

**Minutes of the December 10, 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 5:15 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 November 5, 2018 Water Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence – General Manager Cansler provided the Authority a copy of an example letter sent to homeowners who occasionally request to be connected to nearby SCWA distribution systems. He said that these requests generally come from residents whose wells are failing. He stated that the SCWA response letters include estimates of the cost of connecting to our systems. Mr. Cansler stated that almost half of the cost of connecting is the System Development Fee (currently \$3103.00). In his opinion, and that of Foreman Brandon Belair, the overall cost, generally \$6000-8000 depending on location, drives away potential new customers. Mr. Cansler said that most potential customers will try to rehabilitate or replace their well rather than pay the high SCWA charges to connect. He stated that other utilities in the area charge much less to connect.

Mr. Cansler said he understands the need to charge a higher system development fee in new subdivisions where the impact of many new houses frequently results in significant upgrades to the SCWA systems, but he felt that the Authority should relook at the fees for individual existing homes located near our distribution systems. After some discussion the Authority agreed to put this subject on next month's meeting agenda as a discussion item.

General Manager's Report

1. Emergency Interconnections with Ledyard/Groton Utilities

In 2017 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 are to 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.

Groton Utilities began construction of the interconnections in October. Mr. Cansler stated that the Tower/Ferry View and Ledyard Center interconnections were completed in November, and the Barrett Division interconnection was completed in early December. He said that the interconnection at Barrett required a complete shutdown of the system on December 4th because of additional water mains and valves that had to be installed. He also stated that SCWA staff have been monitoring the interconnection construction on a daily basis.

2. Tower Division - Well #3

This past summer it was discovered that Tower Division Well #3, which is located in the pumphouse, was failing. SCWA tried to obtain approval from the State Department of Public Health (DPH) for approval to replace the well a few feet away, just outside the pumphouse. Unfortunately after several submissions and resubmissions, DPH would only approve a well location about 100 feet from the pumphouse, due to wetlands constraints established after Well #3 was originally installed.

General Manger Cansler stated that SCWA has reached out to two different well drilling companies for bids on installing the well at the alternate location. In addition, he is continuing to work, in conjunction with SCWA Attorney Nick Kepple, on the easements required from the Town of Ledyard, and Avalonia Land Conservancy, for the approved alternate well site. The State requires a 200 foot buffer zone around all wells over a certain capacity.

3. 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. 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.

After a series of hearings at the lower courts the case was forwarded to the Connecticut Supreme Court in September 2017. In January 2018 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. Mr. Cansler stated that the Connecticut Supreme Court heard the case on November 13, 2018, and he provided a summary of Attorney Berry's thoughts regarding the hearing. She felt that the case went well for our side, but stated the Justices could still reverse the lower court's decision. She said it may take 4-6 months for a decision.

4. 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.

Sitework and excavation began earlier in summer, and in August the well was drilled. In October SCWA was included (cc'd) on a series of letters and emails that went back and forth between DPH and Anne Vitale, representing the developers for the Thames Aquatic Center:

- October 25, 2018: Letter from DPH to Thames Aquatic Center (Ms. Vitale) stating that DPH would not approve the well because it had insufficient supply to meet system demands. In their letter DPH recommended that the Aquatic Center connect to SCWA.
- October 29, 2018: Ms. Vitale, responded to DPH stating that they are working with their well drilling company on possible solutions to their low yield issue. Ms. Vitale said that they do not intend to connect to SCWA because we do not have any mains nearby. SCWA's nearest main is approximately 400 feet away, straight line distance.
- November 1, 2018: DPH responded to Ms. Vitale stating that, in their opinion, resolving the low yield issue would be difficult, and they reiterated their recommendation for the Aquatic Center to connect to the SCWA Ledyard system.
- November 2, 2018: The Aquatic Center developers sent a letter directly to Lori Mathieu, Chief of the DPH Drinking Water Section stating that they intended to pursue development of the well. That same day Ms. Mathieu responded that DPH understands the path that the Aquatic Center has chosen, and that DPH would work with them to process the next application as appropriate.
- November 13, 2018: Ms. Vitale sent an email to DPH stating that their well professionals have come up with a solution to satisfy all requirements for the water system to be approved, and that DPH would be presented with their plan in the near future.

Prior to the initial correspondence DPH called SCWA regarding the issue. General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA is ready to support the Aquatic Center. To date, SCWA has not intervened in the letter/email discussion between DPH and Thames Aquatic Center.

5. Four-log Applications

At the November meeting the Authority approved a request by the General Manager to expend no more than \$10,000 to have Lenard Engineering perform all required calculations and documentation necessary to achieve 4-log certification on all SCWA systems that qualify. This was based on the fact that over the past few years several SCWA wells have tested positive for E-Coli during routine sampling. If SCWA can get the chlorine treated systems 4-log certified we will be able to reduce our sampling/testing requirements, and SCWA will not have to conduct a public notification for positive e-coli results from samples taken before treatment.

To obtain a 4-log certification a utility must apply for a permit from DPH for each system. Only the divisions which use chlorine treatment are eligible for 4-log approval. Currently 11 of our 14 systems use chlorine treatment. Presently the North Stonington system does not use chlorine treatment, but based on the fact that e-coli has been discovered in the North Stonington wells in the past, SCWA intends to start chlorine treatment at that system as well.

The 4-log application, which must be completed by a certified engineer, requires specific calculations demonstrating treatment technology that reliably achieves a 99.99 percent (4-log) inactivation, or removal of viruses. After the November Authority meeting General Manager Cansler directed Lenard Engineering to prepare all the calculations and EPA/DPH documentation required for 4-log permits for all eligible SCWA divisions.

6. Town of North Stonington School Upgrade Project

SCWA has been working with the engineers and 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. Over the past several months SCWA staff have been working closely with the construction contractor during the installation of the new water distribution system and fire suppression systems for the new additions to the schools. Mr. Cansler stated that the new mains at the school project have now been tested and are operational.

7. Future DWSRF Projects

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program provides low-interest loans, with the potential for up to 25% subsidization, for eligible projects in the form of principal forgiveness. SCWA had several projects that were eligible. In January General Manager Cansler submitted Part 1 of the required Financial Assistance Application for an Interconnection of Montville and Seven Oaks Divisions, and in June SCWA formally requested the project be included on FY19 DWSRF funding list. In November General Manager Cansler informed DPH that SCWA was holding off on moving forward with this project until after they determined the costs involved with replacing Tower Division Well #3.

8. Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Audit

Sandra Welwood conducted her on-site audit visit on August 7, 2018. She had hoped to have the draft audit completed in time to present her Audit Review at this RAB meeting, however she did not receive information she needs from the State in time to complete audit. She will present the draft audit to the RAB Finance committee in December or January, prior to presentation at the January RAB.

9. Regional Considerations

a) State Water Plan: On November 28, 2018 The Water Planning Council (WPC) formally re-submitted the Draft Connecticut State Water Plan (Plan) to the Energy and Technology, Environment, Planning and Development and Public Health Committees for consideration and approval. 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 State Water Plan was heard during the 2018 legislature cycle, but no action was taken. 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. Mr. Cansler stated that the WPC had submitted the same version of the State water Plan that they had submitted last year; the version that contained new language regarding water as a "Public Trust". Many public utilities in the state had argued about the addition of this language in the State Water Plan.

b) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) met on November 14, 2018 at the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) office. The date of the next meeting is to be determined, most likely in January or February of 2019. These meetings are 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.

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 5:56 p.m.

It was noted the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on January 14, 2019, 5:15 pm at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler
Secretary

