



## ***Fiscal Committee - Board of Representatives***

Monica Di Costanzo, Co-Chair

Lindsey Miller, Co-Chair

# **Committee Report**

**Date:** Monday, December 19, 2022  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m.  
**Place:** *This meeting was held in the Democratic Caucus Room, 888 Washington Blvd, Stamford, CT, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor and was held remotely.*

The Fiscal Committee met as indicated above. In attendance in person were Co-Chairs Miller and Di Costanzo, and Committee Member Reps. Fedeli and Morson. In attendance electronically were Committee Member Reps. Boeger, Figueroa, Garst, Nabel, and Tomas. Absent were Reps. Coleman and Pierre-Louis. Also present electronically were Reps. de la Cruz, Ley, and Summerville, Matthew Quinones, Director of Operations; Larry Pignataro, Competitive Energy Services; Lou Casolo, City Engineer; Shawn Reed, Chief Building Official; William Brink and Ann Brown, WPCA; Sandra Dennies, Director of Administration; Anthony Romano, OPM; Nette Compton, Mill River Collaborative; and Greg Stackpole, Assessor.

Co-Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Committee Action</b>
1. <a href="#">F31.159</a> \$595,314.00	ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Operating Budget); Global Price of Energy Increase; Gas and Electric – (Source of Funds: Contingency) 11/30/22 - Submitted by Mayor Simmons 12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0	<b>Approved 9-0-0</b>

Mr. Casolo explained that this appropriation is to address additional or increased electric costs. Mr. Pignataro of Competitive Energy Services, the City's energy consultant, reviewed the [attached presentation](#) to explain the market conditions leading to the rate increases and how the City produces electric rates. Mr. Pignataro explained that all rates are locked through October 2023. The City's prices are better than the Eversource default rates. In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Pignataro and Mr. Casolo explained that:

- Staggering contracts in a volatile market is a good idea
- Volume on the chart is kilowatt hours of usage. Rates are going to double for all classes in January, the appropriation is meant to address this increase
- New England is very dependent on natural gas for electricity generation

A motion to approve Item No. 1 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa, Garst, Morson, Nabel, and Tomas in favor.)

2. [F31.160](#)  
\$475,000.00

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Operating Budget); Hunt Center Demolition; Chief Building Official has determined that Building at 39 Courtland Avenue has met the Criteria for Immediate Danger and has ordered the demolition. (Source of Funds: Fund Balance)  
11/30/22 - Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

**Approved 8-0-1**

Mr. Quinones explained that there was a partial collapse of the structure in 2022 and the City took some mitigating steps. Ultimately, the Chief Building Official determined that the building needed to be demolished. The Engineering Department has taken the lead in getting bids. This is the lowest bid.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Reed, Mr. Casolo and Mr. Quinones stated that:

- There are no plans to construct an apartment complex at 39 Courtland Avenue
- TRC consultants was hired to evaluate the building, and design the demolition, primarily because of environmental hazards
- These funds are for the demolition. Different administrations performed various studies on the use of the building but this is the first time the City has sought funds for demolition
- There are currently no formal plans regarding the use of the space. There was a community meeting several months ago at which various ideas were presented and this item came up as part of the discussion. It would require more community input to make plans for the space
- This is a response to a safety concern identified by the Chief Building Official
- The hope is to begin work just after the New Year.
- The partial collapse was earlier this year and based on the Chief Building Official's assessment, the determination was made not to wait until the next budget cycle.
- These funds will come from the anti-blight fund, which has about \$900,000.
- There are fewer people around the site if the work is done in winter.
- The deterioration of the building is accelerating and should not wait until the next budget cycle.

A motion to approve Item No. 2 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa, Garst, Morson, Nabel, and Tomas in favor; Rep. Figueroa abstaining.)

The Committee next considered Item No. 15.

15. [F31.161](#)  
\$83,488.00

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); C5B613; BOE District Wide Boiler and Burner Replacement; Eversource Energy Efficient Services Incentive Rebate for Rippowam Middle School Boiler Plant Replacement Project.  
11/08/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

**Approved 9-0-0**

Mr. Casolo explained that this is an incentive rebate the City received from Eversource for the installation of high efficiency boilers at Rippowam Middle School. The work was done in 2021.

A motion to approve Item No. 15 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa, Garst, Morson, Nabel, and Tomas in favor.)

3. [F31.147](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 5-0-4**  
\$4,500,000.00 CP1455 – WPCA; Primary Sludge De-Gritting System; Existing De-Gritting System has to be Replaced with More Efficient System for Separating the Grit from the Primary Sludge; Additional Request due to Inclusion of Primary Clarifier Arm and Drive Unit Replacement and Inflation Costs (Source of Funds: Bond (WPCA)).  
11/02/22 - Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

Mr. Brink explained that the scope of this project has increased; the replacement of one of the primary clarifier mechanisms and drive was added which increased the costs, plus the effects of inflation. This additional appropriation will bring the cost up to where they are now. The project is out to bid. This cost includes the low bid.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Brink explained that:

- The WPCA issues revenue bonds to pay for its capital projects or it pays for capital projects out of the capital reserve
- In this case the costs for this project were included in the 2020 revenue bonds; the entire cost of the project will come from the 2020 bond issue.
- Anyone who pays a sewer charge pays for the revenue indebtedness. There are approximately 22,000 sewer users. The costs for Items 5 and 7 will be out of bonds issued in 2023
- The system is from the 1920s. The last major update was completed in 2004 at a cost of about \$100,000,000. Since then about \$30 million of upgrades have been done

Mr. Romano explained that the resolution for the capital projects budget was approved by the Board in May as part of the budget process. Any additional appropriations to the Capital appropriation will amend the original capital budget resolution.

Mr. Brink stated that since May, the projects went out to bid and came back higher than anticipated. In addition, the primary clarifier was added. The bidding climate has changed since the capital budget was prepared in October 2021. The costs were based on an engineer's estimates at the time. Now there are actual costs and a low responsible bid.

A motion to approve Item No. 3 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Fedeli, Morson, and Nabel in favor; Reps. Boeger, Figueroa, Garst, and Tomas abstaining)

4. [F31.148](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for **Approved 5-0-4**  
Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for Water Pollution Control Project CP1455 Primary Sludge De-Gritting System.  
12/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 4 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Fedeli, Morson, and Nabel in favor; Reps. Boeger, Figueroa, Garst, and Tomas abstaining)

5. [F31.149](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**  
\$1,880,000.00 C22046; WPCA; Perna Lane Area Sewers;  
Properties in the Neighborhood of Perna Lane  
have Failing Septic Systems. Phase I of the Sewer  
Project will serve Properties on the Eastside of  
High Ridge Road between Perna Lane and Merritt  
Parkway. (Source of Funds: Bond (WPCA)).  
11/08/22 - Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-1

Ms. Brown noted this project has been going on for a long time. Ms. Brown noted that this project is on High Ridge Road from the Merritt Parkway north to Scofieldtown Road. There are 3 phases to the project. This appropriation is for Phase 1, which addresses older homes on smaller lots, many of which have failing septic systems. Some of the lots are too small to meet the current health codes for a new system. The Rippowam River borders some of the lots with failing septic systems and they would like to protect this waterway. This is also an aquifer protection area, and they want to avoid leaks into that area. This is an area designated for sanitary sewers because of the size of the lots and the failing septic systems.

Ms. Brown continued to discuss this item with the Committee. This project has gone out to bid twice. Both times, the bids came back much higher than the estimate because the contractors all considered it a difficult project. A survey conducted of the neighborhood got a response from ½ the neighborhood and ½ of those respondents were in favor of the project. The residents of Perna Lane have asked the WPCA to move ahead. The Board decided to go forward if 2/3 of the residents were in favor. Due to efforts of the residents, there is now support of more than 2/3 of the residents. The decision was made not to service basements which would be below the sanitary sewer, which will result in cost and time savings. The cost estimate is now \$8.1 million. This additional appropriation will permit the redesign and rebidding of the project. There will be another public meeting with the residents to bring them up to speed in January. The \$8.1 million estimate is based upon the costs of recently bid projects.

The residents will not be given the exact amount of their costs until after the project goes out to bid. The average cost of the sewerage will be \$21,000 per homeowner for the 146 homes, which will be spread out over 15 years. The homeowner will have to bear the cost of connecting to the sewer line and the user fees.

Rep. Nabel stated that the residents of this district are sorely in need of this project.

The appropriation is being done now in order to be able to issue the revenue bonds in order to be able to finance the project.

40% of the project cost, less the City's portion, will be borne by the homeowners over the next 15 years.

Rep. Ley stated that the residents are overwhelmingly in favor of this project. She shared page 6 of the [attached presentation](#) which is a map of the lots which would be unable to put in a compliant septic system if their current system failed or would have to put into an expensive alternate system. She is in full support of this project.

The residents will have 180 days to connect to the sewer and will have to disconnect from their septic system – the septic tank is crushed – and the resident must bear that cost. There is currently no enforcement mechanism for this although residents are notified of the requirement.

Rep. Ley stated that she has been asking residents about septic in their basements. Some already have grinder pumps or need them. There are only 2 homes she has found that do not meet these criteria.

A motion to approve Item No. 5 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa, Garst, Morson, Nabel, and Tomas in favor.)

6. [F31.150](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for Water Pollution Control Project C22046 Perna Lane Area Sewers. **Approved 9-0-0**  
12/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 5-0-1

A motion to approve Item No. 6 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa, Garst, Morson, Nabel, and Tomas in favor.)

7. [F31.151](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 6-0-3**  
\$3,600,000.00 CP0124; WPCA; Upgrade the Plant Water Pumps and Strainer System and Replace Existing Return Activated Sludge (RAS) Pumps for More Efficient Operation (Source of Funds: Bond (WPCA)).  
11/08/22 - Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

Mr. Brink explained that this project is in the design phase. It will go out to bid in the Summer. It will be funded with a revenue bond issue in the fall. The original authorization was based on an engineer's report done in 2020. They are further along in their design phase and have identified additional needs and scope. These pumps were originally installed in the 1970s.

A motion to approve Item No. 7 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Fedeli, Garst, Morson, and Nabel in favor; Reps. Boeger, Figueroa and Tomas abstaining.)

8. [F51.152](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for Water Pollution Control Project CP0124 Replacement of Plant Water and RAS Pumps. **Approved 6-0-3**  
12/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 8 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Fedeli, Garst, Morson, and Nabel in favor; Reps. Boeger, Figueroa and Tomas abstaining.)

9. [F31.153](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**  
\$50,000.00 CP5025; WPCA Aeration Blowers Upgrade;  
Upgrade Existing Aeration Blowers to High  
Efficiency Blowers and Other Improvements to  
Secondary Treatment Process. (Source of Funds:  
Bond (WPCA)).  
11/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

Mr. Brink explained that Project 9-14 are all part of a completed plant upgrade project, which came up short by about \$20,000 per project (\$50,000 is the minimum that can be requested). The total cost of these projects was \$28 million.

A motion to approve Item No. 9 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, Nabel and Tomas in favor.)

10. [F31.154](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for **Approved 9-0-0**  
Fiscal Year 2022-2023 For Water Pollution Control  
Project CP5025 Aeration Blowers Upgrade.  
12/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 10 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, Nabel and Tomas in favor.)

11. [F31.155](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**  
\$50,000.00 CP5147; WPCA; Upgrade Plant Headworks;  
Upgrade of the Raw Sewage Pump Station at the  
WPCF Including Screenings Removal, Raw  
Sewage Pumping and Septage Receiving. (Source  
of Funds: Bond (WPCA)).  
11/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 11 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, Nabel and Tomas in favor.)

12. [F31.156](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for **Approved 9-0-0**  
Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for Water Pollution Control  
Project CP5147 Upgrade Plant Headworks.  
12/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 12 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, Nabel and Tomas in favor.)

13. [F31.157](#) ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION (Capital Budget); **Approved 9-0-0**  
\$50,000.00 C71201; WPCA; Upgrade of Ultra-Violet  
Disinfection System; Ultra-Violet Disinfecting is  
used to Disinfect Treated Wastewater Prior to  
Discharging to Long Island Sound; the Existing  
System has no Built-In Redundancy as Required  
by CT DEEP Regulations. (Source of Funds: Bond  
(WPCA)).  
11/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
11/22/22 – Approved by Planning Board  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 13 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, Nabel and Tomas in favor.)

14. [F31.158](#) RESOLUTION; Amending the Capital Budget for **Approved 9-0-0**  
Fiscal Year 2022-2023 for Water Pollution Control  
Project C71201 Upgrade of Ultra-Violet  
Disinfection System.  
12/02/22 – Submitted by Mayor Simmons  
12/07/22 – Approved by Board of Finance 6-0-0

A motion to approve Item No. 14 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, Nabel and Tomas in favor.)

16. [F31.102](#) REVIEW; Mill River Park TIF Revenues and Long- **Report Made**  
Term Capital Needs.  
10/21/22 – Submitted by Rep. Miller  
**11/28/22 – Report Made & Held by Committee 8-0-0**

There were no questions for Ms. Compton as a follow-up to her presentation last month.

17. [F31.162](#) REVIEW; Update on Current Property Revaluation. **Held 8-0-0**  
12/05/22 – Submitted by Reps. Fedeli, Di  
Costanzo, and Miller

Mr. Stackpole reviewed the [attached presentation](#).

People who are concerned about their value should look at the website and come in for a hearing. Hearings are by appointment only. Typically, appointments are made online. There is a website contained in the notice. If an owner has more than 2 parcels, then they can call for an appointment.

Ms. Dennies said that without knowing the budget, it is hard to know the impact of revaluation on the tax rates. This information probably won't be available until February. Depending on the impact, the Mayor may look at phasing in the increases.

A motion to hold Item No. 17 was made, seconded, and approved by unanimous voice vote (Reps. Miller, Di Costanzo, Boeger, Fedeli, Figueroa. Garst, Morson, and Tomas in favor.)

Co-Chair Miller adjourned the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lindsey Miller, Co-Chair

This meeting is on [video](#)