

MINUTES

Joint Meeting of the Representative Advisory Board to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority and the and the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority Electronic Virtual Meeting January 20, 2022

The joint meeting of the Representative Advisory Board to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority and the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority was called to order at 7:03 pm by Advisory Board Chairman Barry Weiner. It was determined by SCWA General Manager and Acting RAB Secretary, Josh Cansler, that the requisite number of members present constituted a quorum. Chairman Barry Weiner concurred.

Advisory Board members in attendance were: Chairman Barry Weiner, New London; Carol Russell, East Lyme; Martin Artale, City of Groton; Mary Lou Smith, Town of Groton; Mike Cherry, Ledyard; Anthony Siragusa, Montville; Robert Boissevain and Mike Macina, North Stonington; Jeffrey Callahan, Stonington Borough

SWCA Board members in attendance were: Authority Chairman Edward Monahan, Vice Chairman Harry Watson, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Barbara Franciosi, and Claudia Koerting.

Chairman Barry Weiner offered a period for public comment. There were no customers or citizens in the meeting wishing to speak.

Chairman Weiner asked for a moment of silence for Authority Member Peter Balestracci, who passed away on January 5, 2022; and for former RAB Chairman Dennison Allen, who passed away on January 12, 2022.

A motion was made by Mr. Cherry and seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the minutes of the April 15, 2021 meeting, the July 15, 2021 meeting, and the October 21, 2021 meeting. It was noted that the April and July meeting minutes were not approved previously because there was not a quorum at past meetings. The motion carried unanimously.

On behalf of the RAB Finance Committee, Mr. Cherry reported the Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Audit of the Authority was carried out and accomplished satisfactorily by the firm of Sandra E. Wellwood, LLC Professional Services. Mr. Cherry asked Ms. Welwood for her comments regarding the audit. She stated that the audit went smoothly, and she appreciated the great responsiveness from the SCWA staff throughout the audit process. She added that there had been very few, minor, adjustments during the audit. A motion was made by Mr. Cherry and seconded by Ms. Smith to accept the audit. The motion carried unanimously. After further discussion a motion was made by Mr. Cherry, and seconded by Mr. Siragusa, to retain Sandra E. Wellwood, LLC for the Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Audit. The motion carried unanimously.

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SCWA Authority Chairman Monahan gave his report (Attachment 1) to the RAB and noted the continuing and safe operations of the Authority during the current COVID pandemic. During his discussion on Operational Activities, he gave an update on the proposed project to interconnect the Montville Division and Seven Oaks Division; the project to upgrade the Spicer Hill Booster Station; the Tower Division Upgrades; and the Robin Division Treatment Study.

Under the Administrative section of his report Chairman Monahan discussed a Proposal from the South Central Water Authority (RWA) to partner in their PipeSafe Program; and the ongoing legal matter between Raspberry Junction Holding, LLC and SCWA. He noted that because the Plaintiff did not file an appeal of the final Connecticut Court decision to the U.S. Court of Appeals within 90 days, the Raspberry Junction vs SCWA case is finally resolved.

Regarding the PipeSafe program Chairman Monahan stated that the Authority, at their last meeting, had agreed to send the proposed PipeSafe partnership agreement to legal counsel for review. Ms. Russell asked how the PipeSafe Program worked and if SCWA would have any liability. Mr. Cansler explained that customers enrolled in the program would call the RWA PipeSafe emergency number if their service line fails and RWA would have a pre-arranged local plumber repair their line. SCWA would not have any liability.

Addressing SCWA Planning Activities, Chairman Monahan provided an update on the construction of the Green Village II housing complex in Salem; construction of the Millwood Subdivision in Montville; and an update on PFAS related legislation that could potentially affect SCWA, once implemented.

Mr. Cherry asked if we would be expanding our service area through these two new Green Village systems; Mr. Cansler responded yes. Chairman Weiner asked if we were confident that the two systems are in good shape and met all regulatory standards. Mr. Cansler stated that the design for both systems met AWWA building standards and the plans/specifications had been approved by the CT Department of Health (DPH). He added that he and the foreman had visited both systems and were happy with the quality of construction.

Also in his Chairman's report, Dr. Monahan also noted that SCWA continues its participation with the Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC), the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG), the Water Planning Council (WPC), and the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA).

Chairman Weiner indicated there would be no report from his station at this meeting.

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Mr. Callahan, Chair of the Nominating Committee, announced that the committee's proposed slate of officers for 2022 were Mr. Weiner as Chairman and Mr. Cherry as Vice-Chair. He stated that there was not a nominee for RAB Secretary, but that SCWA General Manager Josh Cansler had volunteered to be acting Secretary. Mr. Callahan made a motion to appoint Mr. Weiner as Chair, and Mr. Cherry as Vice-Chair for calendar year 2022. His motion, seconded by Mr. Macina, carried unanimously.

Jeff Callahan, also representing the Appointments Committee, stated that the RAB needed to fill two vacancies on the 7-member Authority. He said that Ms. Barbara Franciosi's term had expired at the end of 2021, and as mentioned earlier in the meeting, Mr. Peter Balestracci had passed away. Mr. Callahan said that Ms. Franciosi had expressed a desire to be re-appointed to another 5-year term. Mr. Siragusa made a motion to reappoint Ms. Franciosi to another term on the Authority, ending December 31, 2026. His motion, seconded by Mr. Callahan, was approved unanimously by all members present. Since the Appointment Committee did not have a nominee to replace Mr. Balestracci, Chairman Weiner asked that if any members were interested in the position, or knew of any potential nominees, they should reach out to Mr. Callahan.

There were no other member reports.

Under New Business Mr. Macina brought up the fact that there were a lot of vacancies on the RAB, and mentioned that many towns were not represented at all. Mr. Cansler said that SCWA sends out a letter every two years to all the municipalities represented by the RAB asking for representatives to the Board. He said that in many cases we never hear a response. He also mentioned that he had been told by some towns that they had no intention of providing a representative to the RAB because SCWA did not provide service in their municipality. He added that a couple First Selectman had stated they didn't have enough volunteers for many of their committees. Mr. Cansler stated that he felt a bigger issue was lack of attendance by many of the RAB representatives. After some discussion the RAB agreed the first step to addressing the vacancy issue is to have the General Manager reach out to the new Executive director of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) for support filling some of the vacancies. Mr. Cansler agreed to do this.

A motion was made by Mr. Siragusa, and seconded by Mr. Callahan, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting is scheduled for April 21, 2022, at 7:00 pm, with location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Josh Cansler
SCWA General Manager/RAB Acting-Secretary

Attachment 1 to Minutes of the January 20, 2022 RAB Meeting:

Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority Chairman's Report to the Representative Advisory Board January 20, 2022

I. Operational Activities

A. Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

Last year SCWA began the planning and engineering of a project to 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 reduce maintenance costs. Last April SCWA reached out to the current owners of the parcel between the end of the Montville water main extension and the existing Seven Oaks distribution system requesting consideration of an easement across their parcel. The attorney for the owners responded by asking for time to develop concept drawings for a proposed housing development.

In their response, received in November, the owners stated they were willing to grant an easement for a water main that follows the street plan for their future proposed development. Their proposed route is about 1900 feet longer than the SCWA proposed route. The SCWA route follows a more direct route to interconnect with the water main completed in 2007. In December, General Manager Cansler sent a letter to the parcel owners stating that their proposed longer route will result in a significant project cost increase, and that there are other routes available that do not cross their property, and may be more economically feasible.

B. Spicer Hill Booster Station- Ledyard

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. SCWA expects the engineering, plans, and specifications to be completed by early 2022.

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. The second phase of this project will be replacement of the original water mains. In addition, 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. Robin Division Water - Montville

Over the past few years SCWA has received some calls regarding discoloration, and occasional sediment in the water, from residents of Robin Division. SCWA contracted with Lenard Engineering to conduct a manganese treatment study, and chemical feed modification design for this pump station. After reviewing the design and cost estimate for the proposed phosphate injection system SCWA decided to first try modifying the pump systems at Robin Division to flush out the initial influx of water from the wells prior to inflow to the systems tanks. An analysis of the water coming from the wells indicated the water cleared soon after the wells began pumping. If this doesn't work then SCWA will submit a request to DPH for approval of a change to the treatment process.

II. Administrative Activities

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

In October 2021 the Authority received a letter from Larry Bingaman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the South Central Regional Connecticut Water Authority (RWA), proposing a partnership with SCWA in their service line protection program, which is called PipeSafe. Similar to homeowners' insurance policies, customers who enroll in the program pay a small monthly fee in exchange for free repair or replacement of their service line if it leaks or fails. These repairs generally cost \$2,000-\$4,000 and can often result in a customer having no water until the repair is completed. The PipeSafe program, operated RWA, also includes sewer line, septic, or indoor service line protection options. The proposed partnership would allow RWA to enroll SCWA customers in their PipeSafe program. In exchange SCWA would receive a percentage of the monthly fees charged our customers.

After an initial meeting with Chairman Monahan and General Manager Cansler in November, Mr. Bingaman and Dennis Donovan, Director of Business Development for RWA, gave a presentation on their proposal to the Authority at our December meeting. After the presentation the Authority agreed to move forward with the initial draft of an agreement between the two utilities regarding a partnership in the PipeSafe program. The Authority discussed the draft agreement at the January meeting, and voted to forward the agreement to SCWA Legal Counsel for review.

B. 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. 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.

III. Planning Activities

A. Green Village – Salem

In November 2020 SCWA signed an agreement to take over as the owner/operator of the pumphouse and water distribution system at the new Green Village development in Salem once it is completed. Green Village will be a 55 and over community with 48 townhouse units, each unit with individual meters. This complex is nearing completion and the developer, Colchester Construction, plans to start leasing units in early 2022. The developer has also approached SCWA about the possibility of taking over an almost identical development which opened in East Haddam in 2020. After legal review the Authority authorized the General Manager in November to move forward with the process of acquiring the water system at Green Village I in East Haddam.

B. 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 five homes were sold last fall, and several more homes are nearing completion.

C. 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.

D. Regional Considerations

1) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) last met in May 2020. The last Statewide WUCC meeting was held virtually in November and the next statewide 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.

2) SCWA Interaction with Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG): SCWA and the SCCOG continue to interact cooperatively. To this end, Chairman Monahan frequently attends the SCCOG Regional Water Committee meetings. The General Manager participates on the SCCOG Regional Water Committee’s Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TAS).

3) SCWA Interaction with the WPC and CWWA: The General Manager is a member of the CT Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly. His term as co-chair of the WPCAG ended January 1, 2022. He also represents SCWA as a member of the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) Legislative Affairs Committee.

IV. Personal Comment of the SCWA Chair

I would like to join the members of the SCWA Representative Advisory Board in remembering, and honoring, two members of the SCWA community, Dennison Allen and Peter Balestracci, who have recently passed, and who have both made contributions, over extended periods of time, to our collaborative efforts.

Edward C. Monahan, Chairman
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority