

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD**

**December 12, 2022**

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A special meeting of the Town of Fairfield was held on Monday, December 12, 2022 at 7 PM at 501 Kings Hwy East, Fairfield and via Webex.

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM by Moderator Mark McDermott

PRESENT: 32      ABSENT: 8      VACANCY: 0

PRESENT: Bateson, Longo, Ruggiero, Gerber, McCormack, Perham, Steele, Durrell, Galdenzi, Pistilli, Karson, McCabe, Spolyar, Zezima, Garskof, Barahona, Siebert, Wolk, Berez, Havey, McDermott, Vergara, Wackerman, Choniski, Iacono, Meyers, Brown, Georgiadis, Horton, Astarita, Britton, Sparacino

ABSENT: Furey, Lambert, Gale, Graceffa, Kuhn, Ference, Scinto, Tallman

**ITEM NO. 1 ON CALL:**      PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE

Moderator McDermott led the Body in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ITEM NO. 2 ON CALL:**      TO HEAR, CONSIDER AND ACT UPON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION AS RECOMMENDED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE: “RESOLVED, THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH A REQUEST FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS, AN APPROPRIATION OF \$1,750,000 BE MADE FROM THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY (WPCA) RESERVE FUND TO FINANCE THE REPAIR OF THE PRIMARY DIGESTER.’

Dru Georgiadis, District 9 moved this item as distributed with the Call, duly seconded.

Joe D’Avanzo, VC of the WPCA gave a brief overview of the digester situation explaining that in April the bolts blew off. One bid for cleaning and repair was received and rejected after determining it was far too expensive so the clean out was rebid and the lowest bid was awarded for \$630,000; the work was completed for \$531,000 at the end of October. There are four things that are damaged including the piping, the liner that will be pulled out, the lid that will be cribbed and bolts that were damaged will be repaired, and a monitor will be installed to monitor the pressure inside. A \$1 million claim was submitted and the net was \$948,000 to be used toward the repair and cleanout. The bid opening is 12/15.

Dru Georgiadis asked why this took so long if the incident took place in April. John Bodie attributed the delays to the insurance claim investigation, the bid rejection and rebid of the cleanout. Mr. D’Avanzo explained that the smell was exacerbated by the use of chemicals to reduce the smell; the odors did not increase until October when the chemicals were introduced. Ms. Georgiadis asked if the digester is working to which Mr. Bodie said it is not operating at all. The secondary digester is working and the extra chemical & overtime costs are in the operating budget.

Sharon Pistilli, District 3 asked what type of digester, chemicals and maintenance schedule are in place. Mr. Bodie said it is an anerobic holding or storage tank that is cleaned every 10 years. The secondary is a junk gatherer that is cleaned out every 10 years. He further explained that the Ph level was too high so they

stopped using the chemical that was causing the foaming for one to neutralize the Ph.

Liz Zezima, District 4 questioned the lifespan of the digester. Mr. Bodie said the tank was built in the 1950s and rehabbed in 2000 and is expected to last 50 years. The condition of the internal parts such as piping are what need to be evaluated more frequently.

Michelle McCabe, District 4 asked if the original bid was for cleaning only and if there is an understanding as to why only 1 bid was received. Mr. Bodie said it was for cleaning and repair; there were many unknowns because the tank was not clean. He thinks there will be more bids now that you can see what needs to be repaired in the tank. Mr. D'Avanzo said it was an operational decision to rebid and break out the cleaning and repair. The smell was not present in the spring; it was the attempt to fix the smell that exacerbated it in the fall.

Jeff Steele, District 2 asked what is done with the biogas. Mr. Bodie said it is used to heat the digester and another building.

Margaret Horton, District 9 asked if having the primary digester offline will cause more problems. Mr. Bodie said it is not overloaded; it's an ebb & flow of pumping sludge in & out to be compressed and composted.

Christine Brown, District 9 said the neighbors had legitimate complaints about the smell and asked for support of the funding. Ms. Georgiadis said the residents were subjected to unhealthy air quality for far too long.

Bill Gerber, District 2 asked if the sludge byproduct is something of value. Mr. Bodie said the compost is stored by We Care Denali and another vendor sells it, but the Town makes a little money from it.

Mark McDermott, District 7 questioned the project schedule and budget. Mr. D'Avanzo said the bid opening is 12/15 followed by internal reviews, reference check and award. They anticipate 3 months for completion. Mr. Hurley said if it were to go over budget they would come back for additional funding approval.

**VOTE:** The \$1,750,000 appropriation from the WPCA reserve fund to repair the primary digester was approved by unanimous voice vote.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth P. Browne, MMC, MCTC  
Town Clerk