

**Draft Minutes of the January 10, 2022, 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, 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.

Chairman Monahan asked for a moment of silence for Authority Member Peter Balestracci, who passed away on January 5, 2022.

**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 December 13, 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 SCWA had its first staff member test positive for COVID-19 a few days before. He said that this one case had not impacted operations at SCWA. The Authority continues to meet virtually until further notice.

**2. 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, 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 by 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.

In early November Chairman Monahan and General Manager Cansler met with Mr. Bingaman and Dennis Donovan, Director of Business Development for RWA, to discuss their proposal. At the November meeting the Authority voted to have RWA give a presentation on their proposal at the December Authority 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.

General Manager Cansler stated that he had received a copy of the proposed partnership agreement with RWA the day before, and had forwarded it to the Authority just before the meeting. After some discussion regarding the agreement Mr. Eccard made a motion to tentatively approve the agreement pending review by the SCWA legal counsel. Final review of the agreement would be contingent on discussion and consideration of the legal review. His motion, seconded by Mr. Mullane, was approved by a unanimous vote of all members present.

### **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 now online, and that we are awaiting more information regarding the pricing for the meter reading software.

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

In late November SCWA received a response to our request for consideration of an easement through a parcel of property between the end of the Montville water main extension and the existing Seven Oaks distribution system. Our request for the easement was made through Attorney Harry Heller, who is representing the owner/developer, 100 Waterfall, LLC. 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.

In his response, Attorney Heller stated that his clients were willing to grant an easement for a water main that follows the street plan for their future proposed development. Their proposed route differs from SCWA's proposed route and 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.

General Manager Cansler stated that in late December he sent a letter to Attorney Heller stating that the longer route proposed by his clients will result in a project cost increase so significant that other possible interconnection routes become more economically feasible. He said alternatives include interconnecting the two SCWA divisions through a much shorter water main installed along Old Colchester Road, directly from Seven Oaks sub-division to the Montville Manor distribution system. Mr. Cansler said that in his letter he stated that SCWA would prefer not to go this route because Old Colchester Road, being in the Town right-of-way will require additional permitting and engineering.

He added SCWA would prefer to cross the 100 Waterfall, LLC property since this allows for future development of their land, which would ultimately benefit both parties.

**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.

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 soon, and the project to be bid out in the spring.

**4. Green Villages I and II (Salem and East Haddam)**

November 2020 the Authority authorized the General Manager to sign a New Water System Agreement between SCWA and Green Village II, a 48-unit, 55+ Community complex being constructed in Salem. 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.

Last fall Colchester Construction approached SCWA about taking over an almost identical development which opened in East Haddam in 2020. 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.

**5. 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 last fall, and several more homes are nearing completion.

**6. 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.

Mr. Eccard asked how neighboring states were handling the PFAS issue. Mr. Cansler responded that several New England States had already established maximum contaminant levels (MCL) for PFAS, and that the allowable levels varied by state. Ms. Koerting quoted the MCL for Massachusetts had established. Mr. Cansler said that the State DPH may try to set allowable levels in the upcoming legislative session, or they may wait for the EPA to establish a Federal Standard for MCLs in PFAS.

#### **7. 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.

#### **8. Appointment of New Authority Member**

General Manager Cansler stated that long-time member Peter Balestracci had intended to make this Authority meeting his last meeting, and that SCWA had purchased a plaque to be presented at this meeting. He stated that with Mr. Balestracci’s passing the week before he wasn’t sure what to do with the plaque. After some discussion the Authority decided it would be best to send the plaque to his wife, along with a donation to his favorite charity, The Knights of Columbus Chapter in Mystic.

#### **9. Regional Considerations**

**a) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC):** The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) last met in May 2020. 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):** General Manager stated that his term as co-chair of the CT Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG) had ended the week before, but that he intended to remain on the Advisory Council, which meets monthly. 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.

**Other Business** - None

**Report from Chairman**

Chairman Monahan mentioned an email he sent the week before to General Manager Cansler about an announcement by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation regarding a \$150K Request for Proposal for a "Resilience Pipeline Project". Mr. Cansler stated that he intended to look into this more.

**Report from Authority Members**

Mr. Watson asked about updates on legislation that could potentially impact water utilities. Mr. Cansler stated that while the State Legislature is in session each year, he attends regular legislative affairs committee meetings hosted by the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA). He said that he also receives frequent updates from CWWA regarding any legislation potentially affecting the water industry.

**Public Comment** – None

**Adjourn**

On motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Ms. Franciosi, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m.

It was noted the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on February 14, 2022, at 5:15 pm, either virtually, or at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler  
Secretary