

**Draft Minutes of the April 8, 2024, 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: Vice-Chair Harry Watson, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Nicholas Mullane, Claudia Koerting, and Alex Masse.

Authority Staff: General Manager Josh Cansler

Call to Order

Vice-Chairman Watson 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. Eccard, seconded by Ms. Koerting, the Authority approved the minutes of the March 11, 2024, Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence - None

General Manager's Report

1. Authority Chair

General Manager Cansler stated that Ed Monahan, who has served as Authority Chairman for the past 11 years, resigned from the Authority on March 28, 2024. He said that the Authority will need to select a new chairman to complete Dr. Monahan's three-year term as Authority Chair, which expires on June 30, 2025. Mr. Eccard nominated the current Vice-Chair, Harry Watson, to complete the remaining 15 months of Dr. Monahan's term. His motion, seconded by Mr. Mullane, was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Mr. Eccard then nominated Alex Masse to fill the Vice-Chair position vacated as a result of Mr. Watson's appointment to Chairman. His motion, again seconded by Mr. Mullane, was also approved by a unanimous vote of all members present. Mr. Masse will complete the remaining three months of Mr. Watson's term as Vice-Chair. The Authority offices of Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary are each for one year, and will expire on June 30, 2024.

2. Oakdale Heights Subdivision (Montville)

At the request of the Oakdale Heights Association, which represents the 219-home Oakdale Heights subdivision in Montville, a formal agreement for SCWA to take over ownership and operation of the Oakdale Heights water system was signed by SCWA and the Oakdale Heights Association in July 2023. 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 August 2023.

DPH finally responded to the transfer application request on February 1, 2024, with a formal letter stating the transfer is subject to the consent of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and that a public hearing will be required. General Manager Cansler stated that he was originally told by DPH staff early last year that this transfer was not subject to PURA review or approval and would not require a public hearing. General Manager Cansler stated that for the past two months he called and emailed the DPH Hearing Office on numerous occasions in an effort to get the requirements for the public hearing, and to schedule the hearing itself. He said that unfortunately all voicemails and emails were ignored. He finally reached back out to DPH staff that he works with regularly for assistance.

On March 28th, Mr. Cansler said he received an email from Eric McPhee, a Section Supervisor at DPH, that stated "the proposed SCWA acquisition of Oakdale Heights public water system is being handled solely by the DPH Legal Office", and that "the Drinking Water Section has no involvement with the process at this stage". The email also stated that if the parties wish to proceed with this transfer a joint letter must be submitted from SCWA and Oakdale Heights. Mr. Cansler said he has prepared a joint letter, which has already been vetted by SCWA legal Counsel, Attorney Nick Kepple. He said that he plans to send the letter out as soon as the President of the Oakdale Heights Association signs it, hopefully that same week.

3. Capital Projects Update

a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. A request for proposals was publicly announced last November and bids were opened in December 2023. SCWA received a total of 3 proposals for this project. After an extensive review of references our consulting engineer on this project, Haley Ward, determined that the two firms with the lowest bids did not have any experience in the construction of water pumping stations. As a result, Haley-Ward recommended that SCWA award this contract to the next low bidder, Richards Corporation. In their recommendation letter Haley-Ward stated that Richards Corporation had provided positive references regarding construction of multiple successful water pump station projects in the past.

At the March meeting the Authority approved a motion, that based on the recommendation of our consulting engineer, the Authority authorize the General Manager to award a contract for the project titled "SCWA Seven Oaks Water Main Interconnection", pending approval by the State DPH DWSRF section, to Richards Corporation of Terryville, CT, for a bid price of \$1,191,750. In mid-March SCWA sent all the bid documents to DPH and we are currently awaiting approval to award the contract to Richards Corporation. Mr. Cansler stated that we were informed that it usually takes four months for approval.

b) Grant-in-Aid for Upgrades at the Tower Pump Station (Ledyard)

General Manager Cansler stated that last fall SCWA received word that the State approved a public act in October that included a grant-in-aid for the Tower Division to upgrade the pump station, add storage tanks, and upgrade security. He said this grant also includes an extension of the emergency connection up Christy Hill Road. The total amount allocated is \$3 million. Mr. Cansler stated in late February he met with the State Department of Health (DPH) to discuss the requirements for the grant-in-aid funding, and in March the DPH Grant Management Office sent a package to be completed requesting extensive financial and organizational information.

c) Upgrades at the Spicer Hill Booster Station

This project includes installation of variable frequency pumps (VFDs) at 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 the station, which is a top priority for DPH. General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA has completed the first phase of this project, which included external electrical upgrades. The second phase of the project will be completed once the VFDs are delivered, which is expected to be late-spring 2024.

4. Robin Division Water

General Manager Cansler said that in 2021 the Authority approved a motion to contract with Lenard Engineering (now Haley-Ward) to conduct a manganese treatment study, and chemical feed modification design for Robin Division in Montville. He said this was after SCWA received a number of calls regarding discoloration, and occasional sediment in the water, from residents of Robin Division. SCWA received the design for a proposed phosphate injection system at Robin Division in late 2021, however based on a suggestion from our consulting engineer SCWA decided to first modify the pump systems at Robin Division to flush out the initial inflow to the system and evaluate the reduction of manganese in the water.

Mr. Cansler stated that the pump systems were modified in 2022 and appeared to reduce the manganese levels noticeably. However, recently he said SCWA has received more calls regarding discoloration. As a result, he intends to submit the application and design to DPH requesting approval of the change in the treatment system allowing for phosphate injection.

5. Proposed New Development - Salem

This past summer SCWA participated in a meeting with DPH and CLA Engineers to discuss a proposed new 24-unit condominium development in Salem, which is in the SCWA exclusive service area (ESA). This development is currently still in the design and engineering phase. The developer hopes to begin construction in mid-2024 with the goal of selling the units in early 2025. This development will be located just off Route 85/Hartford-New London Turnpike, approximately one mile south of the traffic circle.

6. 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 47 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.

7. 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. DPH finally sent the final inventory template out in August 2023. SCWA staff are currently researching and inputting data into the LSL Inventory spreadsheet.

8. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

Mr. Cansler stated that it has been reported that the White House last week wrapped up its review of EPA's final regulations regarding PFAS. He added that although the EPA did not say when the new rules will be released, it is "rumored" they will be out by the end of May 2024. The statutory deadline for issuing a final rule is September 3, 2024. As proposed last year, the rule would set a cap of four parts per trillion for two widely studied PFAS, known as PFOA and PFOS, which is the lowest level at which the substances can be detected by most laboratories. The rule would also set limits on 4 other compounds (PFNA, PFHxS, PFBS & GenX) when one or more of the chemicals are present in drinking water.

9. Proposed Mobile Home Development – Tower Division

General Manager Cansler said that last month a developer met with SCWA about a proposed 10-unit Mobile Home development at 59 Kings Highway in Gales Ferry. There is a water main along Kings Highway which is part of the Tower Division distribution system in Ledyard. SCWA informed the developer that this division had enough capacity to serve 10 mobile homes, but unlike most mobile home parks, SCWA will require that each mobile home have individual meters.

10. Upgraded Systems Tracking at SCWA Pumphouses.

Mr. Cansler said the SCWA Foreman has been working with an electrical contractor to install upgraded tracking systems at the SCWA pump houses, starting with the North Stonington and Tower Division systems. He said these upgrades will enable SCWA staff to log in through our website and monitor tank levels, pump operations, and treatment levels in real time.

11. Regional Considerations

- a) **Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC):** The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met in November 2022.
- 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 October 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 5:50 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on May 13, 2024, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler
Secretary