

**Draft Minutes of May 12, 2025, 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 Harry Watson, Vice-Chair Alex Masse, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Claudia Koerting, and Nicholas Mullane.

**Authority Staff:** General Manager Josh Cansler

**Call to Order**

Chairman Watson called the meeting to order at 5:16 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 April 14, 2025, Authority Meeting by a unanimous vote of all members present.

**Correspondence** – None

**General Manager's Report**

**1. Oakdale Heights Subdivision (Montville)**

In July 2023 SCWA and the Oakdale Heights Association, which represents the 219-home Oakdale Heights subdivision in Montville, signed a formal agreement for SCWA to take over ownership and operation of the Oakdale Heights water system. This agreement was submitted along with a formal Request for Transfer of Water Lands Application to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) in August 2023. In February 2024 SCWA was informed that the transfer is subject to the consent of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and a Docket Number (24-05-10) was assigned in May 2024. General Manager Cansler stated that over the past year SCWA responded to several information requests from PURA, and on February 10, 2025, a public hearing was held at the PURA offices in New Britain, which he attended along with SCWA Attorney Nick Kepple.

Mr. Cansler said that a final decision on the transfer of the Oakdale Heights water system to SCWA was finally rendered by PURA on May 7, 2025. He said this acquisition of the Oakdale Heights water system by SCWA is contingent on:

- a) Approval of the Request for Transfer of Water Lands Application by DPH at least 30 days prior to the Closing.
- b) Inspection of the two atmospheric tanks and the two hydropneumatic pressure tanks within 90 days, and submission of a plan to address any deficiencies found during the inspection.
- c) Within 20 days of the Closing SCWA must provide written notification to the Oakdale Heights customers informing them that SCWA has assumed ownership.

## **2. Capital Projects Update**

### **a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project**

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. Last year SCWA awarded a contract to Richards Corporation after a public bidding process, and construction began in December 2024. General Manager Cansler stated that construction of the new water main connecting the two systems was completed in February, and the foundation and floor slab for the new booster station was completed in early March. He added that the project was temporarily halted for 4-5 weeks due to weather but restarted again on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Cansler said that on April 15<sup>th</sup> the State Department of Public Health (DPH) conducted an inspection of the construction site. He said the DPH inspector was accompanied by our project engineer from Haley-Ward, the SCWA Chief Operator/Foreman, and himself. He added that the scheduled completion date is August 14, 2025, and that the contractor is on schedule to meet that completion date.

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

In 2023 the State approved a \$3 million grant-in-aid for the Tower Division to upgrade the pump station, add storage tanks, and upgrade security. This grant also includes an extension of the emergency connection up Christy Hill Road. General Manager Cansler stated that the final grant contract was approved and signed by the State in February. He said that at the April meeting the Authority voted on a motion to authorize Haley-Ward Engineering to complete the design/engineering for the project, for a total of \$252,000. He added that Haley-Ward has already started the surveying for engineering and design, and that they were scheduled to meet with Haley-Ward engineers later in the week, onsite at Tower Division, to go over concept plans for the upgrades and modifications.

### **c) Upgrades at the Spicer Hill Booster Station**

This project includes installation of variable frequency pumps (VFDs) at the Spicer Hill Booster Station, which is part of the Ledyard distribution system. This project also includes the elimination of the hydropneumatic pressure tanks, which is a top priority for DPH. General Manager Cansler stated SCWA completed the first phase of this project, which included external electrical upgrades last year, but halted the project temporarily due to equipment delivery delays and weather issues. He said SCWA crews restarted the project in early April and expect to complete the upgrades in late May.

### **d) Possible Grants for Mohegan, Robin, and Birchwood Divisions in Montville**

General Manager Cansler stated that in April 2025 SCWA received word that the Mohegan, Robin, and Birchwood Divisions all qualified for free engineering reviews through an EPA grant which is part of a federal infrastructure program to assist small utilities in disadvantaged communities. He added that the Town of Montville is considered a disadvantaged community.

Mr. Cansler said the engineering review includes a complete analysis of possible upgrades/modernizations needed at each pump station by a designated engineering firm. He said that after the engineering firm determines what upgrades and modernizations are needed at each pump station, that engineering firm will assist SCWA with obtaining federal grant funding for the rehabilitation of the stations. The three SCWA divisions that qualified for this grant program were part of eleven total statewide.

### **3. Ongoing and Proposed New Developments**

**a) Millwood (Montville):** Millwood is part of the adjacent SCWA Hillcrest subdivision in Montville. Construction of this 55 and over community started in 2021 and so far, 32 homes have been constructed and sold. Forty-six individual modular homes are proposed for this development.

**b) King's Highway Mobile Home Park (Ledyard):** General Manager Cansler said that the construction of this 10-unit Mobile Home development along King's Highway in Ledyard is almost complete. He said SCWA installed the service line to the development in August, and the water main was turned on in December. Currently seven mobile homes are already on-site, and four are already occupied.

**c) North Stonington:**

Mr. Cansler stated that the same developer who built the mobile home park on King's Highway in Ledyard has approached SCWA about constructing a similar 15-unit mobile home park in North Stonington. He said the property to be developed is approximately 600 feet north of the Bellissimo Hotel on the Norwich-Westerly Highway (Route 2). He added that the developer intends to extend the SCWA water main, which ends at the Bellissimo Hotel, to his property.

Mr. Cansler said that approximately another 1100 feet north along Route 2, another developer plans to construct a 10-house subdivision, which will include several low income homes. He said he met with the developer and tried to convince him to extend the SCWA main as far as his property, but the developer thinks that will be too expensive unless other owners, or the Town, share the cost. His current plan for this site include the installation of wells on the property to be developed.

### **4. Exclusive Service Area (ESA) issues in Ledyard:**

General Manager Cansler said that he has attended two meetings at the Ledyard Town Hall to discuss modifications to the Exclusive Service Area (ESA) boundaries in Ledyard. These meetings were attended by the Mayor of Ledyard, Ledyard Town Planner, Ledyard WPCA, and Ledyard Zoning and Planning. He said Ledyard would like to modify the ESA boundaries to enable several proposed development projects in Ledyard to receive water from the closest available public water systems.

Mr. Cansler said the proposed modifications to the ESA boundaries would transfer two large parcels in Gales Ferry and Ledyard Center to SCWA. Both parcels have planned 20-25 new housing developments, and both parcels are within 200-300 feet of SCWA water mains. The closest Ledyard WPCA water mains to each parcel are over 1200 feet away. In exchange SCWA would hand over several parcels in the Ledyard Center area that would be served by Ledyard WPCA water mains along Colonel Ledyard Highway. This includes a proposed apartment complex and several small commercial properties in Ledyard Center.

Mr. Cansler said that approval of changes to the ESA boundaries does not need to be approved by the Eastern Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC), as long as all parties agree in writing to the changes. He said that Mr. Mike Cherry, who serves on both the Ledyard Zoning and Planning Committee, and the SCWA Representative Advisory Board, is drafting the letter for all parties to sign. Mr. Eccard made a motion to authorize the SCWA General Manager to sign the ESA Modification Letter on behalf of SCWA. His motion, seconded by Mr. Mullane, was unanimously approved by all Authority members present.

## **5. Lead Service Line Inventory**

The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper, which went into effect in 2021, required all public water systems to develop a lead service line (LSL) inventory identifying all materials used to construct or repair all service lines connected to a public water distribution system. General Manager Cansler said that SCWA met the October 2024 deadline for submission of the lead service line inventories and received acknowledgement of our submissions from CT DPH a week later. He said to date SCWA has received formal approval of our LSL inventory submissions for 7 of our 15 SCWA divisions.

## **6. Appraisal and Possible Sale of SCWA Property in Robin Division**

SCWA currently owns two parcels in the Robin Division in Montville. One of the parcels includes the Robin Division Pumphouse and wells. The other is a 22.8 acre parcel located at 16 Sparrow Court. SCWA does not have anything on this parcel, and it is not required for any easements serving the water system at Robin Division. General Manager Cansler said that at the April meeting the Authority voted to have the land appraised with discussion of a possible sale of the land to follow. He said the Avalonia Land Trust has indicated an interest in the property and has offered to coordinate for two independent appraisals of the property.

After some discussion, Mr. Watson made a motion authorizing the SCWA General Manager to coordinate with Avalonia for the two appraisals. His motion, seconded by Mr. Eccard, was unanimously approved by all Authority members present. The Authority agreed that they would discuss the possibility of selling the property after reviewing the two appraisals. Mr. Cansler added that it was likely that sale of the land would require approval of a Request for Transfer of Water Lands Permit Application by DPH.

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

General Manager Cansler stated that in April 2024 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation establishing Maximum Contaminant Levels for six PFAS in drinking water. The new regulations require all water systems to complete the initial monitoring requirements for each PFAS within 3 years, and when warranted, take steps to ensure compliance within 5 years. Mr. Cansler said the new EPA administration under President Trump is currently reviewing the new EPA PFAS regulations. He added that the current Connecticut Legislative session includes several bills that could affect PFAS allowable levels and sampling requirements if passed. Mr. Cansler said that regardless, SCWA plans to start sampling for PFAS next month.

## **8. Digitalization of Blueprints and Drawings Project**

SCWA is currently working with Ziptility, Inc. to begin the process of digitizing our old paper blueprints; specifically the locations of water mains, service lines, valves, hydrants, etc. Digitalization of our drawings and blueprints is a project that has been on the capital projects list for years. Last fall Ziptility input the addresses and areas served by SCWA into their database. SCWA and Ziptility are currently evaluating how to best transfer information and data from our old blueprints into their system.

## **9. Personnel**

General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA has been trying to successfully hire a new employee to replace the certified operator who retired in 2023. He said the first person, hired in December 2024, did not work out and was let go during his six-month probationary period. The second person, hired in March, did not show up on his first day. Mr. Cansler said that after several interviews in April, SCWA offered the job to a third candidate, who is expected to start on May 15, 2025.

#### **10. Discussion on Publicity for SCWA**

At the April meeting, incoming Authority member Jonathan Klein indicated an interest in generating additional publicity for SCWA, specifically regarding ongoing and future capital projects. After some discussion at the Authority decided to defer further discussion regarding this topic until the next meeting, when Mr. Klein is available to discuss some of his ideas regarding publicity.

#### **11. Regional Considerations**

**a) Drought Update:** General Manager Cansler stated that in November 2024, Governor Lamont declared a Stage 2 drought advisory for all eight counties in Connecticut due to below normal precipitation levels and ongoing fire danger levels statewide. In March the Drought Advisory was reduced to Stage 1.

**b) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC):** The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met in November 2022.

**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.

**Other Business** – None

**Report from Chairman** – None

**Report from Authority Members** – None

**Public Comment** – None

#### **Adjourn**

On a motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Mullane, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:50 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on June 9, 2025, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler  
Secretary