

SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

NOVEMBER 16, 2023

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Kevin:

I will call the November 16th, 2023 meeting of the Five-Member Authority of the Regional Water Authority meeting to order. And we have a Safety Moment which is displayed on the screen and I don't know if anyone wants to read it.

Larry:

If Liz is here she usually does the Safety Moments, which this is on Thanksgiving Fire Prevention. Very timely.

Kevin:

Liz, are you there?

Liz:

I'm here. Sorry.

Larry:

Want to touch on the Safety Moment?

Liz:

Sure. My computer was acting up. Fire Prevention is the Safety Moment. And you know, obviously, Thanksgiving is coming up; it's next week. So kind of be mindful for all those that fry their turkeys, make sure that we're frying them in a safe spot. Don't leave food cooking unattended because we've probably all had a mishap with a fire on the stove. Stay in the home when cooking your turkey, check on it frequently, make and practice a fire escape plan just in case, in an event that there's a fire breaks out, and keep anything that can catch fire: oven mitts, wooden utensils, and things away from the stove. I know I had a father-in-law that started a fire at ours when he tried to fry a turkey.

Kevin:

Thanks Liz.

Liz:

You're welcome.

David:

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
November 16, 2023

While Dave's getting set up, public comment statements limited to the legislative function of the authority. Time limit granted to each speaker shall be three minutes, and residents may address the board at this time. Do we know if we have any public speakers logged in?

Jennifer:

No, seeing none.

Kevin:

Last call for public comment. Thank you. And do we have a motion to go into the Environmental, Health & Safety Committee? Motion by Suzanne?

Catherine:

Second.

Kevin:

Seconded by Catherine in discussion. All in favor?

Group:

Aye.

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETS FROM 12:32 P.M. TO 1:53 P.M.]

David:

On our revised agenda, which we all have in the written [inaudible 00:00:11] in here, the next item is act on any matters coming from committee meetings. So we'll move to fix that calendar.

Catherine:

Mr. Chairman, I move the approval of the Consent Agenda.

Mario:

Second.

David:

Are there any points of clarification or anything you want removed? Sensing you're ready to vote. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Group:

Aye.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
November 16, 2023

David:

Of course you have your calendars all set there now with that last item for next year.

RPB committee meetings, let's get those up there. I will tell you mine within this month is not until next week, so we won't have that one. So we had Land Use. Catherine, were you able to go to Land Use?

Catherine LaMarr:

I was.

David:

And you're looking for the notes.

Catherine:

For my notes. Actually, I really remember this pretty well. Following the usual safety moments [inaudible 00:01:07] minutes, there was a really great presentation made by Cody Savoy of the Lake Whitney Dam Project. The members were very interested in that project. There were lots of questions about not only the project but how the whole way that we selected the design and this is a very unique process that we've all talked about. The members are very interested in that. There were some questions about, I think some of them came from you, not only about the ECI project, but also just how do you define a high hazard dam and what does that mean and how the thing was going to be built. There was also very favorable response to the film that was put together by Larry. You did a great job of going through the entire presentation.

Other things that happened at that meeting. The report from John Triana.

Brian:

Quick comment. What Catherine was referring to, I think some members of the committee are confused between the difference between, it's called a high hazard dam. Thinking that that means that it's at risk of failure versus a high hazard dam, meaning it's a high hazard dam because of where it is. The difference between those two terms I think confused a couple of members of the committee. My questions are more on how we're choosing which type of dam to go upstream or downstream.

Catherine:

And then of course there were questions about the cost, which we decided was a lot.

David:

Next, Finance was on Monday. Suzanne, were you able to attend?

Suzanne Sack:

Yes, I was able to attend. And they basically covered the 10-year model presented by Rochelle who did a fabulous job. They had a few questions. One of them was about using the low end cost of the Whitney Dam and why was that and a few others, but nothing unusual or sticking. I think everybody appreciated

all the work, appreciated the variations of what we could be doing and to affect it and the ongoing ability to mitigate rates, so by using all the tools that were laid down from the presentation. So I think it was well received and there weren't a lot of questions.

David:

And there were other members there too from Land Use I understand, so that was nice because it's being presented Monday to Consumer Affairs and anybody else who would like to come. It was nice to see that they're not doing it their own [inaudible 00:04:43]

Suzanne Sack:

Got it.

David:

That was good. All right, then we'll move on. Let's try to get the other two quick things done then we'll take a break and then we'll just have Strategic Planning if that's all right. So Larry, can we go to your business updates?

Larry:

Sure. I do have only one other item, but before I get to mine I'll have Prem do the RWAY project update.

Prem:

Good afternoon everyone. So can you go to the dashboard.

So for this month's update, I think from a schedule standpoint there is no change. We had reported three weeks delay in the schedule, so we are continuing to see the same delay trying to recoup the time. The project is still scheduled to go live September next year overall. No impact on the project cost itself so we are still tracking good. We still haven't gotten into spending much of the contingency dollars there. Overall, I think the team is doing a great job. One of the key things to notice that November, December, as you all know is holiday time. So we are trying to stay on track because we don't add any more additional delays to the project. So a lot of focus and again we are making sure that we are able to give some time for the team so they can actually recharge themselves during holidays. So a lot of focus there.

In terms of accomplishment, overall I think the team has been doing a good job. We have completed ETL's transform extraction, transform load. I'm going left to right on the accomplishment side. The team has done a good job and I think we have completed our ETL-2 exercise. We are actively currently working on ETL-3. Basically, what it means is we are trying to find bugs in the system as we are transforming the data from SAP into the new system and you're trying to resolve the bugs and issues. So basically, we are being pretty active on that as part of the project during the design phase.

And then one of the current activities we are working on is also what we call as Omni-channel. Basically, what it means is, if you remember, we actually have meritization as part of the project that we will be implementing basically not only the IVR system but other channels where the customer can contact us. The good news here is we actually are able to do a cost avoidance for a future IVR project where we do

not have to spend the \$2 million in the capital plan. So the team had done a very good job on looking at that and really implementing that as part of the solution.

Now going on to the right side. We are tracking as I mentioned, the three weeks delay. And then in terms of really looking at the next steps after the design phase is development. As you could imagine now to recoup the time we are doing some parallel activities. So the team is looking at configuration and some development work to start in parallel for the design that's already complete. So that's been ongoing as well. So that's some good news there. One of the things we did was if you go to the next slide...

Any questions for me until this point here?

Suzanne:

I had two quick questions. One is I have a kickoff of 2/13 on that. I know that's [inaudible 00:08:08]

Prem:

Yes, that's pretty old data, Suzanne, good question. We grayed out because we are kind of keeping a tab of all the commentary that we started out the project with. We actually kicked out the project in February 13th. So it's just a tracking mechanism that you're trying to do it. We are going to start removing those commentary eventually. That's why it's grayed out. So that was a kickoff of the project, when you started the project.

Suzanne:

Say again?

Rochelle:

February 13th, 2023.

Suzanne:

Oh, thank you.

Secondly, did you mention, because I didn't catch it if we did, the delay associated with design phase because of your data migration, et cetera? How much of a delay is that?

Prem:

It's a three-week delay, Suzanne. We actually had it four weeks last time when we met. We were able to recoup a week from the team. So now we are looking at a three-week delay. So we are still working through that. One of the main reasons that we actually have the delay is because of the extent of the requirements that was gathered and now the team is working through the kinks. So we did anticipate some slide in the project but then we have some contingency that we are kind of pulling it together. At this point, I think the three-week delay is, I would say we still have work to do to be honest. So why not recoup and that's why I made a comment about November and December being the holiday time. We don't want to add any more delays so we are trying to make sure that the team is hitting all their milestones. So it's a three-week delay at this point.

Suzanne:

Thank you.

Prem:

So I think one other thing we did was as part of the change management, if you remember we have a good change management program in place now and the team has been doing a good job on tracking the benefits and what you see here is just a highlight as we say in terms of educating our team. So they're doing it in terms of various series of talking about change and new functionality, et cetera. So I won't go through everything in here, but I wanted to hit some key highlights.

So Omni-channel or the customer care contact center if you will, and some self-service. We are implementing an integrated call transcription, which we do not have today. That saves five to ten minutes of our CSRs' time as they're trying to wrap up a call. So that's a good one. And we are implementing sentiment analysis. For example, anybody who calls in, we might already know based on why they're calling in and if they have a high bill complaint or let's say if they have an outstanding balance, they would like to talk. So the system would automatically know and provide a sentiment of why the customer's calling so we can more informally talk to the customer on the call.

And then a couple other things. We have implemented real-time payments as part of the design. We still have to go through the development phase where real-time payment would come into the system. This way we kind of know if there's a work call out there for disconnect let's say. So automatically system recognizes and does all the things it needs to do behind the scenes. We are introducing over a thousand payment location. Now that's a very big uplift and benefit. Basically all the Walmart's and the CVS that you know of there, they're going to have a payment system where the customer can walk in and pay. So that's a very big benefit.

And going onto the field service, for the field service very quickly we are going to have an improved dispatching tool. So that's a good thing helping Jim Hill and rest of for field team there as well. We'll have a self-service appointment window for the customer so they can go online or whatever. Today we don't have it. Somebody is going to call us and then get an appointment. So that's a good thing. So they can do self-service appointment base. That's going to be a good thing as well.

Technology side, very high level, some good live dashboards doing reporting from a power BI perspective. Security patching, I may have mentioned this. We are going to get consistent security patching so we do not have any cybersecurity issues. We will have single sign-on. So from our team's perspective, once they log in they don't have to re-log into different system. Today they do it with COBRA and other different systems. So it's going to be a single sign on. Another big thing for our technology team is the system refresh. Today it takes typically two weeks to refresh our SAP system and that's going to be in one hour. That's incredible, so the new system. So all of this is going to be adding some benefits there for technology side.

Last but not least, for the series one, we are trying to streamline some complex billing that we have. The team has been looking at certain processes with its wholesale backflow program, et cetera. So that's another good benefit that's going to come along the way. Again, last but not least, a reduction of Excel sheets. As you know we use a lot of Excel sheets in RWA, so much of that is going to go away.

So those are some very, very highlights of a very high level and there'll be more in series two, et cetera. So any questions for me on this? I know I didn't go through a lot of details, but very high level.

David:

Mario has a question.

Mario:

So Prem, is this going to be easier for the customer service rep to get to the various screens to answer the questions?

Prem:

Absolutely. That's a great question. Today they have to navigate through schemes, but tomorrow it's going to be based on user profile. So a CSR profile is going to be created so they can see all in one screen based on a customer call coming in. What kind of bills they have outstanding, if they had made a payment; everything is going to be on one screen. So less navigation based on the profile, Mario. So we are looking forward to it. They're all excited. So waiting for the solution to go live.

Mario:

Okay, thank you.

Prem:

Thank you. That's all I had for today.

David:

Anything else, Larry?

Larry:

Yes, I just wanted to let you all know that our police department just successfully completed their state tier one accreditation process. That's due by the end of the year and they had to review over 130 policies and standards and update them. So they've been working on that all of '23. Paul Ruggiero, who is the captain of the police department, he started working on it and then turned it over to Ed Massey who was the police sergeant while Paul was recruiting police officers and orienting the new ones that were hired. But that will go through a thorough self-evaluation process and then it's reviewed by an independent group of state assessors and members of the council assigned to the police officer standards and training accreditation committee. So it's a rather involved process that they have to go through. So I thought that was great that they were able to do it early and see this tier one accreditation.

Brian Eitzer:

Is that ISO, an ISO accreditation?

Larry Bingaman:

I'm not sure if it is or not, Brian. I'll check that and let you know.

Brian:

Just curious. Because I know ISO accreditation, any accreditation [inaudible 00:15:26] process we've been through.

Suzanne:

The policies that they have to update, is there a service within the water community that... Are these universal policies that can be adopted through? I know in school policies there are firms that, when policies have to be updated, they just give you the version of the policies, you adopt them, make some minor changes, but you're not sitting to rewrite and review every single policy.

Larry:

Yes, I'll double check the answer on this, but as I recall, they have some standards that are particular to RWA just because we're unique and then they have others that they have to follow that are kind of universally accepted for community policing. And then they go through and update those to make sure that they're up-to-date to what's required today or considered best practice that they get from police officer associations.

Suzanne:

Okay.

David:

All right, thank you. Well, all right, so you're all set then we'll go on to the finance because this will be quick and then we'll take a break. Review the budget, hopefully you all looked at that. So we're going to combine our March meeting, start in early and have it be the budget meeting because it's so close to when we would have the budget meeting anyway. Now that we're at the four Thursday of the month, then that's very late in the month. But if I stole your thunder, I'm sorry, Rochelle.

Rochelle Kowalski:

This schedule, it follows other than the adjustments for the calendar, our normal schedule. So if the 28th is good for everyone, we'll assume that they'll get us ready to send out to the OCA and RPB on the second and then Jennifer will work on scheduling the committee meetings and it'll be completed after the final approval. And then we'll send our final budget to the trustee.

David:

Good. All right. And all the holidays were clearly reviewed.

Suzanne:

It's the same day as regular board, right?

David:

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
November 16, 2023

Yes, exactly. That's when we can combine.

Suzanne:

It should be on our calendar.

David:

Yes, exactly. Just starts earlier. All right, very good. Well, with that, why don't we take a 10-minute break.

Suzanne Sack:

Thank you.

David:

And then we'll get right into your committee.

Brian Eitzer:

And I guess no more from [inaudible 00:17:45]

David:

For that, no discussion.

Thank you for understanding that. Thank you for being here. Larry and I had said it was going to be very timely that you were...

[BREAK]

David:

All right, you guys, it's been ten minutes, so the meeting is back to order, and I'll ask if someone would like to recess the Authority and meet as the Strategic Planning Committee?

Catherine:

So moved.

David:

All those in favor, say "Aye."

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETS FROM 2:20 P.M. TO 3:43 P.M.]

Suzanne:

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
November 16, 2023

All right, we're back with the Committee, and there are no items from the Committee to come out, so we are ready to adjourn and reconvene as the Authority Meeting.

Kevin:

So moved.

Mario:

Second.

Group:

Aye.

David:

Very good. Thank you, everyone. I know I'll see most of you later, but happy Thanksgiving to all of you.