

**WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
Town of East Haddam**

**Regular Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2016**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Andrew Lord called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

2. ATTENDANCE:

Present: Andrew Lord, Ed Blaschik, Robert Casner, Richard Fiala, Arthur Merrow, Richard Pettinelli, John Russell

Absent: None

Others present: James Ventres, Grant Weaver, and approximately 9 members of the public

3. MINUTES:

Motion by Mr. Blaschik to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2016 special meeting with the following amendment:

- **Page 7, Item 4, Paragraph 9: Correct the spelling of Mr. Blaschik's name.**

Motion seconded by Mr. Fiala, and carried by unanimous vote.

Motion by Mr. Blaschik, seconded by Mr. Merrow to change the order of business to discuss Item 4B at this time. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

B) Banner Citizen Concerns

Mr. Ventres said the site was inspected by representatives from the DEEP, the Chatham Health District, WMC Engineering, the owner, himself, Andrew Lord and Art Merrow from the East Haddam Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA). Prior to that inspection, the leaching field area was cleared of shrubs and debris. They inspected the septic tank at the country club, and had it pumped out. They went to the tank servicing of unit C, which is an approximately 4,000 gallon tank that dumps into a pump station. This took considerable time to do, but the tank was pumped clean. At the same time, they inspected all of the ports in the leaching field. As the CT DEEP report shows, there was no major ponding or backup. All of the leaching field inspection sites were made accessible. They also went back to the gray water pump, made sure the alarm was working.

They next looked at pump station for units A&B. It was determined that both buildings were inadequate to control odors because they were not well sealed. They did make sure the alarm works in case of failure. The tank had been pumped out approximately one month prior to this incident. From that point on, the CT DEEP put together an inspection report.

Mr. Ventres explained that this site is under DEEP's jurisdiction. The key part of the DEEP report was that the pump station for Units A&B need to have a better cover. Mr. Ventres stated he was there yesterday and the buildings for A & B were repaired, and although it was better, it was not perfect.

Since Ms. Riley recently reported that the tennis court had an odor, Mr. Ventres also went to the Unit C tank and pump station. There was seepage of odor coming out of the vent pipe of the pump station. This morning, Mr. Ventres asked Brian Curtis for product information on the filters, which was forwarded to Steve MacDonald, P.E. and Anthony Longitano, the owner. They spoke today, and the product will be ordered tomorrow.

Mr. Casner asked how high the filter would be. Mr. Ventres stated the unit will be about 3½ - 4 feet high, charcoal filter. Both will help allow the air to be filtered. In addition, the existing 8-foot structure for A & B will have a filter as well.

Mr. Pettinelli asked if the septic system was designed for the area they have, or for future expansion. Mr. Ventres stated it was designed for what was supposed to go there, Units A, B, C, and the unbuilt D section. He noted that the Unit C pump station could take all of Unit D if built. Responsive to inquiry by Mr. Russell, Mr. Ventres stated the area will vent out, and needs to go through the activated carbon filter.

Mr. Ventres stated as for the rest of the issues, the WPCA was requested by citizens to get Chatham Health District and the CT DEEP to the site for inspections. They concur that there should be quarterly inspections, and an annual report.

Mr. Casner asked how the response from the owner has been. Mr. Ventres stated they have had a good response. When he asks them to do something, they do it.

Mr. Blaschik inquired about spending of any escrowed amount? Mr. Ventres stated they have not spent anything from the escrowed funds.

Mr. Blaschik asked about the baffles in the tank for Unit A & B. Mr. Ventres stated these had not been inspected, but the tank was pumped out a month ago and the septic hauler did not note any problems.

Mr. Lord stated in summary, Mr. Ventres has done a lot of work getting the CT DEEP here. The issues are now really in the CT DEEP's hands. There is correspondence going back and forth. He believed the CT DEEP will demand more of the applicant. It is likely that they will continue to stay involved with the communication.

Mr. Casner commended Mr. Ventres on the amount of work he has done on this, and that it looks good.

Mr. Lord opened the discussion to the public for comments.

Ms. Kate O'Boyle, 12 Pinehurst Lane, re-iterated the function of the WPCA. She did not think the WPCA can just push this issue off to the CT DEEP. She stated as far as developer went, the first time they asked for the area to be mowed was February. Regarding the baffles, Ms. Daha from the DEEP said they could not inspect the baffles.

Ms. Charlene Riling, 12 Pinehurst Lane, distributed the CT DEEP report. She stated she has questions about the report, to which she did not receive response yet. Ms. Daha's June 5 response is shown, and Ms. Riling's comments are in red. One question regarding the pro shop, was who holds the permit for that. Mr. Ventres stated that is the CT DEEP. He stated that permit was originally for the entire facility. From day one, the entire facility was part of the system, even if someone typed "residential" on the application as a typographical error. This was all part of the initial diagram. Mr. Ventres stated everyone needed to stop quabbling about that issue. Ms. Riling stated they could talk to CT DEEP about that.

Ms. Riling stated site maps/as built should have the septic tank and leaching field, and should show every connecting point on that plan. Mr. Ventres stated he showed them in the field where that is located. Ms. Riling stated that was fine.

Ms. O'Boyle stated it took the State and this commission in order to have Banner do anything, and that is big in her mind. If they had not pursued it, they would not have done anything. She stated she has a big issue with Banner's credibility. She would like to see documentation that tells her everything is working properly. She was concerned about the tree growth over the leaching field. Mr. Ventres stated they went through several ports in the leaching field but saw no root intrusion. Even if there was, all of the trees have been cut and treated. He believed the best method is to let them die and rot.

Ms. Sharon McClellan, 9 Pinehurst, stated that will not happen unless the field is cut and mowed. She stated it is due to be cut again. Mr. Ventres agreed. It is in the DEEP permit to be cut 3 or 4 times per year.

Ms. O'Boyle stated they wanted a third party inspection for an independent view. She stated everyone seems okay with WMC Engineers, but they submitted an incomplete plan after two-and-a-half years. She stated the values of her property have gone down. She tried to sell her property and couldn't, so she had to take it off the market. She hoped that WPCA would be on the side of the residents to get something done.

Ms. O'Boyle stated one should never smell septic, period. She wanted to see things in writing. People's word is not good enough anymore. She stated everyone wanted to see things in writing. She will not accept anything less.

Ms. Riling wants an independent third party inspection, and that they would pay for. She added that Mr. Longitano does not live there.

Mr. Russell stated it seems like they have gotten back to a mowing schedule. He has not seen any documentation that the septic tanks have not been pumped. Ms. Riling stated the tanks have not been pumped in at least 8 years. The people who were cleaning the tanks had to use a shovel to break through the buildup, and then come back from the labor of having to clean out those tanks. She stated there are no records in almost the past 10 years that the tanks have been maintained. The nitrates have gone up significantly in recent years.

Mr. Russell explained that septic systems bulk at the top when cooking oils, etc. are used. That is why it takes a shovel to break the bulk at the top. There are baffles in the tank, and they are two part tanks.

Ms. Katherine Flannery, Cherry Swamp Road, would like to see a copy of the as-built. Mr. Ventres stated he has one for the A&B units, and one for proposed C unit. Ms. Riling asked about the pro shop. Mr. Ventres does not have that, because it has been there since approximately the 1940's. Ms. Riling stated there have been many expansions to the pro shop.

Mr. Russell asked if they had laundry facilities, to which Ms. Riling responded affirmatively. Mr. Russell asked about garbage disposals, but Ms. Riling stated they did not have these. Mr. Russell explained that these all contribute to up and down systems.

Mr. Russell stated the time frame is a highly variable system. If water is flowing down the system, no need for a camera. From what he has read here, there is not a lot left to do.

Mr. Russell stated they keep going back to the pro shop. They have a kitchen. He believe there is a grease trap, which takes the grease out. The pro shop is far away, and is not contributing to their issue. He could not see where the argument was for this leaching system, and added that there are 50 units there. Ms. Riling questioned why the DEEP couldn't answer their questions.

Ms. Riling asked why they could not get a third party inspection. Mr. Ventres stated that the WPCA does not have authority, nor does the CT DEEP have authority to go onto their property with an outside consultant. The association has the authority, and that association is owned by Mr. Longitano.

Mr. Ventres stated that the WPCA's guarantee was that they will oversee the inspection process every year. Ms. McClellan asked if that included the pumping, to which Mr. Ventres responded affirmatively. She then stated that was good enough for her.

Mr. Ventres stated they will oversee Banner's compliance going forward. Ms. Riling stated they can still pursue their issues through the CT DEEP, their attorneys, etc. She stated they are still not confident with the report. If they are certain it is in compliance, then she felt the CT DEEP should be able to confirm that in writing.

Ms. Riling acknowledged that they appreciate this commission's work. She stated they will continue to work with the CT DEEP. She asked this commission to follow the second stated function of the WPCA. She stated they would continue to follow up with Ms. Davidson, and she will copy Mr. Ventres on her correspondence. Mr. Ventres asked that he be copied on anything regarding odors. He noted that there are 169 communities, and they are inundating the DEEP with requests and applications. Their time allotments get overloaded, and they don't always respond in a timely fashion. They agreed that the system needed repair, they stated repairs that were needed, and they will continue quarterly monitoring of the nitrates. When you ask people for 100% guarantee, no one will give that.

Ms. Riling asked about sewer plant. Mr. Lord noted this was not the same as Banner's, but that the plant was designed for 55,000 gallons per day.

Ms. Riling stated there should be as-builts. She acknowledged the fact that the stipulations of the permit will be done quarterly, with supervision. Mr. Ventres asked that quarterly permits be sent to him and to Chatham Health Department. Ms. Riling stated she appreciated the commission's time to this issue.

Ms. O'Boyle thanked the commission as well.

4. DISCUSSION

A) Water Planet Report

Grant Weaver – expenditures on track.

Mr. Weaver stated they were over budget right now, probably \$31,000 - \$32,000 over budget. He noted the gas, electric, and sludge were also over budget for the first time ever. He believed this was because of the great deal of pumping that had to be done when the plant's roof was done.

Mr. Casner questioned the usage in the summer. Mr. Weaver stated it was similar, except when the Goodspeed was not open, and then it was around 15,000 – 20,000 gallons per day.

The Mr. Weaver stated there are two wires need to be replaced. One shorted at 32 Main Street and burnt out the control in the wiring going to the chamber. Another had been laying on the ground too long. Mr. Lord asked if that was an expensive fix, to which Mr. Weaver stated it was not. It was just a matter of timing to get it fixed. They will follow up with Mr. Traceski again, and if he cannot get to it in the next week, they will call someone else. This could be a safety issue if someone goes to maintain that lawn.

Mr. Weaver stated there have been many discussions with Eric Hess, from F.R. Mahoney, who was also present. Mr. Weaver stated yesterday there were two grinder pumps that needed to be repaired. Two pumps were done for approximately \$600.00, as opposed to \$4,000. His staff had it in their heads that for any pump over 5 years old, it was in the town's best interest to replace it rather than repair it. That won't happen anymore.

Mr. Ventres stated he did the walk and hand delivered brochures, and put the stickers on each unit. He talked to several people. He stated when these repair/replacement pumps have debris such as Clorox wipes, etc. in them upon failure, he would like pictures taken and sent to him, so the cost can be passed along to the property owner. He estimated that 20% of the users were causing 60% of problems.

Mr. Hess stated photo documentation will be standard procedure. They will also be installing new software. They give a 27-month repair warranty with new cores. The exception will be unless there was something foreign in the pump.

Mr. Lord stated this has become a huge problem for this authority. They have never been this far over budget, and they don't have means to continue this way.

Mr. Ventres asked if there could be an evaluation of each pump. Mr. Hess stated if they can't fix the pump on site, they do have an option of putting in a loaner.

Mr. Pettinelli stated when our budget gets healthier, the authority should consider having a couple spare pumps on hand. Mr. Hess stated they will always provide a loaner pump. He explained that the Town would pay for the initial call and any labor for the first call. Mr. Hess's staff would then take the pump back to the shop for evaluation. Discussion ensued regarding having a few spare pumps. Mr. Weaver did not believe they have any spares at this point. Mr. Hess stated they could arrange for an extra pump.

Mr. Blaschik asked what happened to the cores that go back. He has a new house 2 years old that blew the pump. Mr. Hess stated if it was within two years, it should have been under warranty. Mr. Hess was asked to check into 26 Norwich Road. There had been a problem only with 26B, but they replaced A and B. He stated there was no problem with A, and he questioned why this was replaced.

Mr. Lord asked if the commission could go through the bills, rather than being passed through The Water Planet Company. He stated they need to scrutinize the bills. Mr. Pettinelli noted that Mr. Weaver is maintaining the database for the pumps and locations. Mr. Lord suggested the bills be submitted to the authority for approval. It was noted that they only meet every other month, so it would be very difficult to wait for approvals. Mr. Ventres suggested Mr. Weaver pay the bills, but include copies of the work orders with each bill.

The discussion changed to the average EDU cost, which is currently \$1,025.00. Mr. Russell asked what the mechanism would be for guarantee of payment, to which Mr. Ventres stated it would be a lien on the property.

Mr. Pettinelli stated the problem was that we have many repeat offenders. Mr. Lord noted that 35 of the properties had no repairs. They suggested a database that could be plotted onto a GIS map.

Mr. Ventres noted that he was concerned about three foreclosure units. He asked if there were any issues that would stem from the lack of use? Mr. Hess stated if a house sat vacant for few months, as long as the power was on, and the unit was exercised, it would be okay. But if not, the liquid becomes very corrosive and should be pulled. Mr. Ventres will call the company who currently owns these vacant foreclosures.

Mr. Hess talked about overtime rates for night service calls, etc. The question was posed if they could save money if they can do the service during regular business hours. Mr. Hess stated if a customer calls during regular business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:00) they should not incur overtime charges. However, he cautioned that people should not wait until the alarm comes on and stays on. If pump is noisy, have it looked at during regular business hours, rather than wait for something bad to happen.

Mr. Lord asked if alarm comes on Tuesday night if they can wait until Wednesday morning. Mr. Hess stated if it is the first time an alarm has come on, you may be able to wait, not shower, no laundry, etc.

Any call after hours documented by email to technician. Mr. Hess stated he has two full time staff in the office, who work from 7:30 – 4:00. He stated they could add the time in and out on work orders. If call comes in during working hours, the town should not incur any overtime charges.

The authority briefly discussed letters to homeowners. They also have yearly monitoring service that keeps a permanent log of run times, alarms, etc. The cost is \$100.00 per year for air time, plus the hardware cost of \$400. Mr. Hess stated this would be beneficial for owners who are not on site all the time, i.e. restaurant, etc.

5. MEMBERSHIP

Motion by Mr. Blaschik, seconded by Mr. Fiala to recommend to BOS that Bob Casner be re-appointed. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Blaschik stated he was very uncomfortable with the new service for the grinder pumps. The drivers are coming from Massachusetts. He was also concerned that they may be paying for a lot of pumps that were not necessary. He stated we were warned about this company, and we are paying more, just like they were told they would. The commission discussed shut off heads, Clorox wipes, etc.

6. ADJOURNMENT:

**Motion by Mr. Blaschik seconded by Mr. Casner to adjourn at 8:46 p.m.
Motion carried by unanimous vote.**

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Pattavina