

Draft Minutes of the September 11, 2023, Water Authority Meeting
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority
1649 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT

This meeting was held virtually per Public Act No. 22-3, which permanently established the requirements for virtual public meetings in Connecticut.

Present

Authority: Chairman Edward Monahan, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Claudia Koerting, Alex Masse, and Nick Mullane.

Authority Staff: General Manager Josh Cansler

Call to Order

Chairman Monahan called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Public Comment on any Item on the Agenda – None

Approval of Prior Minutes

On a motion of Mr. Masse, seconded by Ms. Koerting, the Authority approved the minutes of the August 14, 2023, Authority Meeting by a vote of 4-0, with one abstention (Mullane).

Correspondence - None

General Manager's Report

1. Oakdale Heights Subdivision (Montville)

Oakdale Heights is a 219-home subdivision in Montville that has been operating its own water system since the subdivision was developed in the mid-1960's. Last December the Oakdale Heights Homeowners Association (HOA) expressed interest in turning over full-time operation to SCWA. Their system consists of two fully operational pump houses, five wells, and 2.5 miles of distribution main.

A formal agreement for SCWA to take over ownership and operation of the Oakdale Heights system was signed by the chairman of both SCWA and the Oakdale Heights HOA last month. The signed agreement was submitted along with a formal Request for Transfer of Water Lands Application to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) in early August. General Manager Cansler stated that as of today he has not heard anything back from the State.

2. Capital Projects Update

a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. The Pre-bid Construction Package, which includes the initial plans and specifications, was submitted to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) Drinking Water Section (DWS) in March 2023. General Manager Cansler stated that a request for additional information and additional forms was received on August 1st. He said the requested information and completed forms were submitted back to DPH on August 3rd. Mr. Cansler also stated that SCWA had hoped to receive project approval in time to award this project this summer, but the project will have to be pushed back into early next year since the approval process is taking so long.

b) Upgrades at the Ledyard Pump Station and Spicer Hill Booster Station

This project includes installation of variable frequency pumps (VFDs) at the Ledyard Pump Station and the Spicer Hill Booster Station, which is part of the Ledyard distribution system. This project also includes the elimination of the hydropneumatic pressure tanks at both stations, which is a top priority for DPH. Unfortunately, because the recently completed Tower Division water main replacement project cost significantly more than estimated, SCWA will have to delay this project a few months, until more Capital Funds are available.

c). Proposed New Well at Ledyard Division

During the drought last summer SCWA realized an additional well is needed at the Ledyard pump station because the peak summer usage was near the capacity of the existing wells. DPH approved the new well in November.

General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA is still working with legal counsel to obtain an easement because the State requires that SCWA control a 150-foot radius around each well. He said the easement is taking longer than anticipated because of a recent change in ownership of the property next to the Ledyard pump station.

d) 2023 Bond Anticipation Note (BAN)

General Manager Cansler stated that based on the long-term capital financing plan approved in 2020, the 2022 BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) will be rolled over into another BAN this year, and most likely at least two more years before the BANs are rolled into a Bond SCWA will begin to pay off. This will roughly align our payment schedule with the expiration of the 2007 Bond that SCWA is currently paying off, while enabling the Authority to do some small projects.

Mr. Cansler said SCWA does not intend to add any new projects to this year's BAN, however we do need to add capital funds for two existing projects from last year's BAN. He said these two projects are the upgrade of the Ledyard Pump Station and Spicer Hill Booster Station (\$60K), and the Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection project engineering (\$15K). Mr. Cansler stated this will bring the total issuance in FY 2023 to \$380,000. He added that the bid opening for the BAN is scheduled for September 26th, and the closing is scheduled for October 12, 2023.

3. Proposed New Development - Salem

In June the General Manager and Foreman participated with DPH and CLA Engineers to discuss a proposed new 24-unit condominium development in Salem. Because this development is large enough to qualify as a separate community water system, and Salem is in the SCWA exclusive service area (ESA), DPH is expecting SCWA to take the water system over once the development is complete. CLA Engineers said the goal is to complete construction and start selling the units by the end of 2024. This development will be located just off of Route 85/Hartford-New London Turnpike, approximately one mile south of the traffic circle.

4. Green Village (Salem) and Millwood (Montville)

Green Village is a 55 and over community with 48 townhouse units in Salem which opened in August 2022. Currently there are 46 units occupied.

Millwood is part of the adjacent SCWA Hillcrest subdivision in Montville. Construction of this 55 and over community started in 2021 and so far, twenty homes have been constructed and sold. Forty-six individual modular homes are proposed for this development.

5. Lead Service Line Inventory

The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper, which went into effect in 2021, requires all public water systems to develop a lead service line (LSL) inventory that identifies all materials used to construct or repair all service lines connected to a public water distribution system. Last fall the EPA released their guidance for developing the LSL inventory. This LSL inventory must be completed and submitted by October 16, 2024. General Manager Cansler stated that DPH finally sent the final inventory template out on August 22, 2023. He said DPH intends to conduct training sessions on how to properly complete the LSL inventory template in October of this year.

Mr. Cansler said that on August 29th SCWA hosted a meeting with Avanti Corporation, Oakdale Heights, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the State Department of Public Health (DPH). Avanti has a contract with the EPA to assist small communities with the lead service line inventory, and follow-on assistance with obtaining funding and contractors with lead service line replacement if needed. Oakdale Heights was selected by DPH to receive assistance from Avanti Corp. DPH and the EPA have authorized Avanti to continue working with SCWA on the LSL for Oakdale Heights after the transfer of ownership. Since SCWA has full-time staff, we are not eligible for assistance with the LSL at our other divisions.

6. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

On March 14, 2023 the EPA announced their draft regulations regarding PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances), which included draft maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for 6 different PFAS in drinking water. The review and comment period for these draft PFAS regulations ended May 30, 2023.

During the 2023 Connecticut Legislative Session the House and the Senate passed a bill that will establish an account in the general fund to provide grants to municipalities to test for and remediate PFAS contamination on town-owned properties, and to assist residential homeowners impacted by such contamination.

7. Mystic Village Apartments - Dieldrin

Mystic Village Apartments (MVA) are one of SCWA's Contract Operations, which are water systems not owned by SCWA. For these systems the owners are responsible for all maintenance, upgrade costs, and sampling fees, and SCWA is paid to serve as their certified operator. Recently the chemical Dieldrin, which was used to treat termites until the 80s, was detected in the water samples taken at MVA. The property owner of MVA hired a company to install a treatment system for Dieldrin.

General Manager Cansler stated that to help expedite the project SCWA submitted a General Application to DPH requesting a change in the treatment process on behalf of the owners on March 1, 2023. After a change of contractors SCWA resubmitted the General Application form to DPH on May 12, 2023, and it was approved on July 21st. Mr. Cansler said that on August 28th DPH requested a status update from the owners on the installation of the approved treatment system.

8. Regional Considerations

a) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met on November 16, 2022. A meeting of the Eastern WUCC scheduled for July 19, 2023, at the Southeastern CT Council of Governments (SCCOG) office in Norwich was cancelled.

b) SCWA Interaction with SCCOG: SCWA and the SCCOG continue to interact cooperatively. To this end, SCWA attends the monthly SCCOG meetings if there are items relating to water on the agenda, and the SCCOG Regional Water Committee, which meets only as needed.

c) SCWA Interaction with the WPC, CWWA, and AWWA: The General Manager represents SCWA as a member of the Connecticut Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly. Mr. Cansler is also a member of the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) Legislative Affairs Committee, which generally meets monthly between November and June.

Other Business – None

Report from Chairman – None

Report from Authority Members – None

Public Comment – None

Adjourn

On motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Mullane, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:30 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on October 16, 2023, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler
Secretary