

**Draft Minutes of February 10, 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.

Representative Advisory Board: Jonathan Klein

Authority Staff: General Manager Josh Cansler

Call to Order

Chairman Watson 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 Ms. Koerting, the Authority approved the minutes of the January 13, 2025, Authority Meeting by vote of 4-0, with one abstention (Mr. Mullane).

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 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 2024 PURA assigned a Docket Number (24-05-10). Over the next few months PURA requested information from both parties, including two sets of interrogatory questions. Responses to information requests, and all the interrogatory questions intended for SCWA, were submitted to PURA through their electronic filing portal.

General Manager Cansler stated that on January 22, 2025, PURA issued a Notice of Hearing, for February 10, 2025. Mr. Cansler said he met with the SCWA Attorney, Nick Kepple, on January 28th to discuss the SCWA strategy and requirements for the PURA Hearing, and that both he and Attorney Kepple attended the hearing. He added the hearing lasted just over 3 hours. Mr. Cansler said his cross examination lasted about 90 minutes. At the conclusion of the hearing, the hearing officers indicated that an additional hearing might be necessary. They also mentioned that a draft decision would be issued at a later date.

2. Capital Projects Update

a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. This project is funded through a mix of State grants (30%), State loans (20%), and Federal Infrastructure grants (50%). Last summer SCWA awarded a contract to Richards Corporation after a public bidding process, but due to delays with issuance of the grant funds this project was put on hold temporarily. Based on guidance that SCWA would receive the funds by the end of the year, a Notice to Proceed was issued to Richards Corporation in late November. Construction began the first week of December. After going back and forth with the State DPH several times in January, SCWA finally closed on the loan portion of the funding on February 10, which will allow the grant funds to be released.

b) Meeting with State Senator Osten to Discuss Possible Grant for Montville Division

General Manager Cansler stated that on January 24th, 2025 he attended a virtual meeting with State Senator Cathy Osten and Town of Montville Mayor Leonard Bunnell. The subject of the meeting was regarding the high number of service line leaks/repairs in the Montville Division. Mayor Bunnell's concern was that many of these service line repairs require digging up portions of the road. Mayor Bunnell mentioned that Montville needs to pave the Montville Manor subdivision, but there is hesitation because SCWA might need to dig up sections of the newly paved roads again.

Mr. Cansler said he explained that the service lines in Montville Manor were of inferior quality and construction, and that over half of SCWA's service line leaks were in this one area. Senator Osten stated that she was interested in requesting a State grant to replace all of the service lines in this area, and asked if SCWA could provide a rough estimate of costs to do so. Mr. Cansler responded that replacing the service lines, and even the water mains at Montville would be a huge boost to SCWA, and that he would provide estimates for both within 2-3 weeks. Mr. Cansler said he reached out to Haley-Ward Engineering the same day to assist with the preparation of an estimate.

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

In late 2023 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. General Manager Cansler stated that he has attended several meetings with the State Department of Health (DPH) over the past year to discuss the requirements and schedule, and contract. He said in early February the final grant contract was circulated for approval by all parties, and that he is currently waiting on further guidance regarding the execution of the contract. Mr. Cansler discussed the grant/project status in a virtual meeting with Senator Osten on January 24th.

d) 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 said SCWA has completed the first phase of this project, which included external electrical upgrades. He said SCWA finally received the new VFD pumps in October and the second phase of the project started the first week in December. He added that unfortunately, due to extreme cold weather in December, installation of the pumps was delayed because this portion of the project requires the use of exposed water main.

3. 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 stated that SCWA met the October 2024 deadline for submission of the lead service line inventory, and received acknowledgement of our submission by CT DPH a week later. Mr. Cansler said that in late November SCWA received notice from DPH that SCWA was also responsible for submission of lead service line inventories for the public system at the Lincoln Park Elderly Housing in Preston. Although SCWA does not own this system we have an agreement to operate this system for a fee. Mr. Cansler said SCWA staff are currently gathering information regarding this system so that we can complete the inventory.

4. 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 Kings 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. He added that currently four mobile homes are already on-site.

c) Exclusive Service Area (ESA) issues in Ledyard: Mr. Cansler said that after an ESA issue arose at the King's Highway Mobile Home Park, he looked into two other proposed developments in Ledyard where developers have reached out to SCWA for connection to our nearby water mains. In both cases the actual properties proposed for development are in the Ledyard ESA. Mr. Cansler indicated that he is awaiting a meeting with the Town of Ledyard to address the ESA-related matters. He said the two proposed Ledyard developments are:

- A 20-25 house development connecting to the SCWA water main along Hyde Park Drive in the Tower Division.

- A 22-house development in the Ledyard Division connecting to our water main at the end of Seabury Avenue.

5. 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 SCWA plans to sample twice in 2025, in accordance with the new regulations.

6. 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. In August Ziptility input the addresses and areas served by SCWA into their database. General Manager Cansler said that SCWA and Ziptility are currently evaluating how to best transfer information and data from our old blueprints into their system.

7. 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. Stage 2 is the second of five stages of drought defined in the Connecticut Drought Response and Preparedness Plan. Residents are encouraged to voluntarily conserve water. Mr. Cansler said the State Interagency Drought Workgroup last met in January 2025, and decided to remain at Stage 2. He said the Group is scheduled to meet again in early February.

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

General Manager stated that the SCWA Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Capital Program included the acquisition of a service pickup truck for the Chief Operator/Foreman. He said the truck being replaced is a 2017 ¾ ton crew cab with over 150,000 miles. As in the past, the Foreman requested a crew cab pickup because he carries the sensitive listening equipment for locating water mains and leaks in the cab so that it will not be damaged. Mr. Cansler said he reached out to dealers on the Connecticut State Contract for the Sale of Light Trucks, and received two quotes back, both for the Ford 250s.

<u>Dealer</u>	<u>Vehicle</u>	<u>Bid</u>	<u>Estimated Delivery Date</u>
Tasca Ford Berlin, CT	2025 Ford F-250 Crew Cab 4x4	\$48,397	March
Gengras Ford Plainville, CT	2020 Ford F-250 Crew Cab 4x4	\$48,422	March

Mr. Cansler stated that both trucks are very similar, and the prices are almost equal. He added that SCWA has done business with both dealers in the past with equal satisfaction. Mr. Cansler recommended approval for the purchase of the truck from Tasca Ford simply because of the \$25 savings. Based on the General Manager’s recommendation, Mr. Eccard made a motion that the Authority approve the purchase of the 2025 Ford F250 4x4 pickup from Tasca Ford for \$48,397. This motion, seconded by Mr. Mullane, was unanimously approved by a vote of all members present.

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 5:40 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on March 10, 2025, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler
Secretary