

**Draft Minutes of the August 9, 2021 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, Barbara Lee Franciosi, Peter Balestracci, Claudia Koerting, and Nick Mullane.

**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. Watson, the Authority approved the minutes of the July 12, 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 although COVID-19 cases continue to rise in New London County, so far none of the staff at SCWA have been infected, and operations at SCWA have not been affected. The Authority discussed future meetings and decided that based on the recent increases in infections from the COVID-19 Delta variant, the Authority will continue to meet virtually until further notice. Mr. Cansler mentioned that the July Representative Advisory Board (RAB), which was held in-person, had an unusually low turn-out, and that several members who did attend stated that they would rather have held the meeting virtually.

**2. Capital Projects Update**

**a) Montville Division Tank and 7 Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project**

In March 2021, DPH approved SCWA's Preliminary Engineering Report requesting approval of 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 are in need of minor repairs. As part of the initial upgrades to the Montville pump station, SCWA had the raw water concrete storage tank at Montville cleaned-out, power-washed, sealed, and coated in May.

General Manager Cansler reminded the Authority that a few months ago SCWA reached out to the current owners of the parcel between the end of the Montville water main extension and the existing Seven Oaks distribution system (100 Waterfall LLC) requesting a meeting to discuss an easement across their parcel. The attorney for 100 Waterfall responded by asking for time to develop concept drawings for a proposed housing development, which they plan to build in the future. Mr. Cansler stated that in late July the attorney representing 100 Waterfall LLC indicated the owners were still not prepared to discuss the future plans for this parcel.

**b) Tower Division Upgrades**

In November SCWA crews installed new valves in the existing water mains leading from the Tower Division pump stations to the main distribution located on East Drive in Gales Ferry. Over the past few years there have been several breaks in this water main, each resulting in system wide outages. General Manager Cansler stated that the second phase of this project, installation of a back-up water main from the Tower pumphouses to East Drive, which has been rescheduled multiple times due to weather, material shortages, and most recently, diversion of assets due to water main breaks, had finally been completed the first week in August. This phase of the project did not involve a system wide outage. He said completion of this project will eliminate any future system wide outages resulting from breaks in the water mains leading out of the pump station and into the main Tower distribution system.

General Manager Cansler said that the project to install new perimeter fencing, and three new gates around the Tower pumphouses, which was approved by the Authority at the previous meeting, was slated to begin on August 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Cansler said this was a positive development since he was initially informed the project wouldn't start until later in the fall. He said the new fencing, along with the cellular monitoring system installed in May, and the cameras installed in 2019 will greatly increase security at Tower Division, and significantly enhance the ability of the SCWA field staff to react to changes in the system such as power outages, low water pressure, and fluctuations to the chemical feed systems.

**3. Robin Division Water**

At the April meeting the Authority approved a motion authorizing the General Manager to contract with Lenard Engineering to conduct a manganese treatment study, and chemical feed modification design for Robin Division in Montville. Over the past few years SCWA has received an increasing number of calls regarding discoloration, and occasional sediment in the water, from residents of Robin Division. SCWA received the design for a proposed phosphate injection system at Robin Division in July. General Manager Cansler said he is now working with Lenard Engineering on the documents required by DPH to request approval for a change to the treatment process at Robin.

**4. Green Village II – Salem**

In November 2020 the Authority authorized the General Manager to sign the New Water System Agreement between SCWA and Green Village II, on behalf of SCWA. Green Village II is a 48 unit, 55+ Community complex being constructed in Salem. The complex will have townhouses with individual garages per unit. Each unit will have individual meters. Once completed SCWA will take over as the owner/operator of the Green Village pumphouse and water distribution system. General Manager Cansler stated that the site has been cleared and installation of most sub-grade infrastructure has been completed, along with the structural framing and roofing for most of the townhouse units. Mr. Cansler said he had talked to the developer recently and was told that the new development will be open by the end of the year. The developer also stated that he has a waiting list for units.

## **5. Construction of Millwood Subdivision (part of Hillcrest Division) in Montville**

Sun Communities, Inc. has finally started construction of the proposed development (called Millwood) 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 age 55+, and will tie into the existing Hillcrest water distribution system. SCWA staff have been working with Millwood contractors installing the water distribution lines and meter pits for each unit. Mr. Cansler stated that there are currently about a dozen units under construction at Millwood.

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

The State Budget, signed last month by Governor Lamont, included \$408,000 in FY 2022, and \$420,000 in FY 2023, to support the Department of Public Health (DPH) in implementing certain recommendations of the Connecticut Interagency PFAS Task Force. This will include 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 addition the State legislature approved bills that prohibit using firefighting foam with PFAS substance, and as well as banning the use of food packaging made using PFAS materials.

General Manager Cansler mentioned that despite objections raised by the American Water Works Association (AWWA), and other organizations representing the water sector and local government, the U.S. House of Representatives last month passed H.R. 2467, the PFAS Action Act. AWWA and others objected to the fact that the bill will put water utilities and their customers on the hook for paying for PFAS cleanups even though the water systems were not the sources of PFAS contamination. He said the bill now goes to the Senate. In the meantime AWWA has requested the House consider an amendment that would exempt water systems from PFAS cleanup liability under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, also known as Superfund, just as airports are exempted. The exemption is sought because water systems are not the sources of PFAS pollution.

## **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. After a series of hearings at the lower courts, the case was forwarded to the Connecticut Supreme Court, which issued a ruling in 2019 sending the case back to the trial court for consideration of the summary judgment argument. A pre-trial oral argument was held before the Connecticut Trial Court on January 15, 2021. SCWA was informed by the attorney for Gladfelter Insurance that the argument went well, and that a decision should be rendered by mid-summer. General Manager Cansler said he had recently discussed the case with the Legal Counsel formerly representing SCWA on the case, Attorney Lloyd Langhammer. Attorney Langhammer said he thought we wouldn't receive a decision until later in the year.

## **8. SCWA Response to Administrative Order DWS 19-072-063**

In 2019, SCWA received an Administrative Order from DPH requiring a series of corrective actions in response to the vandalism at the Tower Division pump station on September 23, 2019. The Authority requested an Appeal, and a Stay the Administrative Order, which were both granted in November 2019. The Hearing has yet to be scheduled.

## **9. Sanitary Surveys**

Sanitary Surveys are conducted at each community public water system (PWS) by the DPH Drinking Water Section every 3 years, and at each non-community PWS every 5 years. A Sanitary Survey is an on-site inspection of the water sources, treatment, distribution system, finished water storage, pumping facilities and controls, monitoring and reporting data, system management and operation, and operator compliance with State requirements.

General Manager Cansler said first of the surveys for 2021 occurred in July at the Preston Town Hall and Preston Library, and the results of the inspection were received the following week. SCWA has until mid-August to respond to the findings. Mr. Cansler said the rest of the sanitary survey inspections for 2021 were scheduled to occur between August 27<sup>th</sup> and September 3<sup>rd</sup>. The remaining SCWA community systems scheduled for sanitary surveys this year are:

Mohegan Division, Montville  
Barrett Division, Ledyard  
Chriswood Division, Ledyard  
Robin Hill Division, Montville  
Birchwood Division, Montville  
North Stonington Division

## **10. Regional Considerations**

**a) Drought Update:** Mr. Cansler stated that the State's Interagency Drought Workgroup had cancelled both their July and August meetings because the state is not experiencing any drought conditions.

**b) Planning for Future Water Demands North Stonington:** Last fall General Manager Cansler discussed long-term water needs in North Stonington, specifically the area near the Rt.187/Rt. 2 traffic circle, with Attorney, Ken Labbe, who is representing the Town. Mr. Labbe indicated that they are trying to involve all the regional utilities.

**c) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC):** The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) last met in May 2020. A meeting scheduled for June 2021 was cancelled and has not been rescheduled. A Statewide WUCC meeting was held on May 19, 2021. This meeting included an update from the WUCC workgroups to address: Interconnections/Regionalization; Non-Community Water Systems Design Requirements; Updating Process requiring Non-Community Systems to Connect to an Existing Community Water Systems, Conservation/Drought. General Manager Cansler is serving on the Interconnections and Regionalization Workgroup.

**d) 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).

**e) SCWA Interaction with the Water Planning Council (WPC):** The General Manager, representing SCWA, is co-chair of the CT Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly. All meetings are currently being conducted virtually via Zoom.

**f) 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**

Mr. Mullane asked if SCWA had heard anything new regarding the Homeowners Association water issue which was discussed in the July meeting. In that meeting General Manager Cansler discussed an article titled "Lebanon Homeowners Face Big Bills for Small Water System" that appeared in the *Connecticut Examiner* newspaper on June 29, 2021. The article discussed a community water system supporting a 41 home subdivision in Lebanon that is trying to address huge aging infrastructure issues. Mr. Cansler said he had not heard anything new regarding this issue, and no one had contacted SCWA about it. He added that SCWA's enabling legislation intentionally left the Town of Lebanon outside of SCWA's jurisdiction.

**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 September 13, 2021, at 5:15 pm, either virtually, or at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler  
Secretary