

**Draft Minutes of the December 13, 2021 Water Authority Meeting
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority
1649 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held virtually using public meeting guidelines established by the Governor to limit the spread and impact of the virus.

Present

Authority: Chairman Edward Monahan, Vice-Chairman Harry Watson, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Peter Balestracci, Claudia Koerting, Nick Mullane, and Barbara Lee Franciosi.

Authority Staff: General Manager Josh Cansler

Call to Order

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

Presentation on PipeSafe Program by Regional Water Authority

Larry Bingaman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the South Central Regional Connecticut Water Authority (RWA), and Dennis Donovan, Director of Business Development for RWA, gave a presentation to the Authority on their proposal to partner with SCWA in their PipeSafe program, which offers customers a service line protection for a monthly fee. After the presentation Mr. Bingaman and Mr. Donovan answered questions from the Authority regarding fees, liability, and services offered through the program. After the RWA representatives departed the virtual meeting, the Authority discussed the presentation internally during Item 2 of the General Manager's Report (below).

Public Comment on any Item on the Agenda – None

Approval of Prior Minutes

On a motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Mullane, the Authority approved the minutes of the November 8, 2021, Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence - None

General Manager's Report

1. COVID-19/Coronavirus Pandemic Update

General Manager Cansler stated that although COVID-19 cases have once again surged recently, so far none of the staff at SCWA have been infected, and operations at SCWA have not been affected. The Authority continues to meet virtually until further notice.

2. Proposal from Regional Water Authority (RWA) to partner in Pipesafe Program

At the November meeting the Authority voted to invite representatives from RWA to present their proposal to offer SCWA customers a service line protection program via a partnership with RWA. RWA currently offers this service line protection program through a program they call PipeSafe. This invitation was based on a letter from RWA in October and a subsequent discussion about the proposal with RWA, Chairman Monahan and General Manager Cansler in November. Mr. Cansler coordinated the presentation by RWA for the beginning of this Authority meeting.

After the presentation the Authority discussed whether SCWA should move forward with a potential partnership with RWA in their PipeSafe program. Several members expressed concern about possible legal liability of SCWA in such a partnership, but most felt the partnership would enable SCWA to offer an additional service to our customers at no cost to the Authority, and potentially some long-term financial benefit. All members agreed that any proposed agreement would need a legal review by the SCWA legal counsel. Mr. Watson queried whether RWA could offer this service to our customers without an agreement with RWA. Chairman Monahan said that they could and most likely would. General Manager Cansler stated that RWA already advertises the program statewide and mentioned that SCWA occasionally receives calls asking if we offer this service.

At the conclusion of this discussion Mr. Eccard made a motion to authorize the General Manager to inform RWA that SCWA is interested in moving forward with drafting an agreement between the two utilities regarding a partnership in the PipeSafe program. His motion, seconded by Mr. Balestracci, was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present. Mr. Cansler said he would coordinate with RWA on the agreement with the goal of having an initial draft agreement for discussion at the next Authority meeting.

3. Capital Projects Update

a) 2021 Bond Anticipation Note (BAN)

The 2021 BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) was finalized in October. In addition to absorbing the interest and principal from the 2020 BAN, the latest BAN included new funding for the replacement of three pumphouse roofs, and an upgrade of our meter reading software and SCWA office computers. General Manager Cansler stated that the new office computers were purchased and are now online.

b) Montville Division Tank and 7 Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

General Manager Cansler stated that since April SCWA has been trying to coordinate a meeting with the owner/developer of the parcel between the end of the Montville water main extension and the existing Seven Oaks distribution system, to discuss an easement across their property. This easement will be required for SCWA to move forward on a project to upgrade the Montville pump station and complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. The first phase of the interconnection was completed in 2007. Completion of this interconnection will greatly relieve pressure on the Montville system and make it easier to work on the tanks in the Montville system, which need minor repairs.

Mr. Cansler said after months of calls and letters SCWA had finally received correspondence from Attorney Harry Heller, representing the owner/developer. Attorney Heller's letter stated that his clients (100 Waterfall LLC) were willing to grant an easement for a water main that follows the street plan for their future proposed development. Mr. Cansler said that their proposed route differs from SCWA's proposed route. Their proposed water main is about 1900 feet longer than the SCWA proposed route, which is estimated to be approximately 1800 feet. The SCWA route follows a more direct route to interconnect with the water main completed in 2007. Mr. Cansler also described two alternative routes to interconnect to the Montville system, which would not require an easement by 100 Waterfall LLC. Unfortunately, those two routes follow a state highway which could lead to a different set of obstacles. General Manager Cansler said he is drafting a response to 100 Waterfall LLC through Attorney Heller stating that their route will cost significantly more and could put the project at risk.

c) Tower Division Upgrades

Over the past year SCWA crews installed new valves and a backup water main leading from the Tower Division pump stations to the main distribution located on East Drive in Gales Ferry. A test of the new back-up water main was conducted in September using SCWA's mobile pump station. The second phase of this project will be replacement of the original water mains.

General Manager Cansler mentioned that on December 3rd, around 1 am, there was a significant water main break just beyond the new backup mains. This water main break resulted in a Boil Water Advisory for Tower Division, which was lifted the next day (Saturday, December 4th), after SCWA received results from water samples taken immediately after the main was repaired.

This year SCWA also installed a new perimeter fence and three new gates around the Tower pump station, and a cellular monitoring system which enhances the ability for field staff to react to changes in the system, such as power outages, low water pressure, and fluctuations to the chemical feed systems.

d) Spicer Hill Booster Station

At the September meeting the Authority approved a proposal from Lenard Engineering to complete the engineering, design, and specifications for replacement of the hydropneumatic tank at the Spicer Hill Booster Station, which is part of the Ledyard Division. This project includes replacement of the existing pressure tank with a small booster pump package, installation of new piping to reroute distribution through the new pumps, and the elimination of the pressure tank from the system. General Manager Cansler said that he expects the engineering, plans, and specifications to be completed by early 2022, and the project to be bid out in the spring.

4. Robin Division Water

At the April meeting the Authority approved a motion authorizing the General Manager to contract with Lenard Engineering to conduct a manganese treatment study, and chemical feed modification design for Robin Division in Montville. Over the past few years SCWA has received an increasing number of calls regarding discoloration, and occasional sediment in the water, from residents of Robin Division. After reviewing the design and cost estimate for the proposed phosphate injection system we decided to first try modifying the pump systems at Robin Division to flush out the initial inflow to the system. If this doesn't work, then SCWA will submit a request and design to DPH for approval of a change to the treatment process at Robin.

5. Green Villages I and II (Salem and East Haddam)

November 2020 the Authority authorized the General Manager to sign the New Water System Agreement between SCWA and Green Village II, on behalf of SCWA. Green Village II is a 48-unit, 55+ Community complex being constructed in Salem. The complex will have townhouses with individual garages per unit. Each unit will have individual meters. Once completed SCWA will take over as the owner/operator of the Green Village pumphouse and water distribution system. This complex is nearing completion and the developer, Colchester Construction, plans to start leasing units in early 2022.

In September the developer asked if SCWA would be interested in also taking over Green Village I, an almost identical development which they opened last year. After legal review the Authority authorized the General Manager to move forward with the process of acquiring the water system at Green Village I in East Haddam. The General Manager stated that he had a meeting with the developer in November and that they are working on a draft agreement.

6. Construction of Millwood Subdivision (part of Hillcrest Division) in Montville

Sun Communities, Inc. is continuing construction of the new Millwood development, adjacent to their Hillcrest subdivision in Montville. The roads and infrastructure were completed in 2019 before Jensen Communities was sold to Sun Communities. The proposed Millwood development will have 46 modular homes for people aged 55+, and will tie into the existing Hillcrest water distribution system. The first three homes were sold in September, and several more homes are nearing completion.

7. Claim by Raspberry Junction Holding, LLC vs SCWA

In 2016, Raspberry Junction LLC, owners of the Bellissimo Grande Hotel in North Stonington, filed a legal claim against SCWA for losses incurred during the water outage that resulted from the rupture of a pressure tank in 2015. This claim was forwarded to our insurance company at the time, Gladfelter Insurance. After five years of winding all the way to the Connecticut Supreme Court a decision was finally rendered on August 23, 2021, affirming the trial court's granting of their motion for summary judgment in favor of SCWA. General Manager Cansler stated that because the Plaintiff did not file an appeal of this decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals within 90 days, this matter is finally resolved.

8. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

SCWA continues to monitor new guidelines and regulations pertaining to PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances). The 2022 and 2023 Connecticut State Budgets included funding for additional staffing for toxicological expertise, permitting of more Connecticut laboratories to do PFAS testing, support testing of public water systems, and a PFAS education program. In September the EPA released their "Strategic Roadmap to confront PFAS contamination nationwide". This roadmap established a list of goals and milestones for the EPA moving forward.

9. Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Audit

Sandra Welwood conducted her annual audit visit of SCWA in August and September. She intends to present her audit findings to the Representative Advisory Board (RAB) Finance Committee and the Authority prior to the January 2022 RAB meeting. Based on the ongoing pandemic her presentation will be virtual. Ms. Welwood will be available to answer questions during the Finance Committee's presentation to the rest of the RAB that same evening.

10. Regional Considerations

a) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) last met in May 2020. General Manager Cansler stated that the Eastern WUCC co-chairs had received some pressure from the State and other WUCCs to call a meeting in early 2022.

A Statewide WUCC meeting was held virtually in November and the next Statewide WUCC meeting is scheduled for February 2022. Currently the Statewide WUCC is trying to address several topics involving interconnections/regionalization, non-community water systems design requirements, conservation/drought, and the process requiring non-community systems to connect to existing community water systems.

b) SCWA Interaction with SCCOG: SCWA and the SCCOG continue to interact cooperatively. To this end, Chairman Monahan attends the monthly SCCOG meetings if there are items relating to water on the agenda. He also attends meetings of the SCCOG Regional Water Committee, which meets only as needed. The General Manager participates on the SCCOG Regional Water Committee's Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TAS).

c) SCWA Interaction with the Water Planning Council (WPC): The General Manager, representing SCWA, is co-chair of the CT Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly. His term as co-chair ends January 1, 2022. All meetings are currently conducted virtually via Zoom.

d) SCWA Interaction with AWWA and CWWA: General Manager Cansler is also a member of the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) Legislative Affairs Committee, which generally meets monthly between Nov. and June.

11. Meetings

General Manager Cansler said that in addition to meetings discussed previously in the General Manager’s Report, he had recently attended an on-site meeting at the intersection of Norwich-Westerly Road (CT Route 2) and Rocky Hollow Road. This meeting, hosted by the CT Department of Transportation (DOT), was attended by representatives of all utilities that had facilities or lines near the intersection. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a future DOT project to replace the hanging stoplights at the intersection with stoplights mounted on poles. Two of the proposed stoplight poles are near the water main extension completed in 2016.

Other Business

Mr. Eccard asked the General Manager if he had reached out to the new Executive Director of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG). General Manager said he had not, but that he would do so.

Report from Chairman - None

Report from Authority Members- None

Public Comment – None

Adjourn

On motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Ms. Franciosi, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m.

It was noted the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on January 10, 2022, at 5:15 pm, either virtually, or at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler
Secretary