

**Draft Minutes of March 10, 2025, 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 Harry Watson, Vice-Chair Alex Masse, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Claudia Koerting, and Nicholas Mullane.

**Representative Advisory Board:** Jonathan Klein

**Authority Staff:** General Manager Josh Cansler

**Call to Order**

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 Mr. Mullane, the Authority approved the minutes of the February 10, 2025, Authority Meeting by vote of 5-0.

**Correspondence** – None

**General Manager's Report**

**1. Oakdale Heights Subdivision (Montville)**

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

In February 2024 DPH informed SCWA and the Oakdale Heights Association that the transfer is subject to the consent of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and in May PURA assigned a Docket Number (24-05-10). Over the next few months PURA requested information from both parties, including two sets of interrogatory questions. Responses to information requests and all the interrogatory questions intended for SCWA were submitted to PURA through their electronic filing portal.

General Manager Cansler stated that in January 2025 PURA issued a Notice of Hearing to be held in New Britain on February 10, 2025, which he attended along with SCWA Attorney Nick Kepple. He said that at the end of the hearing, which lasted about three hours, the hearing officers requested more information from both parties and indicated that an additional hearing might be necessary. Mr. Cansler stated that he had submitted the requested information from SCWA on February 13<sup>th</sup>. He added that he has not heard anything new from PURA since.

## **2. Capital Projects Update**

### **a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project**

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. This project is funded through a mix of State grants (30%), State loans (20%), and Federal Infrastructure grants (50%). Last summer SCWA awarded a contract to Richards Corporation after a public bidding process, but due to delays with issuance of the grant funds this project was put on hold temporarily. Based on guidance that SCWA would receive the funds by the end of the year, a Notice to Proceed was issued to Richards Corporation in late November. Construction began the first week of December.

General Manager Cansler stated that after multiple delays SCWA and the State finally closed on the loan on February 10<sup>th</sup>. He said he met with the DPH fiscal office on February 20<sup>th</sup> to receive guidance on requesting payment for invoices submitted by the contractor. He added that the first set of invoices was submitted on February 26<sup>th</sup> requesting payment for \$526,091. The total project amount is \$1,191,750.

### **b) Possible Grant for Montville Division**

General Manager Cansler stated that on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, he attended a virtual meeting with State Senator Cathy Osten and Town of Montville Mayor Leonard Bunnell. He said the subject of the meeting was the excessive number of service line leaks/repairs in the Montville Division. Mayor Bunnell's concern was that many of these service line repairs require digging up portions of the road, which the Town would like to pave. Senator Osten stated that she was interested in requesting a State Grant to replace all of the service lines in this area, and asked if SCWA could provide a rough estimate of costs to do so.

General Manager Cansler said he reached out to Haley-Ward Engineering the same day to assist with preparation of an estimate, and that on February 21, 2025, he submitted three estimates to Senator Osten:

- 1) The first estimate of \$ 2.63 million is just to replace the 430 water service lines in Montville Manor, while leaving the existing water mains in place.
- 2) The second estimate of \$ 12.5 million is to replace all 430 water service lines, as well as all 26,000 feet of water mains within Montville Manor. Although most of the breaks are in the water service lines, the water mains are 60 years old and at risk of breaks in the future, which would require digging up sections of road and patching. Our engineer highly recommends replacing the water mains at the same time as the service lines over concerns that tapping the old water mains for new service lines will place even more stress on the mains, especially initially.
- 3) The third estimate of \$ 5.7 million is to replace all 430 water service lines, as well as 8000 feet of 60+ year old asbestos cement water mains beneath Connecticut Boulevard only. Not only is Connecticut Boulevard the main traffic artery in Montville Manor, but the water main beneath it is the main artery for supplying the system with water.

**c) Grant-in-Aid for Upgrades at the SCWA Tower Pump Station (Ledyard)**

In late 2023 the State approved a grant-in-aid for the Tower Division to upgrade the pump station, add storage tanks, and upgrade security. This grant also includes an extension of the emergency connection up Christy Hill Road. The total amount allocated is \$3 million. General Manager Cansler stated that the final grant contract was approved and signed by the State in February, and he was currently busy with a significant number of documents and forms that are required to be completed prior to starting the project. He said one of the required documents is a certified resolution by the Authority authorizing himself to execute and sign documents on behalf of SCWA.

Mr. Eccard made a motion to approve the proposed Certified Resolution authorizing General Manager Cansler to execute and deliver documents regarding this grant on behalf of SCWA. Mr. Eccard added that as part of his motion he would be authorized to sign the Certified Resolution on behalf of SCWA. His motion, seconded by Mr. Mullane, was unanimously approved by a vote of all members present.

**d) 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, which is a top priority for DPH. General Manager Cansler said SCWA has completed the first phase of this project, which included external electrical upgrades. He said SCWA finally received the new VFD pumps in October and the second phase of the project started the first week in December. He added that unfortunately, due to extreme cold weather in December, installation of the pumps was delayed because this portion of the project requires the use of exposed water main.

**3. Lead Service Line Inventory**

The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper, which went into effect in 2021, required all public water systems to develop a lead service line (LSL) inventory identifying all materials used to construct or repair all service lines connected to a public water distribution system. General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA met the October 2024 deadline for submission of the lead service line inventory and received acknowledgement of our submission by CT DPH a week later.

Mr. Cansler said that in late November SCWA received notice from DPH that SCWA was also responsible for submission of lead service line inventories for the public system at the Lincoln Park Elderly Housing in Preston. Although SCWA does not own this system we have an agreement to operate this system for a fee. Mr. Cansler said SCWA had finally gathered enough information to complete the inventory in February and had submitted the final LSL inventory on March 5<sup>th</sup>.

**4. Ongoing and Proposed New Developments**

**a) Millwood (Montville):** Millwood is part of the adjacent SCWA Hillcrest subdivision in Montville. Construction of this 55 and over community started in 2021 and so far, 32 homes have been constructed and sold. Forty-six individual modular homes are proposed for this development.

**b) King's Highway Mobile Home Park (Ledyard):** General Manager Cansler said that the construction of this 10-unit Mobile Home development along King's Highway in Ledyard is almost complete. He said SCWA installed the service line to the development in August, and the water main was turned on in December. He added that currently six mobile homes are already on-site.

**c) Exclusive Service Area (ESA) issues in Ledyard:** Mr. Cansler said that after an ESA issue arose at the King's Highway Mobile Home Park, he looked into two other proposed developments in Ledyard where developers have reached out to SCWA for connection to our nearby water mains. In both cases the actual properties proposed for development are in the Ledyard ESA. The two proposed Ledyard developments are:

- A 20-25 house development connecting to the SCWA water main along Hyde Park Drive in the Tower Division.
- A 22-house development in the Ledyard Division connecting to our water main at the end of Seabury Avenue.

Mr. Cansler said that on February 18, 2025, he attended a meeting at the Ledyard Town Hall with the Mayor of Ledyard, Ledyard WPCA, and Ledyard Zoning and Planning, to discuss possible modification of the Exclusive Service Areas in Ledyard. He said one of the proposals was to give SCWA the ESAs for the properties near the proposed Seabury and Hyde Park Drive developments in exchange for a property in Ledyard Center adjacent to a proposed development on property owned by the Town.

#### **5. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)**

General Manager Cansler stated that in April 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for six PFAS in drinking water. The new regulations require all water systems to complete the initial monitoring requirements for each PFAS within 3 years, and when warranted, take steps to ensure compliance within 5 years. Mr. Cansler said the new Trump administration was considering withdrawing the new PFAS regulations and that the State Legislature, currently in session, had a couple of bills pending that could affect PFAS sampling requirements in the State. Mr. Cansler said he had reached out to DPH to discuss the sampling requirements.

#### **6. Digitalization of Blueprints and Drawings Project**

SCWA is currently working with Ziptility, Inc. to begin the process of digitizing our old paper blueprints; specifically the locations of water mains, service lines, valves, hydrants, etc. Digitalization of our drawings and blueprints is a project that has been on the capital projects list for years. In August Ziptility input the addresses and areas served by SCWA into their database. General Manager Cansler said that SCWA and Ziptility are currently evaluating how to best transfer information and data from our old blueprints into their system.

#### **7. Personnel**

General Manager Cansler stated that late last year SCWA began the hiring process to replace a certified operator who retired in 2023. He said in late December SCWA hired a new employee who began work in early January, and as with all new SCWA employees, the new employee was hired with a 6-month probationary period. Mr. Cansler said that after several weeks it was determined that the new employee lacked technical skills, and did not have the ability to work independently without direct supervision. He said after meeting with our Labor Counsel, he let the new employee go.

Mr. Cansler stated that in mid-February SCWA reached out to several candidates requesting interviews. He said that although SCWA reached out to 5 candidates, only one responded. Mr. Cansler said that person appeared to be a promising prospect and SCWA offered him a job shortly after the interview. Unfortunately, the prospective new employee failed to show up for work on his first day. Mr. Cansler added that the March 3<sup>rd</sup> start date had been requested by the prospective employee.

## **8. New Truck**

General Manager Cansler stated that at the February meeting the Authority approved the purchase of a 2025 Ford F250 4x4 Crew Cab pickup from Tasca Ford for \$48,397. This truck will replace a 2017 F250 ton truck with over 150,000 miles. Mr. Cansler said the new truck was ordered on February 11, 2025, and is expected to be delivered by the end of April.

## **9. Regional Considerations**

**a) Drought Update:** General Manager Cansler stated that in November 2024, Governor Lamont declared a Stage 2 drought advisory for all eight counties in Connecticut due to below normal precipitation levels and ongoing fire danger levels statewide. Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the Connecticut Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. Residents are encouraged to voluntarily conserve water. Mr. Cansler said the State Interagency Drought Workgroup last met in February 2025 and decided to remain at Stage 2. He said the Group is scheduled to meet again this month.

**b) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC):** The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met in November 2022.

**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.

## **10. Meetings**

General Manager Cansler stated that he had already discussed most of the meetings he had attended over the past month during his General Manager's Report, apart from a meeting regarding upcoming changes to the State Retirement Plan which SCWA participates in. Mr. Cansler stated that the three employees eligible for retirement, including himself, had participated in the virtual meeting held on February 24, 2025.

**Other Business** – None

**Report from Chairman** – None

**Report from Authority Members** – None

**Public Comment** – Mr. Klein asked if SCWA was planning on ribbon cuttings and/or media coverage at the completion of the Seven Oaks-Montville Interconnection Project or the Tower Upgrade Project. General Manager Cansler said he would look into that as the projects get closer to completion.

## **Adjourn**

On a motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Mullane, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:45 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on April 14, 2025, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler  
Secretary