

**Draft Minutes of the August 8, 2022, 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-Chair Harry Watson, Treasurer Paul Eccard, 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. Watson, the Authority approved the minutes of the July 11, 2022, Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence – None

General Manager's Report

1. FY 2023 SCWA Annual Budget and Rate Increase

At the June 13, 2022 meeting the Authority approved the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget. The Authority also approved a motion that the Authority notify the Representative Advisory Board (RAB) of its intention to increase service rates during FY 2023, and request a public hearing prior to the July RAB meeting. General Manager Cansler stated that at their July 2022 quarterly meeting the RAB found the proposed 5% rate increase to be appropriate, and recommended to the Authority adoption of the proposed rate increase. Mr. Eccard made a motion to approve the proposed 5% rate increase based on the approved FY 2023 Budget, and the recommendation of the RAB. His motion, seconded by Mr. Watson, was approved by a unanimous roll-call vote of all members present.

2. Proposal from Regional Water Authority (RWA) to partner in Pipesafe Program

At the March meeting the Authority authorized the Chairman to sign an agreement with the South Central Regional Water Authority (RWA) to enter into a partnership in their service line protection program, which is called PipeSafe. This partnership will allow RWA to enroll SCWA customers in the PipeSafe program, and in exchange SCWA will receive a percentage of the monthly fees charged our customers. The signed agreement was forwarded to RWA on March 22, 2022, and the initial kick-off meeting occurred on May 3rd. Follow-on meetings were held on July 21st and July 29th, with another meeting scheduled for August 10th. General Manager Cansler stated that during the two July meetings SCWA and RWA discussed the responsibilities of each organization during the start-up process, and once the program is fully implemented. The Authority also discussed the sales letter that RWA intends to send to all SCWA customers.

3. Capital Projects Update

a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

Last year SCWA began the planning and engineering of a project to complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. In April 2021 SCWA reached out to the current owners of the parcel (100 Waterfall LLC) between the end of the Montville water main extension and the existing Seven Oaks distribution system requesting consideration of an easement across their parcel. In their response, received in November, the owners stated they were willing to grant an easement for a water main that follows the street plan for their future proposed development, which is about 1900 feet longer than the SCWA proposed route.

In December 2021 General Manager Cansler sent a letter to the parcel owners, through their Attorney (Harry Heller), stating that their proposed longer route will result in a significant project cost increase, and that there are other routes available that do not cross their property, and may be more economically feasible.

General Manager Cansler stated that on July 21st SCWA finally met with John D'Amato of 100 Waterfall LLC and their attorney, Harry Heller. During the meeting Mr. D'Amato agreed to a route that was only 600 feet longer vs 1900 feet. Mr. D'Amato agreed to waive the fees SCWA would have been required to pay per new house. These fees are part of the 2007 agreement for the Seven Oaks subdivision, which included the area in the requested easement. Mr. Cansler stated that he had argued that agreement was based on the developer installing the water main.

b) Spicer Hill Booster Station

In April SCWA received the design, and specifications for the upgrade of the Ledyard Pump Station and the Spicer Hill Booster Station, which is part of the Ledyard distribution system. This project includes installation of variable frequency pumps (VFDs) at both stations as well as elimination of the hydropneumatic pressure tanks at both stations. Elimination of the pressure tanks is a top priority of the State Department of Health (DPH). The plans and specs were forwarded to DPH in May, along with a general project application requesting approval of this project. DPH sent an approval letter for this project in early July.

General Manager Cansler said that he initiated an order for the variable speed pumps last week, and that he intended to send out a request for bid proposals this week. Unfortunately, the pump manufacturer stated there is now a 6-month lead time for delivery of the pumps. Mr. Cansler said that the last time we had ordered variable speed pumps the delivery time was 3-4 weeks. He said based on the long delivery time for the pumps this project would have to be delayed until spring 2023, because they didn't want to expose the outside lines in the middle of the winter.

c). Tower Division Upgrades

Over the past year SCWA crews installed new valves and a backup water main leading from the Tower Division pump stations to the main distribution located on East Drive in Gales Ferry. The second phase of this project will be replacement of the original water mains. General Manager Cansler said this project has been delayed because of a long lead time for piping and valves. He stated they had finally received all the parts, with the exception of one valve.

d) 2021 Bond Anticipation Note (BAN)

General Manager Cansler stated that based on the long-term capital financing plan approved in 2020, the 2021 BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) will be rolled over into another BAN this year, and most likely at least two more years before the BANs are rolled into a Bond SCWA will begin to pay off. This will roughly align our payment schedule with the expiration of the 2007 Bond that SCWA is currently paying off, while enabling the Authority to do some small projects.

Mr. Cansler said he does not intend to add any new projects to this year's BAN, so the total issuance this year will be approximately \$285,000. The bid opening for the BAN is scheduled for September 20th, and the closing is scheduled for October 13th. Mr. Masse asked if the recent increases in interest rates would affect the final numbers for the 2023 issuance. Mr. Cansler said that it probably would, but that he would have to verify.

4. 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.

Sanitary Surveys were conducted during the last week in May at the Montville Manor, Seven Oaks, Chesterfield Divisions in Montville, and the Ledyard Center, Chriswood, and Tower/Ferry View Divisions, in Ledyard. General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA has not received the results of the Sanitary Surveys as of today.

5. Green Villages I and II (Salem and East Haddam)

In November 2020 SCWA signed an agreement to take over as the owner/operator of the pumphouse and water distribution system at the new Green Village development in Salem once it is completed. Green Village is a 55 and over community with 48 townhouse units, each unit with individual meters. This project had been delayed because DPH rejected the Green Village II application for approval of the first two wells due to safe yield capacity, and concerns about the water quality. The developer installed a third well, which was approved in late July.

General Manager Cansler said that he and Foreman Belair met with Bob Gagnon, the owner of Colchester Construction, on July 28th to discuss the start-up and operation of the water system. Mr. Gagnon has approval from the Health Department to occupy the first 12 units, so SCWA installed the meters for those units on July 29th. Mr. Cansler said the first occupants moved in on August 1st.

6. Construction of Millwood Subdivision (part of Hillcrest Division) in Montville

Sun Communities, Inc. is continuing construction of the new Millwood development, 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 aged 55+, and will tie into the existing Hillcrest water distribution system. General Manager Cansler stated that the first thirteen homes have been sold, and several more homes are nearing completion.

7. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

SCWA continues to monitor new guidelines and regulations pertaining to PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances). The 2022 and 2023 Connecticut State Budgets included funding for 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. Although the State DPH has still not established Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) for PFAS in drinking water, they did send out a letter recommending and encouraging all public water systems to test for PFAS in June.

Mr. Cansler said that our lab, Phoenix Labs out of Manchester intends to subcontract the analysis of PFAS samples to another lab. The cost/sample will be \$250. Phoenix will pick-up the samples as they do with all our samples. SCWA hopes to start testing for PFAS this fall.

8. Regional Considerations

a) Drought Update: On June 2, 2022 the State's Interagency Drought Workgroup placed New London and Windham counties in Drought Stage 1 (Below Normal Conditions). On July 14th the Governor placed all eight Connecticut counties in Drought Stage 2 (incipient Drought) due to precipitation across the state being well below normal. Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the Connecticut Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. Residents and businesses are encouraged to voluntarily conserve water.

General Manager Cansler stated that on July 26th SCWA issued a notice requesting all customers to voluntarily reduce outdoor water usage to include; lawn irrigation, planting of new vegetation, washing of sidewalks/driveways, and topping-off of pools. Currently the wells serving all SCWA divisions are able to keep up with the water demands, however if drought conditions continue, or worsen, the wells may not be able to meet future usage demands. This message was issued via the CodeRed notification system and posted on the SCWA website and Facebook page.

b) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) last met on May 18, 2022. The Statewide WUCC last met on May 19th, and is scheduled to meet again on August 17, 2022. Currently the Statewide WUCC is trying to address several topics involving interconnections/regionalization, non-community water systems design requirements, conservation/drought, and the process requiring non-community systems to connect to existing community water systems.

c) 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.

d) 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 November and June.

Other Business – None

Report from Chairman

Chairman Monahan stated that he spoke to State Senator Cathy Osten at a fundraiser recently, and that she mentioned the \$3 million recently appropriated to the Town of Ledyard. She said that some of the money was intended for upgrades to the SCWA Tower Division system. Chairman Monahan asked Senator Osten for more information on the appropriation because the Mayor of Ledyard had informed SCWA that none of the appropriated money was for SCWA. Chairman Monahan stated that he followed up with an email to her office last week.

Report from Authority Members - None

Public Comment – None

Adjourn

On motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Masse, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:45 p.m.

It was noted the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on September 12, 2022, at 5:15 pm, either virtually, or at 1649 Rt. 12, Gales Ferry, CT.

Josh Cansler
Secretary