrigation system, they do not have a pool and they do not water the
48 lawn. Mrs. Millican questioned the PUC as to why there was such a spike to their past quarterly
49 bill, as their bills for the past 3 years have been less than \$200.00 a quarter.
50

51 Mr. Naples stated that on June 21, 2021 the Water Division took the normal quarterly meter read.
52 The read indicated that 14,400 cubic feet of water had been used in the previous three months,
53 which was a significant increase from prior periods. On July 12, 2021 staff performed a courtesy
54 re-read, which indicated that the water consumption had returned to normal. In August 2021, a
55 bill was issued for the period ending June 21, 2021 in the amount of \$1,302.37. On August 10,
56 2021, the customer called to question the high bill. Staff made an appointment for the Chief
57 Meterman to visit the property on August 12 to check for leaks or other potential causes of high
58 consumption. The Chief Meterman noted that one of the toilets had a high water level but was
59 not leaking at the time he was there. He lowered the bar to adjust the water level. He also noted
60 that a second toilet was turned off at the valve, but there was a brown water mark in the toilet
61 tank indicating the water level was high and would be going into the overflow tube. The
62 customer stated that they turn the valve on each time they use the toilet, and turn it off again once
63 the tank has filled. A meter read was taken on August 12 that indicated the consumption levels
64 remained normal. On September 3, 2021 the meter was removed for testing and a new meter
65 installed. The test results of the removed meter indicated that the meter recorded 11% slow at
66 low flow, 1% fast at mid flow and 1.3% slow at high flow. The customer's current balance is
67 \$1,566.48. Staff has not charged interest on the balance since the customer formally appealed
68 the charges in October 2021. Barring any PUC action, the interest accrual will resume on
69 January 1, 2022.
70

71 Mr. Naples recommended that the Millican's be offered a 12-month payment plan of
72 \$125.00/month with no interest provided that the Millican's stay current with the \$125.00
73 minimum monthly payments and any future charges.
74

75 Mr. Birney questioned, what does low and high flow mean?
76

77 Mr. Amwake stated that when the meter was removed it was put on the meter test bench. The
78 meter was then ran at three flow rates. The volume was ran at ¼ gallon per minute, 2 gallons per
79 minute and 15 gallons per minute. The Division read the meter to see what volume of water
80 actually went through the meter. This is then calculated to see if the meter is running slow or
81 fast. The previous meter was a positive displacement meter, which is designed to slow down if a
82 leak is detected. The meter recorded 11% slow on the reading for the ¼ gallon per minute low
83 flow toilet leak which benefited the customer.
84

85 The Millican's were confused and requested some clarification as to why their bill spiked for the
86 quarter and went back down to normal on the next quarter billing as there were no leaks detected.

87
88 Mr. Amwake stated that this may have occurred from a silent toilet leak. A silent toilet leak is a
89 small leak that continually leaks.

90
91 The Millican's stated they are uncomfortable paying the bill as there is no reason or answer as to
92 why the prior quarter bill jumped so high.

93
94 Mr. Naples stated that the Division has the data points of the reads. The Division is not sure of
95 where the water went or where it was used but the water still flowed through the meter making
96 the customer responsible for the bill.

97
98 There was further discussion on the meter and the 11% slower read from the meter.

99
100 **Motion to enter into the payment plan of a minimum monthly payment of \$125.00 with no**
101 **interest for 12 months for the balance of the 8-1-2021 bill amount provided that the full**
102 **amount of \$1,302.37 is paid by 12-31-2022; and the Millican's remain current with future**
103 **Water and Sewer bills. Mr. and Mrs. Millican shall contact the Water and Sewer Divisions**
104 **Business Office within seven calendar days to enter into the payment plan.**

105
106 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**
107 **Seconded by: Mr. Birney**
108 **Votes: 3 ayes**

109
110
111
112 **5. Executive Session pursuant to State of Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f),**
113 **§7-232a, § 1-200(6)(E) and §1-210(b)(S)(B) regarding commercially valuable and**
114 **financial information given in confidence regarding the Pierce Project.**

115
116 **Motion was made to move into Executive Session at 6:48 p.m. pursuant to State of**
117 **Connecticut General Statutes §1-225(f), §7-232a, §1-200(6)(E) and §1-210(b)(S)(B)**
118 **regarding commercially valuable and financial information given in confidence regarding**
119 **the Pierce Project.**

120
121 **Made by: Mr. Birney**
122 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**
123 **Votes: 3 ayes**

124
125 **Attendance at Executive Session: Chairman Robert Beaumont, Commissioners Patrick**
126 **Birney and Joel Rinebold, Director of Public Utilities Richard Hendershot, Electric**
127 **Division General Manager Tony Buccheri, Business Office Manager Marianne Dill and**
128 **Town Attorney Gerald E. Farrell Sr.**

129
130 **Time of Executive Session: 6:48 p.m. to 7:32 p.m.**

131 **6. Discussion and Possible Action: Authorization to execute Unite CT Agreement**

132
133 Mr. Buccheri referenced the memorandum dated November 30, 2021 and stated that he has been
134 working with the customer service supervisor at UniteCT in regards to the Letter of Agreement.
135 The agreement was drafted and has received input from all the municipal utilities. UniteCT is a
136 federally funded Connecticut Department of Housing administered program to provide rental and
137 utility assistance to qualified Connecticut households financially impacted by Covid-19.

138
139 Mr. Birney questioned, how will this program be implemented?

140
141 Mrs. Dill stated that this will be handled between the account clerks and the billing office.

142
143 Mr. Birney questioned, how much money will be recouped for reimbursement?

144
145 Mr. Hendershot guessed about low six figures.

146
147 Mr. Buccheri stated that once the agreement is in place, he can make this part of the general
148 manager's report.

149
150 Mr. Rinebold stated that he fully supports this program but does have concerns.

151
152 Mr. Rinebold questioned, how many people will receive assistance, what is the percentage, how
153 many dollars and is this a one-time thing?

154
155 Mr. Buccheri stated that this is for customers that can prove they were impacted financially
156 because of Covid-19.

157
158 **Motion to approve the General Manager's authorization to execute the Unite CT**
159 **Agreement**

160
161 **Made by: Mr. Birney**

162 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**

163 **Votes: 3 ayes**

164
165 **7. Discussion and Possible Action: Endorse Director's request for Bid Waiver for**
166 **Energy New England for calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024**

167
168 Mr. Hendershot stated that the agreement between the Town/WED and ENE is expiring at the
169 end of this month. ENE would like to extend the agreement over the next three calendar years.
170 WED remains very satisfied with ENE's performance with regards to energy portfolio
171 management, wholesale power consulting, and ENE's daily work as the WED's wholesale power
172 agent within ISO-NE markets, and in regards to settlement activities. This proposed updated
173 Agreement is identical to the current Agreement between WED and ENE, except for dates that
174 reflect the new time frame, and revised pricing from ENE. ENE is requesting a 3% annual
175 increase in the monthly base fee, and a 2% annual increase in the fee for Market Based Rate
176 Support. The Town's Corporation Counsel advises that a bid waiver is required as the current

177 Agreement is an “extension” from the original Agreement, which was the result of an RFP
178 process.

179
180 Mr. Birney shared his concerns on going out to Bid and exploring options with other companies.

181
182 The PUC discussed further on going out to Bid with other companies.

183
184 **Motion to seek bid waiver for Energy New England for calendar years 2022, 2023 and 2024**

185
186 **Made by: Mr. Rinebold**
187 **Seconded by: Mr. Beaumont**
188 **Votes: 2 ayes**

189
190 **Motion to amend to revisit issue in the 1st Quarter of 2024 prior to extending the Bid**
191 **Waiver**

192
193 **Made by: Mr. Birney**
194 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**
195 **Votes: 2 ayes**

196
197 Mr. Rinebold went through the Service Agreement and requested revisions.

198
199 Mr. Birney requested to send the Service Agreement to the Town Attorney to review and
200 approve.

201
202 **Motion to amend motion subject to review and final approval by Cooperation Counsel**

203
204 **Made by: Mr. Birney**
205 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**
206 **Votes: 3 ayes**

207
208
209
210 **Correspondence/Committee Reports**

211
212 Mr. Hendershot shared information on the ISO press release associated with ISO’s concern about
213 harsh weather causing possible grid problems.

214
215 Mr. Beaumont stated that there will be a problem if we have a cold winter.

216
217 Mr. Hendershot stated that his take from the article is that there is a fuel delivery issue.

218
219 Mr. Rinebold stated that he was pleased to see the article. Mr. Rinebold believed that the article
220 suggested considering our priorities and that the article reinforced the priority of energy liability.

221
222 **Public Question and Answer Period**

223
224 No members of the Public Present

225
226 **Public Question and Answer Period Closed**

227
228
229

230 **8. Executive Session pursuant to CGS §1-225(f), §7-232a, §1-200(6)(E) and §1-**
231 **210(b)(S)(B) regarding commercially valuable and financial information given in**
232 **confidence regarding the purchase of power**

233
234 **Motion was made to move into Executive Session at 8:16 p.m. pursuant to CGS §1-225(f),**
235 **§7-232a, §1-200(6)(E) and §1-210(b)(S)(B) regarding commercially valuable and financial**
236 **information given in confidence regarding the purchase of power.**

237
238 **Made by: Mr. Birney**
239 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**
240 **Votes: 3 ayes**

241
242 **Attendance at Executive Session: Chairman Robert Beaumont, Commissioners Patrick**
243 **Birney and Joel Rinebold, Director of Public Utilities Rick Hendershot, Electric Division**
244 **General Manager Tony Buccheri and WED Office Manager Marianne Dill**

245
246 **Time of Executive Session: 8:17 p.m. to 8:47 p.m.**

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250 **ADJOURNMENT**

251
252 **Motion to adjourn**

253
254 **Made by: Mr. Birney**
255 **Seconded by: Mr. Rinebold**
256 **Votes: 3 ayes**

257
258 The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:47 p.m.

259
260 Respectfully submitted,

261
262 

263
264 Bernadette Sorbo
265 Recording Secretary

266

Respectfully submitted,



Joel Rinebold
Secretary