

MINUTES

**Joint Meeting of the Representative Advisory Board to the Southeastern Connecticut
Water Authority and the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority
Electronic Virtual Meeting held via Zoom on
July 18, 2024**

The July 18, 2024, joint meeting of the Representative Advisory Board (RAB) to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority, and the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority, was called to order at 7:00 pm by Advisory Board Chairman Barry Weiner. It was determined by SCWA General Manager and Acting RAB Secretary, Josh Cansler, that the requisite number of members present constituted a quorum. Chairman Barry Weiner concurred.

Advisory Board members in attendance were: Chairman Barry Weiner, New London; Carol Russell, East Lyme; Martin Artale, Groton City; Mary Lou Smith, Town of Groton; Mike Cherry, Ledyard; Chuck Longton, Montville; Mike Macina and Robert Boissevain, North Stonington; Christopher Seery, Norwich; Leslie Hotary, Salem.

SWCA Board members in attendance were: Authority Chairman Harry Watson, Paul Eccard, Alex Masse, and Nicholas Mullane.

Chairman Barry Weiner offered a period for public comment. There were no customers or citizens in the meeting wishing to speak.

A motion was made by Mr. Macina, and seconded by Mr. Longton, to accept the minutes from the April 18, 2024, meeting. The motion was carried unanimously.

SCWA Authority Chairman Watson gave his report (Attachment 1) to the RAB. Before starting his report Chairman Watson stated that he, Authority member Claudia Koerting, and General Manager Josh Cansler visited former Authority Chairman Ed Monahan earlier that week and presented him a plaque from SCWA in recognition and thanks for his 21 years on the Authority, 11 of them as the Authority Chair.

Under Item I of his report, "Operational Activities", Authority Chairman Watson gave updates on the Grant-in-Aid for Upgrades to the Tower Pump Station, the acquisition of the Oakdale Heights subdivision in Montville, the project to interconnect the Montville Division and Seven Oaks Division, and the issues at the Robin Division in Montville. Chairman Watson mentioned that State Senator Osten attended the July Authority meeting to discuss the Tower Grant-in-Aid which she was instrumental in coordinating for SCWA.

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Under the Administrative section of his Chairman's Report, Mr. Watson discussed the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget, which the Authority approved in May. He stated the Authority was not seeking a rate increase for SCWA in FY 2025. Chairman Watson also gave updates on a change to the SCWA Office Hours and Work Schedule, Election of Authority Officers for the next year, and the Consumer Confidence Reports which must be completed by June 30th of each year.

Addressing SCWA Planning Activities, Chairman Watson discussed the new National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for six PFAS (Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl) chemicals which were released by the EPA in April 2024, proposed new developments within SCWA boundaries, and regional considerations affecting SCWA.

Chairman Weiner indicated he did not have anything to report as Chairman of the Representative Advisory Board.

Under the Agenda item for Report by the Appointments Committee, General Manager Cansler stated that the Authority currently has two vacancies. RAB Appointments Committee members Mike Cherry and Mike Macina agreed to discuss how to best fill these vacancies after the meeting.

There were no reports from other Representative Advisory Board members.

Under New Business Chuck Longton mentioned that the Town of Montville was interested in paving several roads in the SCWA distribution area. General Manager Cansler said he would be more than willing to discuss these paving projects with the Montville Mayor and/or Director of Public Works.

A motion was made by Mr. Longton, and seconded by Ms. Smith, to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m. The motion carried unanimously. The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Josh Cansler
SCWA General Manager/RAB Acting-Secretary

Attachment 1 to Minutes of the July 18, 2024 RAB Meeting:

Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority Chairman's Report to the Representative Advisory Board July 18, 2024

I. Operational Activities

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

Last fall the State approved a 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. The total amount allocated is \$3 million. The General Manager met with the State Department of Health (DPH) several times over the past few months to discuss the requirements, schedule, and application for the grant-in-aid funding. In April 2024 SCWA formally submitted the Bond Fund Application package to the DPH Grant Management Office. In May DPH requested a budget estimate and proposed construction schedule, which SCWA provided. State Senator Osten, whose district includes the Town of Ledyard, attended the July Authority meeting to discuss this grant. She asked about the status of the project and asked to be kept in the loop. SCWA hopes to award a contract for engineering and design later this year, and start construction next year.

B. 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 DPH informed SCWA and the Oakdale Heights Association that the transfer is subject to the consent of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and in May PURA assigned a Docket Number (24-05-10). In June SCWA received an "Order" from PURA stating a joint letter from SCWA and the Oakdale Heights Association must be filed with PURA. The order requested specific information as required in CT regulations 16-66-2 and 16-1-46. SCWA prepared a joint letter with the requested information, which was signed by both parties, and electronically filed through the PURA web portal as required. Both parties are currently waiting on PURA to post a schedule showing events that will happen in the docket.

C. Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project (Montville)

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. A request for proposals was publicly announced last November and bids were opened in December 2023. Earlier this year the Authority approved a motion to award a contract for this project to Richards Corporation, pending approval by the State DPH DWSRF. At the May meeting the Authority approved a Resolution authorizing the loan agreement with the State, and in June the Authority agreed to the terms of an easement for land where the new water main and booster station will be located. The easement should be the last item required by the State before they authorize the loan and award the project.

D. Robin Division Water (Montville)

In May SCWA submitted an application and design to DPH requesting approval to modify the treatment system at Robin Division in Montville to address occasional discoloration issues caused by high levels of manganese in the well water. The application was approved in June and the system was installed in early July. SCWA is currently awaiting sample results and an inspection of the system by DPH before placing the new treatment system online.

In June SCWA hired LaFramboise Well Drilling, Inc. to frack the two wells at Robin Division after observing decreasing production levels in both wells. At one point the wells were at 25% and 50% of their production capacity. Unfortunately, the decreased production coincided with a spike in early summer usage. As a result, SCWA issued a voluntary water conservation notice to the residents at Robin Division and began hauling water from nearby Seven Oaks to refill the Robin tanks as needed. The well fracking was completed in late June, and both wells are now back to 100% production capacity.

II. Administrative Activities

A) Fiscal Year 2025 Budget

On May 13, 2024, the Authority adopted an operating budget of \$1,995,500 for Fiscal Year 2025. The FY 2025 expense budget represents an increase of less than 2% from last year's budget. The only budget item expected to increase significantly is "Sampling and Analysis", which is estimated to increase by \$35,000 due to the new EPA requirements to conduct twice annual sampling for PFAS chemicals. Expenses for the past fiscal year (FY 2024) were around \$37,000 less than budgeted, and revenues last year were \$46,000 less than budgeted. This was the result of a wetter summer than usual last year. Since the expected revenues equal the proposed budgeted expenses, the Authority did not recommend a rate increase for SCWA in FY 2025.

B) Change to SCWA Office Hours and Work Schedule

During the budget discussion for FY 2025 General Manager Cansler presented some ideas the SCWA staff have considered regarding possible modifications to the SCWA work schedule. Alternatives considered included changing the office hours and/or shorter work weeks with longer workdays. All of the options considered maintain the standard 40-hour work week. After the General Manager met with legal counsel, he recommended changing the office hours and work schedule from 8:00 am to 4:30 (which includes a 30-minute lunch break) to 7:00 am to 3:30. This was a schedule change all the staff agreed on. At the June meeting the Authority approved this recommended change, which was officially implemented on June 24, 2024.

C. Election of Officers

At their June 2024 meeting the Authority re-elected Alex Masse as Vice-Chair, Paul Eccard as Treasurer, and Josh Cansler as Secretary. Those three offices are all for one-year terms. The Authority Chair position is for a three-year term, expiring in June 2025.

D. Consumer Confidence Reports (CCR)

In June, SCWA distributed Consumer Confidence Reports, also referred to as "Annual Water Quality Reports", to each of our approximately 3150 customers. Because of the nature of SCWA's water service operations, sixteen separate reports were prepared and distributed. These reports were researched, written, and copied completely in-house. As in the past, processing the reports for mailing, via the U.S. Postal service, was carried out by Viability, Inc. These CCRs are also posted on SCWA's website.

III. Planning Activities

A. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

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 assure compliance within 5 years. SCWA is currently waiting on further guidance from DPH regarding testing schedules and specific State requirements.

In June the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) filed a joint petition with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to review the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Final PFAS Drinking Water Rule. The associations are concerned that the EPA did not rely on the best available science and the most recent occurrence data and used novel approaches as the basis for portions of the rule. AWWA believes the rule underestimates nationwide costs and adds to affordability challenges without achieving the public health outcomes we all seek.

B. Proposed New Developments

- 1) Salem:** A proposed new 24-unit condominium development in Salem is currently still in the design and engineering phase. Salem is in the SCWA exclusive service area (ESA). The developer hopes to begin construction in mid-2024 with the goal of selling the units in 2025. This development will be located just off Route 85/Hartford-New London Turnpike.
- 2) Tower Division:** In March SCWA met with a developer about a proposed 10-unit Mobile Home development which would be connected to the SCWA water main along Kings Highway, which is part of the Tower Division distribution system in Ledyard. In February SCWA met onsite with a developer to discuss the proposed addition of 15-25 new homes in the Tower Division. SCWA has enough capacity at Tower Division to handle the additional proposed new homes and mobile home park.
- 3) Chesterfield Division:** In May a developer reached out to SCWA about the proposed construction of ten new apartment buildings, with between 80-120 apartments, adjacent to the Chesterfield Division in Montville. Approximately \$350,000 in upgrades would be required to expand our Chesterfield system to accommodate the proposed apartment complex. The developer was informed this would be at his expense.

C. Regional Considerations

- 1) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC):** The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met in November 2022.
- 2) Water Planning Council Advisory Group:** The General Manager represents SCWA as a member of the Connecticut Water Planning Council Advisory Group (WPCAG), which meets monthly.
- 3) SCWA Interaction with the AWWA and CWWA:** SCWA is a member of both the American Water Works Association (AWWA) and the Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA). The General Manager represents SCWA as a member of the CWWA Legislative Affairs Committee, which meets regularly while the Connecticut Legislature is in session.

Harry Watson, Chairman
Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority