

**Draft Minutes of the February 12, 2024, 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 Edward Monahan, Treasurer Paul Eccard, Alex Masse, Claudia Koerting, and Nicholas Mullane.

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. Masse, the Authority approved the minutes of the January 8, 2024, Authority Meeting, by a unanimous vote of all members present.

Correspondence - None

General Manager's Report

1. Oakdale Heights Subdivision (Montville)

(Attachment: Letter from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, addressed to William Mackay, President-Oakdale Heights Association, dated February 1, 2024)

At the request of the Oakdale Heights Association, which represents the 219-home Oakdale Heights subdivision in Montville, a formal agreement for SCWA to take over ownership and operation of the Oakdale Heights water system was signed by SCWA and the Oakdale Heights Association in July 2023. The signed agreement was submitted along with a formal Request for Transfer of Water Lands Application to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) in early August.

General Manager Cansler stated that on February 1, 2024, DPH finally responded to the transfer application request via a letter addressed to the Oakdale Heights Association. He said that in addition to acknowledging receipt of the application, the letter from DPH states that the transfer is subject to the consent of the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), and that a public hearing will be required.

General Manager Cansler stated he was originally told by DPH staff, approximately one year ago, that this transfer was subject to PURA review/approval and would not require a public hearing. He said that he is currently trying to determine what the requirements are for the public hearing, and when it may be scheduled. He added he has reached out to SCWA Attorney Nick Kepple for legal counsel regarding the possible hearing.

2. Capital Projects Update

a) Seven Oaks/Montville Interconnection Project

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 on December 15, 2023. SCWA received a total of three (3) proposals for this project ranging between \$780,000 and \$1,191,750. After the bid opening, our consulting engineer on this project, Haley Ward, started reviews of each bid for compliance with the contract requirements, and started checking references on the two low bidders.

At the January 2024 meeting the Authority approved a motion to award a contract for the project titled "SCWA Seven Oaks Water Main Interconnection", pending approval by the State DPH DWSRF section, to the low bidder, Roma Construction of Griswold, CT, for a bid price of \$780,000, provided they submit the required bid award documents and references. As part of the same motion, if the low bidder does not provide the required documents or references in a timely manner, then SCWA will accept the second lowest bidder, B & W Paving and Landscaping of Oakdale, CT, for a bid price of \$1,045,250.

General Manager Cansler stated that, to date, the low bidder, Roma Construction, has not provided adequate references. As a result, our consultant, Haley-Ward Engineering, is currently reviewing the references and bid documents for B & W Paving. Mr. Cansler said that once the review of references and documents is completed the bid packages will go to DPH for review and approval. Once approved by DPH they will coordinate with the State Treasurer's office for allocation of the grant money (75%) and the loan (25%). This process supposedly takes 90-120 days. Mr. Cansler stated that the project is expected to be awarded in the spring of 2024, with anticipated completion in the mid to late summer/early fall.

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

General Manager Cansler stated that last November SCWA received word that the State approved a public act in October that included a grant-in-aid for the Tower Division to upgrade the pump station, add storage tanks, and upgrade security. He said this grant also includes extension of the emergency connection up Christy Hill Road.

Mr. Cansler said that since the grant money was allocated to the State Department of Health (DPH), SCWA requested a meeting with DPH to discuss the requirements for spending the grant-in-aid funding. He added that DPH had an internal meeting to discuss the funding requirements in late December, and although SCWA has reached out to DPH several times over the past few weeks, a meeting has not yet been scheduled. The total amount allocated is \$3 million.

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 tank, which is a top priority for DPH. Unfortunately, due to capital funding shortfalls this past year this project was delayed until later in 2024.

d). Proposed New Well at Ledyard Division

During the drought in the summer of 2022 SCWA decided an additional well is needed at the Ledyard pump station because the peak summer usage was near the capacity of the existing wells. DPH approved the new well last fall. General Manager Cansler stated that SCWA is now working with legal counsel to obtain an easement because the State requires that SCWA control a 150-foot radius around each well. The easement is taking longer than anticipated because of a recent change in ownership of the property next to the Ledyard pump station.

3. Proposed New Development - Salem

General Manager Cansler stated that this past summer SCWA participated in a meeting with DPH and CLA Engineers to discuss a proposed new 24-unit condominium development in Salem, which is in the SCWA exclusive service area (ESA). He said this development is currently still in the design and engineering phase, and that he had been informed that the developer hopes to begin construction in mid-2024, with the goal of selling the units in early 2025. This development will be located just off Route 85/Hartford-New London Turnpike, approximately one mile south of the traffic circle.

4. Green Village (Salem) and Millwood (Montville)

Green Village is a 55 and over community with 48 townhouse units in Salem which opened in August 2022. Currently there are 47 units occupied.

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

5. Lead Service Line Inventory

The National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for Lead and Copper, which went into effect in 2021, requires all public water systems to develop a lead service line (LSL) inventory that identifies all materials used to construct or repair all service lines connected to a public water distribution system. Last fall the EPA released their guidance for developing the LSL inventory. This LSL inventory must be completed and submitted by October 16, 2024. General Manager Cansler said that DPH sent the final inventory template out in August 2023, and that SCWA staff are currently researching and inputting data into the LSL Inventory spreadsheet.

6. PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances)

In March 2023 the EPA announced their draft regulations regarding PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances), which included draft maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for 6 different PFAS in drinking water. The review and comment period for these draft PFAS regulations ended May 30, 2023. General Manager Cansler said the final EPA regulations had been expected to be announced early this year.

7. Representative Advisory Board (RAB)

During the January meeting the Authority discussed how to improve membership and participation on the SCWA Representative Advisory Board (RAB), which is the board that oversees the Authority and appoints members. After a lengthy discussion the Authority requested that the General Manager reach out to the RAB Chairman for his thoughts. Mr. Cansler stated that he did discuss this issue with the RAB Chairman, and that they had considered discussion of this topic during the January RAB meeting. However, most likely because of a boost in membership and attendance at that particular meeting, the issue was not broached during the January RAB meeting.

8. Proposed New Development - Tower

General Manager Cansler stated he and SCWA Foreman met onsite in January with a developer to discuss the proposed addition of 15-25 new homes in the Tower Division in Ledyard. The proposed location of these new homes is off an extension of Bluebird Drive. The meeting also included discussion of possible residential expansion at other locations served by SCWA Tower division as well as within other SCWA divisions.

9. Regional Considerations

a) Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC): The Eastern Connecticut Water Utility Coordinating Committee (WUCC) and the Statewide WUCC both last met in November 2022. A meeting of the Eastern WUCC scheduled for July 2023, at the Southeastern CT Council of Governments (SCCOG) office in Norwich, was cancelled.

b) 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.

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 motion of Mr. Eccard, seconded by Mr. Mullane, the Authority voted to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:45 p.m. It was noted that the next Authority meeting is scheduled to occur on March 11, 2024, at 5:15 pm.

Josh Cansler
Secretary