

**MINUTES  
NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING – JULY 16, 2013  
7:00 P.M. (RELOCATED TO SENIOR CENTER)  
OF THE TOWN OF BETHEL, CONNECTICUT**

**RECEIVED**

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TOWN OF BETHEL  
TOWN CLERK

**PRESENT:** First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker, Selectman Richard Straiton, Selectman Paul Szatkowski, Public Utilities Commission Member Peter Valenti, Public Utilities Commission Member Michael Gribbin, Comptroller Robert Kozlowski, Town Engineer Andrew Morosky, Town Counsel Martin Lawlor.

Aquarion Water Company (AWC): Representatives included Chuck Ferlotte, Dave Connors, John Hurley, Bruce Silverstone and Don Morrisey. Also in attendance was Laurie Matthieu from the State of Connecticut, Department of Public Health.

*To receive public comments on the proposal to sell assets of the Town of Bethel Water Department to Aquarion Water Company.*

First Selectman Knickerbocker opened the Public Hearing at 7:00 p.m. He explained that the Public Utilities Commission and the Board of Selectmen has recommended the sale of the assets of the Bethel Water Department to Aquarion Water Company (AWC) for the total sum of \$7.2 million. He continued that \$2.5 million would be used right away to satisfy the debt that the water department has accumulated and repays these funds, with interest to the general fund. He explained the need for improvements to the aging water system, one of the key benefits in expanding the economic base and the need to replace the water tank, which despite considerable expense on the town, has not been approved by the City of Danbury.

Town Engineer Andrew Morosky provided background information on the water system such as number of customers, average daily consumption, miles of main, and descriptions of pressure zones, storage tanks, hydrants, treatment plants, pump stations and employees. Mr. Morosky noted that although Bethel's water is in compliance, the water treated at the Chestnut Ridge Reservoir will have difficulty meeting the upcoming water quality regulations pertaining to disinfection byproducts based on past results. Mr. Morosky added that the system's aging infrastructure needs to be addressed and many of the upgrades planned have not been

accounted for in the current rate schedule. It was also noted that the Town's land will be protected by State regulation and that most of the watershed lands will revert back to Town ownership once new groundwater sources are brought on-line.

AWC representatives provided an overview of the company, their mission statement and what services they will provide if the sale is approved.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Billy Michael, Fleetwood Avenue: Among other comments and questions inquired about the employee certification for Bethel employees versus AWC employees.

J. Phillip Gallagher, Sunset Hill: Among other comments and questions, inquired as to whether our water is safe – postcard mailer implies it is not.

Jon Menti, Old Hawleyville Road: Among other comments and questions, inquired as to how many engineers do AWC have on staff (20) and how many do we have (2).

First Selectman Knickerbocker advised that if the vote goes down, then the Public Utilities Commission will immediately begin the process of obtaining financing for immediate items and will prepare a recommendation for the longer term items.

Shani Burke Specht, Nashville Road: Among other comments and questions, inquired as to how many lines we replace now (Town Engineer Andrew Morosky advised that the last replacement project was Bethpage Drive in 2006-2007 for over \$1,000,000). She advised that she heard that AWC has only replaced 25,000 feet of water line.

Cynthia McCorkindale, Elgin Avenue: Among other comments and questions, understands HB416 restricts downsizing utility staff, asked how many customers did United Water have when AWC bought it.

Bill Hillman, Walnut Hill Road: Among other comments and questions, inquired about a closing date, noted that some are not opposed to AWC and if this vote goes down, would AWC be interested in coming back in

the future, concerned about fluoridation, asked for clarification on the legal process, Robert's Rules, etc.

Bob Crnic, Old Hawleyville Road: Among other comments and questions, inquired about union employees and their input on the contract, questioned AWC if they contributed to a PAC – (AWC yes - \$2000.)

Elis Ferrera, Long Ridge Danbury; Among other comments and questions, opposed to the location of the water storage tank and advised that his neighborhood will continue to oppose the water tank placement in that area.

Bob Burke, Greenwood Avenue: Among other comments and questions, inquired about water quality (advised that at this time, water is compliant, as of October 1 – no) and was AWC given personnel records of any employee (NO).

Al Vargas, Reservoir Street: Among other comments and questions, advised that during recent storms, lost electricity but not water.

Bill Hagan, Lindberg Street: Among other comments and questions, asked about operational synergies, combining suppliers and any downside to Bethel customers.

Diana Medwick, Grassy Plain Street: Among other comments and questions, asked if AWC acquired United Water in Newtown.

Nancy Ryan, Walnut Hill Road: Among other comments and questions, asked about the billing cycles.

David Glahn, Elizabeth Street: Among other comments and questions, inquired as to whether this should have been bid (No – price is regulated by state).

Thomas Reed, Summitt Lane: Among other comments offered that he heard from someone in Fairfield that AWC is awful.

Will Michael, Fleetwood Avenue: Among other comments and questions, asked if sale goes through, would town residents ever have the ability to vote on AWC decisions (No – AWC would own the system but regulated by PURA and State).

Barbara Costella, Old Lookout Way: Among other comments, concerned that we are selling our rights away. (AWC – misconception – residents, Bethel or AWC do not own the water, state regulates it)

Kurt Dioff, Hickok Avenue: Among other comments and questions, asked about fracking (AWC – no).

Mike McLaughlin, Among other comments and questions – asked about franchising and exclusive right to water.

Dan Reese, Nashville Road: Among other comments and questions, provided background on what he found about AWC including their investors and shareholder information.

Bruce Silverstone, AWC: Advised sarcasm not necessary – AWC is a fine company with a proven track record.

AJ Bernard, Highview Terrace: Among other comments and questions, offered that there is a state statute that the contract dies after 1 year and the state has control of the land.

Shani Burke Specht, Nashville Road: Among other comments and questions, advised residents should vote NO, not pleased with the process.

Bob Crnic, Old Hawleyville Road: Among other comments and questions, offered that the water department now shows a profit, what's the big deal about bonding 4.5 million, once we lost control – it's gone, there are towns out there that need AWC, Bethel doesn't.

Dominic Ippolito, Linda Lane: Among other comments and questions, inquired about the indemnification clause.

Frank Islip, Evergreen Drive: Among other comments, advised that the lagoons are full and who knows what's in there.

Tom Reed, Summit Lane: Among other comments, offered that we have 300 acres of waterfront property. Water is a commodity – Canada is shipping to China, after deregulation – rates went up.

Michael Macchia, Maple Avenue: Among other comments, expressed concern for potential future fluoridation of the water system.

Charles Steck, Putnam Park Road: Among other comments, offered that the Chestnut Reservoir is full of springs and the town should look into cleaning it out – might make it viable again.

J. Phillip Gallagher, Sunset Hill Road: Among other comments, offered that the town didn't lose water during the storms, land returning is at sole discretion of AWC, no guarantee that AWC will always remain the owner or that they will do the necessary repairs, we should look at putting cell towers on the property, the whole process twisted since the beginning.

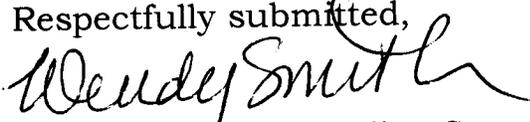
Cynthia McCorkindale, Elgin Avenue: Among other comments, offered that Higgins, MA wants to buy their water system back from AWC.

Carol Cheslock, Huntington Court: Among other comments, offered that the contract is a done deal, people are being shafted.

Shani Burke Specht, Nashville Road: Among other comments, offered we can fix our own water issues, work with neighbors in Danbury on the water to install a tank, create a committee.

As there was no further formal comments, First Selectman Knickerbocker closed the Public Hearing at 10:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wendy Smith". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Wendy Smith, Recording Secretary