

**Draft Minutes of the December 11, 2023, Water Authority Meeting
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority
1649 Route 12, Gales Ferry, CT**

This meeting was held virtually per Public Act No. 22-3, which permanently established the requirements for virtual public meetings in Connecticut.

Present

Authority: Chairman Edward Monahan, Vice-Chair Harry Watson, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Claudia Koerting, Nick Mullane, and Alex Masse.

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 13, 2023, Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence - None

General Manager's Report

1. Oakdale Heights Subdivision (Montville)

Last December the Oakdale Heights Homeowners Association (HOA), which represents the 219-home subdivision in Montville, expressed interest in turning over full-time operation of the water system to SCWA. A formal agreement for SCWA to take over ownership and operation of the Oakdale Heights system was signed by SCWA and the HOA in July.

The signed agreement was submitted along with a formal Request for Transfer of Water Lands Application to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) in August. General Manager Cansler stated that as of today he has not heard anything back from the State. He added that both SCWA and the Oakdale Heights HOA have requested numerous status updates from DPH and each time were told that the application is "near the top" of the list for review. Mr. Cansler said the Sanitary Survey inspection, which is conducted by the DPH every three years, was completed on September 29, 2023, with representatives of both Oakdale Heights and SCWA present.

2. Capital Projects Update

a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. The Pre-bid Construction Package, which includes the initial plans and specifications, was submitted to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) Drinking Water Section (DWS) in March 2023. General Manager Cansler said the plans and specs for this project were finally approved on October 19, 2023.

Mr. Cansler stated that the request for proposals was publicly announced on November 1st, and that the bid opening is scheduled for December 15th. He added that on December 1st SCWA and our consulting engineers from Haley-Ward met with prospective contractors to discuss the plans/specs and answer any questions. This was followed by a visit to the construction site. The project is expected to be awarded in the spring of 2024, with anticipated completion in the mid to late summer of next year.

b) Grant-in-Aid for Upgrades at the Tower Pump Station (Ledyard)

General Manager Cansler stated that in November SCWA received word that the State approved a public act in October that included a grant-in-aid for the Tower Division to upgrade the pump station, add storage tanks, and upgrade security. He said this grant also includes extension of the emergency connection up Christy Hill Road. Since the grant money was allocated to the State Department of Health (DPH), he requested a meeting to discuss the requirements for spending the grant-in-aid funding. DPH said that they needed to have an internal meeting to discuss the funding requirements before meeting with SCWA. The total amount allocated is \$3 million.

c) Upgrades at the Ledyard Pump Station and Spicer Hill Booster Station

This project includes installation of variable frequency pumps (VFDs) at the Ledyard Pump Station and the Spicer Hill Booster Station, which is part of the Ledyard distribution system. This project also includes the elimination of the hydropneumatic pressure tanks at both stations, which is a top priority for DPH. Unfortunately, due to capital funding shortfalls this past year this project was delayed until 2024.

d). Proposed New Well at Ledyard Division

During the drought last summer SCWA decided an additional well is needed at the Ledyard pump station because the peak summer usage was near the capacity of the existing wells. DPH approved the new well last fall. General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA is now working with legal counsel to obtain an easement because the State requires that SCWA control a 150-foot radius around each well. The easement is taking longer than anticipated because of a recent change in ownership of the property next to the Ledyard pump station.

3. Proposed New Development - Salem

General Manager Cansler stated that this past summer SCWA participated in a meeting with DPH and CLA Engineers to discuss a proposed new 24-unit condominium development in Salem, which is in the SCWA exclusive service area (ESA). This development is currently still in the design and engineering phase. The developer hopes to begin construction in mid-2024 with the goal of selling the units in early 2025. This development will be located just off of Route 85/Hartford-New London Turnpike, approximately one mile south of the traffic circle.

4. Green Village (Salem) and Millwood (Montville)

Green Village is a 55 and over community with 48 townhouse units in Salem which opened in August 2022. Currently there are 47 units occupied.

Millwood is part of the adjacent SCWA Hillcrest subdivision in Montville. Construction of this 55 and over community started in 2021 and so far, twenty homes have been constructed and sold. Forty-six individual modular homes are proposed for this development.

5. Lead Service Line Inventory

The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper, which went into effect in 2021, requires all public water systems to develop a lead service line (LSL) inventory that identifies all materials used to construct or repair all service lines connected to a public water distribution system. Last fall the EPA released their guidance for developing the LSL inventory. This LSL inventory must be completed and submitted by October 16, 2024. General Manager Cansler said that DPH sent the final inventory template out on August 22, 2023. SCWA staff are currently researching and inputting data into the LSL Inventory spreadsheet.

6. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

In March the EPA announced their draft regulations regarding PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances), which included draft maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for 6 different PFAS in drinking water. The review and comment period for these draft PFAS regulations ended May 30, 2023. The final EPA regulations are expected to be announced early next year.

In August the primary manufacturers of PFAS, DuPont and 3M, reached court settlements that could collectively provide up to \$13.6 billion in funding to address the concerns of public water systems by PFAS. Unfortunately these settlements only apply to private and municipal utilities, not state or federal utilities. In addition, only locations that were identified as having PFAS contamination prior to June 2023 are eligible. Because the settlements preclude further legal action against either company in the future, and there are concerns the \$13.6 billion is not enough to address this issue nationwide, many utilities are opting out of the settlement.

7. Mystic Village Apartments - Dieldrin

Mystic Village Apartments (MVA) are one of SCWA's Contract Operations, which are water systems not owned by SCWA. For these systems the owners are responsible for all maintenance, upgrade costs, and sampling fees, and SCWA is paid to serve as their certified operator. Recently SCWA has been working with MVA and DPH regarding installation of a treatment system for the chemical Dieldrin which is in the raw well water at MVA. General Manager Cansler stated that the design of the proposed treatment system was approved by DPH in July 2023 and that installation of the treatment system was expected to be completed in early November; however, to date it has not been installed yet.

8. Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Audit

Mr. Cansler said Hoyt, Filippetti & Malaghan, LLC conducted their annual audit visit of SCWA during the first week in October. They will present their audit findings to the Representative Advisory Board (RAB) Finance Committee and the Authority prior to the January 2024 RAB meeting. They will have a representative available to answer questions during the Finance Committee's presentation and to the rest of the RAB that same evening.

9. Digitalization of Blueprints and Drawings Project

Mr. Cansler stated that on December 5th SCWA met with a company called Ziptility, Inc. to discuss digitizing of our old paper blueprints; specifically the locations of water mains, service lines, valves, hydrants, etc. He added that digitalization of our drawings and blueprints is a project that has been on the capital projects list for years. Ziptility specializes in mapping software for utilities. Mr. Cansler said that currently our field crews have to come back to the office to review drawings regarding locations mains and valves. Once locations of all of the SCWA utilities are digitized the field crews will not only be able view locations in the field but correct the locations on-site through the interactive mapping software.

10. Representative Advisory Board (RAB)

General Manager Cansler said that over the past few years participation on the Representative Advisory Board (RAB) has been declining. He added that most municipalities in Connecticut, and around the country, have struggled to find citizens interested in participating on volunteer committees and civic affairs. Mr. Cansler also pointed out that attendance at SCWA RAB meetings has also been declining, even though the meetings are easily attended virtually through Zoom. Three of the last four RAB meetings did not have a quorum present. Mr. Cansler made several suggestions about possible changes to the SCWA charter that could change how the Authority is overseen and how the transparency of SCWA can be improved. After a lengthy discussion the Authority requested that the General Manager reach out to the RAB Chairman for his thoughts prior to the next Authority meeting.

11. Regional Considerations

a) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met on November 16, 2022. A meeting of the Eastern WUCC scheduled for July, at the Southeastern CT Council of Governments (SCCOG) office in Norwich, was cancelled.

b) SCWA Interaction with SCCOG: SCWA and the SCCOG continue to interact cooperatively. To this end, SCWA attends the monthly SCCOG meetings if there are items relating to water on the agenda, and the SCCOG Regional Water Committee, which meets only as needed.

c) SCWA Interaction with the WPC, CWWA, and AWWA: The General Manager represents SCWA as a member of the Connecticut Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly. Mr. Cansler is also a member of the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) Legislative Affairs Committee, which generally meets monthly between October and June. The last CWWA Legislative Affairs meetings was held in Hartford on November 29, 2023.

Other Business – None

Report from Chairman – None

Report from Authority Members – None

Public Comment – None

Adjourn

On motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Mullane, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 6:05 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on January 8, 2024, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler
Secretary