

**Draft Minutes of January 13, 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.

**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 Mr. Masse, the Authority approved the minutes of the December 9, 2024, 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 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). Over the next few months PURA has requested information from both parties, all of which has been submitted to PURA through their electronic filing portal.

General Manager Cansler stated that in December PURA issued a new set of interrogatory questions based primarily on responses from the original 62 interrogatories issued by PURA in August 2024. Both SCWA and Oakdale Heights submitted responses to those interrogatories in September. Mr. Cansler said that in response to the latest round of interrogatories the Oakdale Heights Association had their attorney send a letter to PURA stating they no longer have the staff available to respond to additional interrogatories, and that no additional information would be provided.

Mr. Cansler stated that he discussed providing a similar response from SCWA with our legal counsel and ultimately decided that since SCWA does have full-time staff we would provide responses to the interrogatories, which were submitted to PURA on December 31, 2024.

## **2. Capital Projects Update**

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

This project will complete the interconnection between Seven Oaks and Montville divisions. Last summer SCWA awarded a contract to Richards Corporation after a public bidding process, but due to delays with issuance of the federal grant funds this project was put on hold temporarily. General Manager Cansler stated that 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. He said another preconstruction meeting was held shortly after, and construction began the first week in December.

Mr. Cansler also mentioned that the owner of the property adjacent to the construction site was apparently unaware that the new water main extension was going to connect to an existing water main that runs under his property. The neighbor purchased the property in June 2023, and was never informed about the existing water main, or the SCWA easement that crosses his property. Mr. Cansler stated that he provided a copy of the 2007 easement, which included documentation that it was filed with the Town, and a copy of the easement map. He said the owner was cooperating with SCWA and the contractor.

### **b) 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 submitted a formal Bond Fund Application package for the grant-in-aid funding. Mr. Cansler said that in December SCWA was informed that the Grant Contract was under review by the DPH Legal Office before being forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General to execute the contract.

### **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 said SCWA has completed the first phase of this project, which included external electrical upgrades. SCWA finally received the new VFD pumps in October and the second phase of the project started the first week in December. He said that unfortunately, due to extreme cold weather in mid-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 had 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 this project was temporarily delayed this past fall after the Town of Ledyard claimed that this construction site was in their Exclusive Service Area (ESA) and informed the developer they had to connect to the Groton Utilities systems. Mr. Cansler stated that by using existing maps, available to all via the State WUCC website, SCWA was able to show that the Mobile Home Park is well within our ESA.

**c) Possible other Exclusive Service Area (ESA) issues in Ledyard:** Mr. Cansler said that after the 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.

He said one developer has requested to connect to our water main along Hyde Park Drive in the Tower Division. The nearest Ledyard WPCA/Groton Utilities water main to the proposed subdevelopment is almost half a mile away, along Route 12.

Mr. Cansler said that the other developer has requested to extend our water main at the end of Seabury Avenue in the Ledyard Division. He was not sure where the nearest Ledyard WPCA/Groton Utilities water main is located, however, there are not any other developments nearby, so it is unlikely there are other water mains within a feasible distance.

#### **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. Personnel**

General Manager Cansler stated that in July of 2023 one of SCWA's four certified operators retired and at that time he and the Foreman decided to experiment with only a three-person field crew. After over a year of operating with a three-person field crew they have decided the fourth person is necessary for the field crews, especially since the number of customers that SCWA services has increased by over 10% in the past two years.

Mr. Cansler said in November 2024 SCWA advertised for an experienced and/or licensed operator, however none of the applicants met the qualifications, so he re-advertised for less skilled applicants who have demonstrated an aptitude to learn the trade and eventually become a certified operator. He said an unlicensed operator can take the certification exams after one year of experience in a water utility. Mr. Cansler said that after conducting several interviews in December, SCWA sent an offer letter to a candidate on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. He added that the new person had started work at SCWA on January 13th.

## **8. 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 met again in December and decided to remain at Stage 2. He added they were scheduled to meet again in January 2025.

**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. Masse, 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 February 10, 2025, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler  
Secretary