

**Minutes of the September 10, 2018 Water Authority Meeting  
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority  
1649 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT**

**Present**

**Authority:** Chairman Edward Monahan, 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 August 13, 2018 Water Authority Meeting, by a vote of 6-0.

**Correspondence** – None

**General Manager's Report**

**1. Tower Division - Well #3**

SCWA continues to work with the State Department of Public Health for approval of a well to replace Well #3 at the Tower Division. In May it was discovered that the screen in the well had failed, and was full of sediment. LaFramboise Drilling and Welling and Lenard Engineering both agreed that because of the position of the well inside the pumphouse it would be very expensive to replace the well at its current location. They recommended replacing the well a few feet away, outside the pumphouse.

SCWA submitted an application to DPH for a replacement well a few feet from Well #3. In July DPH visited the Tower Division site and informed us that they could not support the proposed location near the old well, because of wetlands constraints. SCWA immediately submitted an application for an alternate well site, about 100' from the pumphouse. The alternate site meets the current wetlands requirements.

In August Lori Mathieu, Chief of the DPH Drinking Water Section, visited the Tower Division site. She approved the proposed alternate well location 100' from the pumphouse, however, at the request of SCWA she stated she would reconsider approval of the original requested location, just outside the pumphouse. SCWA is still waiting on word back regarding approval of that site. In the meantime, General Manager Cansler, in conjunction with SCWA Attorney Nick Kepple, is continuing to work on 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. Mr. Cansler stated that he and Attorney Kepple met with Avalonia Conservancy in August, and that Attorney Kepple was trying to arrange a future meeting with the Town of Ledyard.

## **2. Emergency Interconnections with Ledyard/Groton Utilities**

In late 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.

SCWA received a copy of the plans from Groton Utilities in July 2018. General Manager Cansler sent a copy of the plans to Lenard Engineering for review. On August 20<sup>th</sup> SCWA met with Groton Utilities and DPH to discuss the review comments and construction schedule. Attendees included the Director of Groton Utilities, and Lori Mathieu from DPH. SCWA's biggest concern was that the interconnections would provide adequate water supply to all areas, per the terms of the agreement. SCWA also expressed concern that all of the construction met DPH requirements.

Mr. Cansler stated that Groton Utilities did some test pits in late August, and that they plan to begin construction within a few weeks. DPH requested they start first with the Tower/Ferry View Division. Groton Utilities has informed SCWA that they intend to complete the interconnections at Tower, Barrett, Ledyard, and Chriswood Divisions this year. They intend to complete the long interconnection between Ledyard and Gray Farms Division next spring.

## **3. Water Outages in North Stonington**

General Manager Cansler stated that recently there has been three outages of the North Stonington water system. One of the outages, on Friday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, was the result of a valve that was not installed properly at the school project, by the contractor working on that project. In that instance SCWA field crews were able to isolate the library and schools, and return water back to the rest of the Town until the contractor re-installed the new valve.

The other two outages were the result of an electrical issue with the probe that measures the water level in the 100,000 gallon storage tank. When the water level reaches a certain level, the pumps kick on, and fills the tank back up. There is a warning system that calls us if the tank goes below a certain level. The probe started malfunctioning after an electrical storm in July. After the first outage we replaced the probe.

Unfortunately there is still an electrical problem that causes the probe to occasionally misread the water level. On Friday night, August 31<sup>st</sup>, the probe read that the tank was full, even though it was empty. Unfortunately since the probe was reading full, the warning system did not kick on either. SCWA had A/Z Corporation, which does our electrical work, out the following day, but they could not determine the electrical issue with the probe. On Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, we met with a representative from the probe company.

Mr. Cansler said that the previous Friday SCWA and A/Z installed a back-up probe, which will alert the wells to kick on if the tank reaches a certain level. The back-up probe will also alert emergency on-call personnel. SCWA intends to continue physically checking the level of the tank twice a day, including weekends, until we are confident everything is working properly.

#### **4. Cedar Ridge Expansion**

During the summer SCWA was contacted several times regarding a possible connection of the Cedar Ridge Division to the adjacent mobile home park, called Northstone Gardens. Apparently the wells at Northstone Gardens can no longer provide adequate drinking water for the 25-35 trailers in the park. Representatives of both DPH and Northstone Gardens have both reached out to SCWA regarding the feasibility of connecting to the Cedar Ridge system. SCWA supports the possible interconnection, however, because Northstone is at a higher elevation, a booster station would be required. In addition, because there is very limited storage at Cedar Ridge, an atmospheric tank would have to be installed as well. The total water main required would be about 1000 feet, depending on the route, which is dependent on several easements. Based on a rough internal estimate, SCWA informed both Northstone and DPH that the cost to connect to the Cedar Ridge system would be \$300-400K.

SCWA suggested installing a main along Rocky Hollow Road to connect both Cedar Ridge and Northstone Gardens to the North Stonington system. This would cost roughly \$450-550K. This option would allow SCWA to close the Cedar Ridge pump station, which doesn't have enough storage capacity, and is in need of renovation. General Manager Cansler discussed this option with DPH and LaFramboise at the meeting to discuss the Emergency Interconnections project in August.

#### **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 was valid until September 2, 2018. Mr. Cansler stated that over the summer there was some partial clearing of the Aquatic Center site, and that in late-August a well was drilled. Since then there has not been any activity at the site. He mentioned that there were also renewed signs of construction at the property across from the Ledyard pump station.

#### **6. 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. In July, and again in August, SCWA met with the construction firms installing the new water distribution system and fire suppression systems for the new additions to the schools.

#### **7. 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.

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. Both attorneys have provided recent updates on the status of the case. It is expected that the case may go before the court again in mid-September of this year.

## **8. 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.

## **9. Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Audit**

Sandra Welwood conducted her on-site audit visit on August 7, 2018. She hopes to have the draft audit completed prior to the October 15<sup>th</sup> Authority meeting, however completion of the audit is dependent on information from the State, which she says has been hard to obtain in the past. If she can complete the audit before the October meeting, she can present the audit findings to the RAB in October.

## **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". General Manager Cansler is currently serving on the Water Planning Council's Organizational Committee to determine the organization and leadership of a 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 stated that the only meeting not discussed earlier in the General Manager's Report was a meeting, on site, at the new Millwood Estates development, next to Hillcrest in Montville. The meeting was with the Jensen Brothers owners of Jensen's Communities, and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the location for the new meter pit and the water main connections.

**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 5:40 p.m.

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

Josh Cansler  
Secretary

