

**Minutes of the July 9, 2018 Water Authority Meeting
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority
1649 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT**

Present

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

Authority Staff: General Manager Josh Cansler

Call to Order

Chairman Monahan called the meeting to order at 5:16 p.m.

Public Comment on any Item on the Agenda – None

Approval of Prior Minutes

On a motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Watson, the Authority approved the minutes of the June 11, 2018 Water Authority Meeting, by a vote of 7-0.

Correspondence – None

General Manager's Report

1. Update on Miller's Pond

Several months ago the Schacht family, on behalf of Miller's Pond LLC (MPLLC), presented a concept memo which proposed that SCWA enter into a joint venture with MPLLC. The intent of the joint venture would be to move forward with the dredging permitting process, and ultimately, operation of Miller's Pond as a regional wholesale water supply. The Authority selected Attorney Catherine Marrison, from the firm Waller, Smith & Palmer in New London, to conduct a legal review of the MPLLC concept memo, and evaluate all options available to SCWA regarding this issue.

Attorney Marrison presented her legal review of the joint venture concept memo, a detailed list of concerns, and potential courses of action, to the SCWA Miller's Pond Committee in March, and to representatives of MPLLC (Rob and Tom Schacht) in April. In June the Authority sent a formal letter of release to MPLLC, per the requirements of Section 13 of Special Act 381. General Manager Cansler and Mr. Eccard (Miller's Pond Committee Chair) both stated that they have not heard anything back from MPLLC, or the Schacht family, since the letter was mailed. Mr. Cansler said they had verification from USPS that the certified letter had been received.

2. Claim by Raspberry Junction Holding, LLC vs SCWA

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. They hired Attorney Stephanie Berry, of the law firm of Tang & Maravelis, in New London, to handle the case. Although Gladfelter, working with SCWA, has proposed settlements on two occasions, Raspberry Junction has not agreed to either proposal.

In January, the Authority approved a motion to hire Attorney Lloyd Langhammer, a specialist in appellate law, to provide legal representation for SCWA, and assist Attorney Berry with preparation of the case vs Raspberry Junction. In late April, they submitted their Defendant-Appellate Brief to the State Supreme Court. In June Attorney Langhammer provided an update to the SCWA regarding the status of the SCWA-Raspberry Junction case, and in July Attorney Berry provided an update regarding the current status of the case.

3. Tower Division Well #3

In mid-May SCWA started receiving complaints of “dirty water” from a few customers closest to the Tower Division pump station. The SCWA field crews were able to trace the source of dirty water to Well #3 at Tower, which they immediately shut down, and flushed. About a week later there were more complaints, so the field crew shut the well down again. Although Well #3 is our biggest producer (260 gpm capacity), the other wells at Tower have enough capacity to meet expected demands.

SCWA hired Laframboise Drilling and Wellington to pull the pump and run a camera down the well, which revealed that the screen in the well had failed, and was full of sediment. Their suggestion was to drill a replacement well nearby. Because of existing wetlands SCWA hired Lenard Engineering to survey and produce a site map for the well application to DPH. The application for an emergency replacement well was submitted on June 6, 2018. In the meantime Tower Division is operating from the remaining three wells at Tower.

Several Authority members asked if it was possible to replace the screen in the old well. Mr. Cansler said that the costs to extricate the screen and replace it would exceed the costs of drilling a replacement well, especially considering the pump house floor would have to be jackhammered out to pull up the screen. There were also questions about possible other locations for the replacement well to reduce costs. Mr. Cansler explained that the nearby wetlands limited the number of locations near the pumphouse where a new well could be drilled.

The SCWA General Manager and Foreman met with DPH at the Tower Division Pump Station on July 5th to discuss the replacement well site location. At that meeting Eric McPhee of DPH said they could not support the proposed location near the old well because of wetlands constraints. SCWA argued that the old well needing replacement was within the wetlands buffer zone. However, Mr. McPhee said the old well had been approved before current wetlands regulations were in effect, and that the State was bound by the new regulations. At that point SCWA formally requested an alternate site, 100’ from the pumphouse, that does meet the current wetlands requirements. Mr. McPhee said he did not see any reason DPH would not approve the alternate location, pending approval of required easements. The alternate site will require easements from the Town of Ledyard and Avalonia Land Conservancy because the State requires a 200 foot buffer zone around all wells over a certain capacity.

Mr. Cansler said that after the meeting he had received an email from Eric McPhee stating that Lori Mathieu (Chief of the DPH Drinking Water Section) wanted to enter into a consent agreement with SCWA regarding the replacement well. She also wanted to have a meeting with SCWA, Ledyard WPCA, and Groton Utilities regarding the emergency interconnections project between Ledyard WPCA and SCWA Ledyard divisions. Mr. Cansler stated that since SCWA was not in violation of anything he felt that a consent agreement was not only unwarranted, but would lead to unnecessary delays getting the new well approved, and in-place. The Authority agreed that the consent agreement was not necessary in this case. The Authority did support the proposed meeting regarding the emergency interconnections project, and suggested SCWA host the meeting.

4. Emergency Interconnections with Ledyard/Groton Utilities

In October SCWA signed an agreement with Groton Utilities and Ledyard to install emergency water main interconnections between all five SCWA Ledyard divisions, and the Ledyard WPCA system. These projects will be fully funded by Groton Utilities in conjunction with a \$15 million DPH DWSRF (Drinking Water State Revolving Fund) funding package they received to assist with financing the upgrade of the Groton Water Purification Plant. SCWA is working with Groton Utilities on the design and engineering of the emergency interconnections, which is expected to be completed later this summer. Groton Utilities still hopes to start installation of some of the interconnections later this year.

5. Thames Aquatic Center –Ledyard

SCWA continues to work with the Town of Ledyard regarding support of the proposed Thames Aquatic Center project, as well as the proposed extension of Fairway Drive in Ledyard; both of which are in the SCWA Exclusive Service Area. Although SCWA proposed alternatives to provide water from our Ledyard Center system, DPH granted approval of a well for the Aquatic Center, with the stipulation that they connect to the water main on Fairway Drive extension once it is installed, and that the Aquatic Center use SCWA for all required testing and monitoring of the well. In March SCWA received a copy of the reissued approval for the well from DPH, which is valid until Sep. 2, 2018. The Thames Aquatic Center is one of several projects that are moving forward in SCWA's Ledyard Center ESA at this time. Mr. Cansler stated that they have seen clearing of the Aquatic Center site over the past few weeks, but have not seen any signs of a new well placement.

6. Future DWSRF Projects

In December 2017 DPH informed SCWA that several proposed SCWA projects were eligible for funding through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). This program provides low-interest loans, with the potential for up to 25% subsidization, for eligible projects in the form of principal forgiveness. In January General Manager Cansler submitted Part 1 of the required Financial Assistance Application for two projects; Replacement of Tower Division Pump Station, and Interconnection of Montville and Seven Oaks Divisions. In June General Manager Cansler made a formal request to DPH to carryover the Seven Oaks-Montville Interconnection project from the FY18 DWSRF funding list to the FY19 list.

7. Town of North Stonington - New Center for Emergency Services/Water Main Extension

The Town of North Stonington is constructing a new Center for Emergency Services, which also involved extending the North Stonington water distribution system 1500 feet. The water main extension is now complete. SCWA continues to work with the construction contractors on the new Emergency Services Center water system, as needed.

8. Town of North Stonington School Upgrade Project

SCWA has been working with the construction contractors, as needed, on the project to renovate existing facilities, and construct some additions, to the Town of North Stonington Elementary School and Middle/High School.

9. Consumer Confidence Reports

In June, SCWA distributed Consumer Confidence Reports, also referred to as "Annual Quality Reports", to each of our approximately 2800 customers. Because of the nature of SCWA's water service operations, seventeen distinct reports were prepared and distributed. These reports were researched, written, and copied completely in-house. As in the past, processing the reports for mailing, via the U.S. Postal service, was carried out by Viability, Inc. (formerly Community Enterprises), SCWA's co-tenant at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry.

10. Regional Considerations

a) State Water Plan: On June 14, 2018, Governor Malloy signed an executive order directing the state's Water Planning Council (WPC) to immediately implement the State Water Plan that was submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly in January 2018. The plan, which was ordered by the General Assembly through Public Act 14-163, was developed by the WPC to balance the needs of public water supply, economic development, recreation, and ecological health.

The proposed State Water Plan had passed through this year's legislature cycle without being voted on, primarily because of language added at the last minute regarding water as a "Public Trust". CWWA, and many utilities, were concerned that the Public Trust Doctrine could be construed to limit the availability of water supplies needed to support economic development, and affect existing water rights and diversions.

General Manager Cansler mentioned that he is currently serving on the Water Planning Council's Organizational Committee to determine the organization and leadership of the State Water Plan Implementation Workgroup.

b) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC), which convened in June 2016, concluded regular monthly meetings at the end of May. The next meeting will be on November 14, 2018 at the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) office. This meeting is open to the public.

c) SCWA Interaction with SCCOG: SCWA and the SCCOG continue to interact cooperatively. To this end, Chairman Monahan often attends the regular monthly SCCOG meetings, and frequently the SCCOG Regional Water Committee meetings as well. The General Manager participates on the SCCOG Regional Water Committee's Technical Advisory Subcommittee (TAS).

d) SCWA Interaction with AWWA and CWWA: The General Manager represents SCWA as a member of the Connecticut Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly. Mr. Cansler is currently Chair of the WPCAG Nominating Committee, which prepares the annual membership slate for appointment/reappointment of members to the WPCAG. Mr. Cansler is also a member of the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) Legislative Affairs Committee, which meets monthly between November and June.

11. Meetings

General Manager Cansler highlighted recent meetings he has attended since the last Authority meeting. He mentioned that one of the recent meetings was with our insurance carrier (Bouvier Insurance) to renew our insurance policy. He stated that our insurance costs had dropped slightly for the second year in a row, and that our insurance carrier felt there were more opportunities for further reductions if SCWA continues to operate with minimal or no claims in the near future.

Executive Session

At approximately 6:05 pm, Mr. Eccard made a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to General Statutes 1-200(6)(D). His motion was seconded by Mr. Mullane. Chairman Monahan called the motion to vote, which passed unanimously. At approximately 6:25 p.m., the Authority concluded the Executive Session and resumed the regular meeting. Chairman Monahan noted that no motions or votes were made during the Executive Session.

Other Business - None

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 6:36 p.m.

It was noted the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on August 13, 2018, 5:15 p.m. at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler
Secretary

