

**Minutes of the February 11, 2019 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 January 14, 2019 Water Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence – None

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 2018. The Tower/Ferry View and Ledyard Center interconnections were completed in November, and the Barrett Division interconnection was completed in early December. General Manager Cansler stated that there has been no change since the last meeting, and that the Ledyard Division to Gray Farms connection was still scheduled to be completed in the spring.

2. Tower Division - Well #3

This past summer it was discovered that Tower Division Well #3, which is located inside 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 after several delays, SCWA was finally able to get Laframboise Well Drilling to drill a test well. Unfortunately, after drilling in three spots at the DPH approved location, Laframboise determined that there was a significant amount of rock/ledge at a depth of only 20-23 feet. Their analysis of the three test locations revealed a minimal yield. After consulting with Laframboise, and our engineering consultant (Lenard Engineering), it was agreed that installing a permanent well at this location would be a waste of money.

Mr. Cansler said that he is going to send a request back to DPH requesting that DPH reconsider our initial application to replace Well #3 next to the pump house. He said Laframboise and Lenard Engineering are also relooking the possibility of rehabilitating Well #3 as well, but they indicated this is not only costly, but also risks potentially damaging Well #3 to the point where it can't be used.

3. 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 DPH sent a letter to the Thames Aquatic Center developers stating they would not approve the new well because it did not provide sufficient capacity for their expected system demands. Over the next few weeks 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. Ultimately, DPH agreed to afford Ms. Vitale the opportunity to work with her well professionals regarding a solution to satisfy all requirements for the water system, per State and EPA standards. SCWA chose not to intervene in the discussions between DPH and the Aquatic Center, other than to reiterate that SCWA is willing to provide water from our Ledyard system. General Manager Cansler stated that he has not heard anything new regarding the well situation, but that there had been renewed signs of construction at the Thames Aquatic site over the past few weeks.

4. Four-log Applications

At the November 2018 meeting the Authority approved a request by the General Manager to expend no more than \$10,000 to have Lenard Engineering prepare all calculations and EPA/DPH documentation required for 4-log permits, for all eligible SCWA divisions that qualify. 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 of potential contamination. The decision to apply for 4-log certification 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 the 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, however due to minimum storage requirements, Lenard Engineering determined that only 9 of the 11 chlorinated systems qualify for 4-log certification. General Manager Cansler stated that Lenard Engineering completed the required calculations, and prepared the applications, which were submitted to DPH on January 17, 2019. 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 application to start chlorination at North Stonington was submitted to DPH in November 2018, and the application for 4-log certification was submitted with the other 4-log applications in January 2019. Mr. Cansler stated that he has not heard anything back from DPH regarding either the 4-log applications, or the North Stonington Chlorine Treatment request.

5. 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. The Connecticut Supreme Court heard the case on November 13, 2018. Attorney Barry 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.

6. Vulnerability Assessments for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances are a group of manufactured chemicals that are collectively referred to as PFAS. PFAS are used in a variety of products and applications including non-stick cookware, upholstered furniture, clothing, food packaging, and firefighting foam used to extinguish petroleum fires. These substances are not found naturally in the environment. They do not break down easily and are extremely persistent in both the environment, especially in water, and the human body. It is estimated that there are approximately 3,000 PFAS in production.

DPH is requiring all water systems that prepare water supply plans, which includes SCWA, to conduct an evaluation of potential contamination resulting from possible nearby sources of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). All utilities are required to complete a vulnerability assessment study for each system.

General Manager Cansler stated that he requested a quote from Lenard Engineering to prepare all the vulnerability assessments for SCWA, to include mapping and land use research. Lenard Engineering provided an estimate stating they could complete all the assessments for no more than \$7,000 (4 hrs/division max x \$125/hour x 14 divisions). Mr. Eccard made a motion for the Authority to authorize the General Manager to expend no more than \$10,000 to have Lenard Engineering complete all the required SCWA PFAS Vulnerability Assessments. His motion, seconded by Mr. Watson, was approved by a vote of 7-0.

7. DPH Safe Drinking Water Primacy Assessment Fee

General Manager Cansler stated that the Department of Public Health recently released proposed new Safe Drinking Water Primacy Assessment language for approval during the current legislative process. This assessment was originally approved during the 2017 legislative session. The purpose of the Safe Drinking Water Primacy Assessment is to fund a percentage of the DPH staff through fees charged to each water utility, or company, based on the number of customers served.

The statute states that the assessment may be collected from each customer, and may be included as a separate item on every bill. The statute also states that the assessment can be adopted in rates without requiring approval through the usual rate revision process. Mr. Cansler said the new language includes a proposal to raise the fee cap from \$4 to \$5 per service connection. The new language also eliminates the cap on the total dollars raised under this fee, currently \$2.5 million.

8. 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 two projects that were eligible. In November General Manager Cansler informed DPH that SCWA was holding off on moving forward with either DWSRF project until after the cost of replacing Tower Division Well #3 has been determined.

9. 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.

10. 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. The version of the Water Plan submitted by the WPC includes same language regarding water as a "Public Trust". Many public utilities in the state have 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. 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 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

(Attachment #1: Article "Drinkability" from Science News, dated November 24, 2019)

Ms. Koerting shared an article from *Science News* called "Drinkability". She said that the article had some interesting facts about drinking water and a discussion about innovative treatment methods. She also mentioned that there was a good discussion on PFAS in the article; relevant to tonight's discussion (Item 6 of the General Manager's Report). Mr. Cansler made copies of the article for the Authority members.

Public Comment – None

Adjourn

On motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Ms. Franciosi, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:47 p.m.

It was noted the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on March 11, 2019, 5:15 pm at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler
Secretary