

**Representative Policy Board
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District**

**June 18, 2020
Meeting Transcription**

A regular meeting of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”) of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District took place on Thursday, June 18, 2020, via remote access. Chairman Ricozzi presided.

PRESENT

RPB

Ansonia	Thomas P. Clifford III
Beacon Falls	Peter Betkoski
Bethany	Brian Eitzer
Branford	Mario Ricozzi
Cheshire	Timothy Slocum
East Haven	Michelle Verderame
Guilford	Charles Havrda
Hamden	Stephen A. Mongillo
Killingworth	Jamie Mowat Young
Madison	Joseph Oslander
Milford	Benjamin Gettinger
New Haven	Naomi Campbell
North Branford	Peter DeSantis
North Haven	Anthony Rescigno
Orange	Jasper J. Jaser
Prospect	Robert E. Harvey, Jr.
Seymour	Michael H. Horbal
West Haven	T. Gregory Malloy
Woodbridge	Mark Levine

Absent

Derby	Frank Pepe
Governor’s Rep.	Vincent M. Marino

Regional Water Authority

Anthony DiSalvo
David Borowy
Joseph A. Cermola
Kevin Curseaden
Suzanne Sack

Management

Larry L. Bingaman
Linda Discepolo
Rose Gavrilovic
Rochelle Kowalski
Beth Nesteriak
Edward O. Norris III
John Triana
Premjith Lakshman Singh

Counsel

Bruce McDermott

Office of Consumer Affairs

Jeffrey M. Donofrio

North Branford Land Conservation Trust

David Sargent

Staff

Jennifer Slubowski

Mario:

Very good. I think we've got everyone who's presenting an item on. We'll start the meeting. Jennifer, you got the recording going?

Jennifer:

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I do. All set.

Mario:

So the meeting is being recorded. If you're not speaking, if you would please mute your microphone, that would be preferred. Thank you and welcome to the June regular meeting of the RPB.

Mario:

Okay. Jamie tries to work through-

Jamie:

I can't hear anything. If you guys can hear me, I can't hear you. I'm sorry.

Mario:

We can hear you. You're on mute. Okay.

Jennifer:

I just muted her.

Mario:

All right. So, our safety moment deals with COVID-19 and water questions and water quality and how that's all related. So [inaudible 00:02:52] through that, and Michelle, thank you very much for hanging in there for us.

Michelle:

Thank you.

Mario:

Approval of the minutes of May 21st. Is there a motion?

Greg:

I so move.

Mark:

Seconded.

Mario:

Greg moved and Mark second. Any corrections, additions, amendments?

Mike:

I second the motion. Mike Horbal.

Mario:

Okay, Mike. All in favor?

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Group:

Aye [crosstalk 00:03:29].

Mario:

Opposed? Anyone abstaining? Okay. Communications, the fiscal year 2021 weighted vote computation was in your package. Most everyone stayed the same. Milford increased by one to 11 votes. So Rich, if you're out there, you now carry more weight around.

Rich:

It's all good. Yeah.

Mario:

And that was because of some additional customers. So that's good. There's also in your packet was a memorandum to submit your preferences of which committees you want to be on. Please identify your first choice, your second choice. I think last year we were pretty good at being able to get everyone their first choice. If you wouldn't mind sending them to Jennifer by next Wednesday as your target date. You don't have to worry about filling out the form. You can just send her an email and she'll compile a table for everyone.

Mario:

All right, so get your choices in. The other item I just wanted to mention is we will probably continue on virtual meetings during the month of July and August. So if you want to try and set your plans, I think the next two months we'll probably be doing virtual, and then we'll think about it come August some time. Okay? That's all on communications unless there's anything else. Tony's here. Tom's here. Okay.

Mario:

Items for consideration and action, the Nominating Committee's recommendation is Steve. [crosstalk 00:05:28]

Steve:

Good evening. The Nominating Committee met on June 3rd, and the first item was the election of the chairman. They elected me as its chairman. We had a brief discussion on the Bylaws regarding the election of officers, and a lot of the preliminary work had been done because Jennifer petitioned RPB members to see if they were interested. We did have one person who did respond. Also, ahead of time, all of the currently serving officers announced their formal intention to run again. And in addition, Jennifer that let the committee know that each of those currently serving officers was eligible to run again.

Steve:

So considering that everyone is interested, they're eligible and doing a good job, after a discussion the committee decided to recommend to the RPB that the currently serving officers be reappointed. So I will read the proposed resolution. Resolved, that the following officers are hereby elected to serve for the year July 1st, 2020 through June 30, 2021 or until their respective successors are duly elected and qualified. Chairperson, Mario Ricoszi; Vice Chairperson, Charles Havrda; Secretary, Bob Harvey Jr.; and Treasurer, T. Greg Malloy.

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Mario:

That's in the form of a motion, Steve.

Steve:

Yes.

Mario:

Is there a second?

Jay:

Mr. Chairman, I'll second that resolution.

Mario:

Okay, Jay. Discussion-

Jay:

Yes, I'll second the resolution.

Mario:

Yes, Jay. Thank you. Any discussion? Hearing none. All in favor?

Group:

Aye. [crosstalk 00:07:38]

Mario:

Opposed? Abstaining? Okay. It passes. Thank you very much, Steve, and thank you very much to RPB for your faith in us continuing.

Steve:

No, we appreciate you doing it. Good job.

Greg:

No, thank you.

Mario:

Try. The next item on the agenda is the final decision of the North Sleeping Giant Well Field Chemical Improvements project. Brian, if you are there and if you could lean closer to your phone.

Brian:

I am closer to my computer. Can you hear me?

Mario:

Yes. Thank you.

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Brian:

Okay. So I will read the proposed resolution, June 18th, 2020 about the Authority's application for a project for the North Sleeping Giant Wellfield Chemical Improvements project. This is in the form of a motion. Resolved, that the proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Final Decision of the Representative Policy Board, with respect to the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority's Application for the North Sleeping Giant Wellfield Chemical Improvements project, a copy of which is attached to these minutes, be and hereby is approved in the form submitted to the meeting.

Mario:

Okay. Thank you very much, Brian. Is there a second to the motion?

Tony R:

Second [crosstalk 00:09:04]

Mario:

Tony Rescigno. Thank you, Tony. Any discussion? Okay. Hearing none, all in favor?

Group:

Aye [crosstalk 00:09:16].

Mario:

Anyone opposed? Anyone abstaining? The motion carries. Thank you very much, Brian, for being the hearing officer. Next we have some Land Use Committee recommendation on the completeness mode of the Authority's application for some non-substantial amendments to the land use plan. Mark?

Mark:

Hello, everybody. Okay. Whereas, the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, on May 22nd, 2020 filed an application to the Representative Policy Board for the approval of a non-substantial land use plan amendment to the land use plan to create a new trail on Authority property in North Branford application or amendment and, whereas the Land Use Committee of the RPB reviewed the application and recommends that it be accepted as complete and considered a non-substantial without a public hearing required. Whereas the RPB concludes that the amendment is non-substantial and the proposed action... Uh-oh what happened here? I lost it.

Mark:

[crosstalk 00:10:38] Proposed action is consistent with an advance of [inaudible 00:10:44] policies and goals of the RWA and has no expected impact on public water supply, no conflict with the trail in the existing land use designation of non-water system land and no financial impact on the authority. Now therefore, be it resolved, that the RPB hereby accepts the application as complete and proves with public hearing the RWA's application for a non-substantial land use plan amendment to create a new trail on the Authority property in North Branford filed May 22nd, 2020, in accordance with Section 18 of Connecticut Special Act 77-98, as amended.

Mario:

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Okay. Is there a second to the motion?

Greg:
Second.

Greg:
I second, Mario.

Mario:
Okay, Greg?

Greg:
Yeah.

Mario:
Very good. Any discussion? Mark?

Mark:
No. Just a non-substantial movement of the trail over to our property because it's... maybe John can tell you more about it but it's-

Mario:
Well, but you reviewed in detail with John at the meeting?

Mark:
Yeah. Yes we did.

Mario:
Okay. Any questions?

Steve:
This is Steve. I just wanted to ask Mark. These trails are to be maintained and paid for by the other agents that are moving them there or are you doing this?

Mark:
I believe so.

Steve:
Okay.

Mario:
Yes.

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Bob:

No cost to the RWA.

Steve:

Okay, thanks.

Mario:

Any other questions? All those in favor of this motion?

Group:

Aye.

Mario:

Anyone opposed?

Mike:

Aye. Aye.

Mario:

Who was that? Is that Mike?

Mike:

Aye.

Mario:

Oh you're in favor, okay. Sorry.

Mike:

Yeah.

Mario:

Anyone abstaining? Okay, the motion carries. The next one is the Quinnipiac trail. Mark?

Mark:

Okay. Whereas the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, RWA, on May 22nd, 2020 filed an application to the Representative Policy Board for the approval of a non-substantial land use plan amendment to relocate the Quinnipiac Trail on Authority property in Prospect application or amendment, and whereas the Land Use Committee of the RPB reviewed the application and recommends that it be accepted as complete and considered non-substantial without a public hearing required. Whereas, the RPB concludes that the amendment is non-substantial and the proposed action is consistent and advances the policies and goals of the RWA as no expected impact on public water land, no conflict with the trail and existing land use designation and non-water system land and no financial impact on the Authority.

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Mark:

Now therefore be it resolved that the RPB accepts the application as complete and approves without a public hearing the RWA's application for non-substantial land use plan and amendment to relocate the Quinnipiac Trail on Authority property in Prospect, filed May 22nd, 2020 in accordance with Section 18 of the Connecticut Special Act 77-98, as amended.

Mario:

Thank you, Mark. Is there a second to the motion?

Male:

Second. [crosstalk 00:14:19]

Mike:

[inaudible 00:14:20] I second that motion.

Mario:

Okay.

Tim:

Question.

Mario:

Question, Tim.

Tim:

Yeah, my question is this, that trail is the oldest and longest in the Blue Trail system. So obviously the whole trail is not being relocated. My question, because Prospect has substantial portions of that trail, is this a minor relocation on a small portion of that trail? What are we really dealing with here? I'm just curious.

Mark:

I understand it's a small section.

Tim:

I presumed as much, but I was just curious if you knew is it up in the area of the Prospect tanks off of Tress Road. Is it something of that nature or are we... It's a big trail. It goes from West Rock to Wolcott.

Mark:

Yeah. [crosstalk 00:15:07]

John:

Would you like me to answer?

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Mark:

Do you know?

John:

Would you like me to answer?

Mark:

Oh yeah, [crosstalk 00:15:11] thank you.

Tim:

Please. Thank you, John.

Brian:

Let's let John [crosstalk 00:15:14] answer.

John:

As Tim said, I don't know if the Quinnipiac trail's the longest, but it's definitely the oldest.

Tim:

Well, it's the oldest.

John:

[crosstalk 00:15:20] trails in the state. What the CFPA and the Prospect Land Trust together are working on this project to relocate the Quinnipiac Trail and make about just a little over two miles new relocated onto our property. The benefit also will be that it then connects the Quinnipiac Trail to an existing trail system on a Prospect Land Trust property called Kathan Woods, which then has a trail head off of a little cul-de-sac called Boardman Drive.

John:

So this will get it off of a road walk that is between Cornwall Avenue, Tress Road, and Chatfield Road. Gets it off of that, puts it into our woods. They do have to then cross Route 68, but then they have the added benefit of crossing our property going into the Kathan Woods system and then having a nice safe trail head to park on Boardman Drive.

Tim:

John, I think that's tremendous. I've walked on the paved portion of that trail, which doesn't seem very trail-like. I think that's excellent and I'm glad to hear that clarification because I just hadn't seen anything beforehand. So I appreciate that.

Brian:

And I'll make a quick comment, I think, John, correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't this the piece of the trail that you took me on last year with a group hike? [crosstalk 00:16:41] It was a very nice piece of trail.

John:

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That is correct. It was two years ago or one year ago when we did trails day. What we did for that trails day event is that we walked this proposed route and we went from Route 42 all the way to Boardman Drive.

Mark:

It was a very nice walk for everybody. So I highly approve making it a full trail.

Tim:

It's a fantastic trail and it's the oldest trail. Edward [Hermontz 00:17:14] is the creator of the trail and I believe the father of that... What is it, Sleeping Giant and all that area there. He was pretty significant in that. It's a good thing.

Mario:

Very good. Other questions? Hearing none, all in favor?

Group:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? And abstaining? Okay, motion passes. Thank you very much, Mark.

Mark:

Welcome.

Mario:

The next action item is to consider an act on a recommendation of the Finance Committee, Consumers' Affairs, to approve the RWA not charging interest beyond zero interest rate beyond July 1st, 2020.

Mike:

Can I make that motion to approve?

Mario:

Okay, hold on, Mike.

Mike:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tim:

Shall I read that motion, Mario?

Mario:

Tim, are you going to lead?

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Tim:

Yes, I will be happy to enter that motion. The committee mentions the Finance and Land Use meant as a whole, I presume, when this was discussed in our meeting of June 18. No, that's today, but our meeting of a week ago or so and the motion follows. Whereas, executive order 7W which extended executive order 7S, section six, applicable to municipalities and quasimunicipal corporations, extended the tax deferral and the interest rate reduction program on a water charge among other types of charges, examples sewer and electric, and which executive order ends July 1, 2020, and whereas management recommends extending the time period concerning abatement of interest zero rate through December 31, 2020 and presented such recommendation at the Representative Policy Board Finance Committee meeting of June 8th, 2020 and at the RPB Consumer Affairs Committee meeting on June 15th, 2020.

Tim:

Whereas RPB Finance Committee and RPB Consumer Affairs Committee agreed to recommend the full RPB management's recommendation and concurs that this is the right approach in light of COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic impacts. Now therefore, be it resolved the full RPB approves the continuation of abatement of interest on arrears authorizing a zero interest rate through December 31, 2020.

Mario:

[crosstalk 00:19:45] Thank you very much.

Mike:

I second the motion.

Mario:

Okay. Steve?

Steve:

I'll address this in the Consumer Affairs report.

Mario:

Okay. Very good.

Steve:

Since this is already read into the record and we're going to vote on it.

Mario:

Okay. Any additional comments?

Tim:

I could address it now as a post to the finance if you'd like. I know that it was addressed. There was discussion in the finance committee regarding reasons for, and I think further amplified by what local communities are doing, recognizing the fact that people are impacted by this and recognizing that there's approximately, I think it was represented at roughly 20 to 25% of the customers have been

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impacted by this and it was recommended because of this that it should go forward and be extended so that there's really no harm addressed to our rate payers.

Greg:

This is Greg. By doing this, what's the estimated revenue we will be losing?

Rochelle:

Oh. Do you want me to answer that?

Tim:

Please.

Greg:

Yes, please.

Mario:

Rochelle.

Rochelle:

So at first we had already incorporated this change into our revised budget on estimated impact being that we weren't charging interest in March and May is approximately \$475000. That's already been incorporated into our revised plan.

Greg:

Okay. Thank you.

Mario:

Okay. Answer your question, Greg?

Greg:

Yep.

Mario:

Okay. Any other questions? Hearing none, all in favor?

Group:

Aye [crosstalk 00:21:30].

Mario:

Opposed? And abstaining? Okay, the ayes have it. Thank you very much. We have no more items for consideration. We're back to reports. Finance committee, Tim, anything to add?

Tim:

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Well beyond the conversation that we just discussed, we did have an update on projects as they stand and it was more or less fairly simple and straightforward, pretty quick meeting. The minutes are probably sufficient to explain.

Mario:

Okay. Questions-

Tim:

No further report.

Mario:

All right. Land Use Committee, Mark, you're on mute right now. You're on mute, Mark.

Mark:

Okay. So we met on June 10th and we had a great discussion about how the recreation permit holders or the increase of permits from June 2016 to date, we're up to 5000 plus permit holders. I've been on the committee for a long time, and I've never seen that many. It's probably because of COVID that nobody wanted to stay in their house and they wanted to go on our land hiking and walking around. So we are very happy about that. We talked about the increase of income that has come in that if it wasn't COVID now, that maybe we could do some recreation programs for inner city youths. All those were canceled this year because of the COVID outbreak. So maybe we could do something better for next year.

Mark:

That's about it. Oh, the water, reservoir levels are 96%. Previous year was 99. Historical average was 93. That's about it, guys. You can read the report.

Mario:

Any questions for Mark? Okay. Thank you very much, Mark. Steve, Consumer Affairs. You're on mute, Steve.

Steve:

Okay, can you hear me now?

Mario:

Yes, you're clear.

Steve:

Thank you. I was trying to find the little icon there. Two things, one we have so obviously some new members to that recreation program. I don't suppose we would know if they actually used it or not, but we might be able to determine that with a survey. Has there been any thought to how to reach out to the new members to keep them?

Mark:

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Well, first of all, most of the new permit holders are two year permit holders. John said that the trails and the activity on our property has increased double fold. So yeah, and they're working on ways to retain these permit holders, but I think once they get a taste of walking on our property, they're going to re-up.

Steve:

Very good. Very good. Thank you. The other question I have is about the house in Hamden on Skiff Street. They finally finished the construction on Skiff Street, the bridge, and did a great job there and now there's access to that property. So I see that there's been some kind of a petition to the zoning board in Hamden. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Mark:

I don't know about it, but I'm sure John does.

John:

Yes. Would you like me to answer?

Steve:

Yes, please, John.

John:

All right. So the situation at Skiff Street was that it was in a T1 zone. If we left it in a T1 zone... in all instances we have to carve out a conforming lot. In the case of a T1 zone, we looked at what the requirements would be and it actually turned out to be a parcel that would be about one and three quarters acres to meet the zoning requirements. As part of the amendment to sell the houses, to get the houses out of our list of assets, the charge was to limit the amount of class one land that would go along with these houses.

John:

In the case of Skiff Street, and also in [Forage 00:26:08] Street for that matter, they are both right next to the Mill River. So basically the entire thing is class one. So we did some thinking and thought, came up to the conclusion that if we can get a zone change from a T1 to a T5 zone, that will reduce the amount of land that we would have to sell for a conforming lot from 1.75 acres down to less than one-third of an acre. So thereby allowing us to retain more than an extra acre of land that is the most important for watershed protection.

John:

So we went before planning and zoning last week for the zone change. Everything went very well. It was a Zoom meeting, the public hearing, and they extended the hearing to next Tuesday, which I will attend as well. Everything looks like it's going according to plan and without getting too much into the details because this will come to you fairly soon is that [Arm 00:27:04] Street has been ready for a disposition. Skiff Street is waiting to catch up. Once Skiff Street gets all the local permits, then Skiff Street will be in sync with Arm Street. I will prepare both disposition applications and you will see them together so that we could have two public hearings on the same night.

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Steve:

Okay. Very good. Yeah, I hope that all goes through okay. Good job. Thank you.

Mario:

Okay. Steve, Consumer Affairs report?

Steve:

Consumer Affairs. We met this past Monday. Like everyone else, the subject of the last meeting, both Finance and Consumer Affairs, was the deferment of the interest and an extension of that. We did have some questions of Rochelle, one of which is what Greg asked. Just concerned about the impact on the Authority and she did respond with that same amount and told us that they had not only considered the impact, but also accounted for it in their budget. So considering that they had already done that, they think it's the right thing to do. After a brief discussion, our committee agreed with that and recommended that the extension of the interest to December be approved. So that was in that proposal that we just approved.

Steve:

Otherwise, Jeff reported on two issues that had escalated from customer service. Both of them are expected to be resolved. So we'll see where that goes. A few housekeeping items, and that was our meeting.

Mario:

Thank you. Questions of Steve on Consumer Affairs? Hearing none. Steve, did you have anything to add to the Nominating Committee?

Steve:

No. Again, there was not much to do as we had already had the petitioning ahead of time for interest and for eligibility. So we just had one meeting and that was it.

Mario:

Great. Good. Work with Jennifer to clean up the minutes approval.

Steve:

We'll do that. She's already scheduling that.

Mario:

Good. Very good. Mr. DiSalvo.

Tony D:

Thank you, Mario. We met today and the Environmental, Health and Safety Committee met and Kevin has the report for you

Kevin:

Yes. Good evening, Mr. Chairman and members of the board. We had a presentation today from John Hudak, who was on the Hamden Middle School Remediation project. I'll just give a little bit of a brief background for those on the board who are not familiar with that project. It's been ongoing for a number of years and it's finally drawing to an end.

Kevin:

This was the Authority's environmental remediation of approximately 25 acres of land formerly owned by the New Haven Water Company in the Newhallville section of Hamden. New Haven Water Company purchased the property in 1900. So it goes back quite a ways. I didn't know this. Today, John had brought it up that this was actually the largest environmental cleanup in Connecticut history. It was done in conjunction with the town of Hamden and I believe there was another entity.

Tony D:

Olin. Olin.

Kevin:

Olin. Yeah, Olin, owner of Winchester Repeating Arms. So as part of a larger, Connecticut DEEP required remediation, state of Connecticut, town of Hamden, RWA and Olin were all required to clean up certain areas and it was done in a number of phases. Remediation was necessitated by the use of the land as a dump site for waste from the Winchester factory, automotive wastes and domestic and municipal waste during the last century, particularly from the 1920s to the 50s.

Kevin:

Contamination, the Hamden Middle School was built on the property in 1956, unbeknownst to them at the time of the extent of the contamination. Investigations of the contamination between '79 and 1990s show that the contaminants on the school site included lead, arsenic, hydrocarbons and PCBs. In 2003, DEEP issued a consent order for remediation to the four entities I mentioned earlier requiring the development and implementation plans for remediation.

Kevin:

The last the members of the board probably heard was that there was going to be a developer of residential property on the site, and we were going to complete the... RWA was going to complete their obligations of their final phase in conjunction with that approval and application and development. That development is not happening or did not happen in a timely manner due to financing I guess for the developer from the state of Connecticut that failed to qualify or obtain financing. So the RWA had proceeded with the completion of their phase of the remediation.

Kevin:

Not to get too far into details with it, but it included burying a lot of the soil beneath the four foot cap in an area that can now be used as a soccer field, importing clean fill and topsoil, including some of the Authority's treatment residuals and paving certain areas. There's a final closure report. What's left to be done is a final closure report with environmental land use restrictions filed with Connecticut DEEP, and the RWA is going to have to continue with post remediation ground water monitoring, which is expected to last for a few years and be in the range of about 12000 to \$15000 a year.

Kevin:

The total project cost is anticipated at 4.3 million, which is close to the 4.1 million estimated in 2017 after the full extent of the remediation became evident. According to Mr. Hudak, it could have been in the six to eight million dollar range, but they were able to have the opportunity to take advantage of some savings by employing innovative methodologies to obtain the clean fill and top soil where they saved 1.5 million and using the Authority's own treatment residuals, saving that's part of the 1.5. That was about 200,000, and they had a bid waiver that was approved by the Five Member Authority to allow opportunistic purchasing as materials from projects became available.

Kevin:

So I think it might be a good presentation for the future for the RPB to have for Mr. Hudak if you have time on your schedule in the future. They're anticipating, like I said, it just to last another couple years and for many members on the RPB, this has been going on for quite some time. That was our meeting today.

Tony D.:

Thank you, Kevin. Any questions, folks?

Tim:

I have a question, Kevin or anyone. I noticed in that general area, besides the school being present, a number of residential properties have been torn down. I didn't know if that was part of that or if that was just another effort taking place in remediation. Does anyone know the answer to that?

Kevin:

Yeah. I can give you a brief answer, and then Ted might be able to finish it. There was part of the phase which was, one of the other entities was required was residential remediation, which was a large part of it. So I'm not sure if those properties were torn down in connection with that. Ted, do you have any knowledge of that?

Ted:

I don't regarding the tearing down of the property, but there were about 240, if I remember correctly, residential properties that Olin and the state had to remediate. So maybe with some of those, Tim, I'll [inaudible 00:35:22], but I'm not sure.

Tim:

Well, that could [crosstalk 00:35:23] be the case.

Jamie:

Are you talking about the Newhallville area?

Ted:

Yeah.

Jamie:

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Yeah. So I can just from... and it's public knowledge. So I can speak from it, but it was where there was tires, issues with tire disposal on the property. So I know they had to do, it was significant work done there on the homes. It was a project, it called the Newhallville project where DEEP worked with I think Olin and the local property owners. But it didn't have anything to do with your project, to my knowledge.

Tim:

Thank you.

Mario:

Any other questions?

Steve:

Yeah, Mario. This is Steve. Kevin, I'm glad you mentioned what the cost was because pretty remarkable over time that you were able to keep it to that figure that was anticipated and not go beyond that. That was very complex, long running project. RWA was I think very responsible throughout the whole process. I'd certainly like to hear kind of a summary of it. I think it'd be good for other members of the RPB who were not part of this for a very long time to have that. So maybe, Mario, in the future, as an agenda [crosstalk 00:36:41] item, we might get that.

Tony D.:

[crosstalk 00:36:44] We're going to arrange that with you, Mario. The bulk of the rest of the meeting Larry will talk about. Larry?

Larry:

Thank you. I'm here. I had it on mute. Thank you, everyone. Good evening, everyone. We'll start off on management's report with an overview of our COVID-19 efforts which Beth will give.

Beth:

Hi, good evening. So I'll just give a quick update regarding our COVID-19 status and where we are headed moving forward. As of today, I'm happy to report that we do not have any employees in isolation or home sick with the virus. So we fared pretty well. As you remember from my previous reports, we've had had two employees who tested positive, two employees tested negative and have several employees that were unable to get tested. That was during the March timeframe, and others that were required to self-isolate because of potential exposure.

Beth:

From the supply perspective, we're doing well. PPE is in good supply. We have masks, face coverings, no interruption of our chemical deliveries or any of our major supply chains from an operational perspective. So all good there. We remain operating our treatment plants and keeping those operators in somewhat isolation. So we're continuing to restrict access to our treatment plants to make sure that we can minimize exposure, and we have several other areas and operations doing that as well. Our laboratory services are working in two different shifts to minimize exposure and some other critical functions.

Beth:

So overall, we're doing pretty well. One of the major focuses has been our reopening plan, and I think I reported on that last month. Our next major milestone for that, well we have a soft opening at the end of June where we are bringing back some staff into the building that have not had the full capability to work from home. So we're going to slowly introduce those staff. We have been making building modifications, workspaces where we can't maintain six feet. We've been installing plexiglass. Also working on making other modifications around the building, just to increase social distancing and make sure we're keeping up to hygiene standards. We're also developing an employee handbook or a guidebook for all the new guidance that's been out, and giving a little bit of a welcome back kit to those employees that are going to be more frequent in the office.

Beth:

As we move through the summer, we'll reassess how we're doing both internally and what's going on outside of our four walls, watching obviously cases and things like that. But overall, moving in the right direction and hopeful that we'll be able to maintain our good status that we've had since March, excuse me. So any questions regarding our COVID response?

Tim:

I have a question.

Beth:

Sure, Tim.

Tim:

I'm certain it's been a great response. My question is though in terms of numbers back on campus so to speak, when do you expect to sort of fully populate the office or you're just doing that on a day by day basis?

Beth:

Well, I'd say we're about a third of the capacity right now on any given day. We have a lot of people that are part-time remoting. So it kind of depends on the day. We have another phase in late July, and then one again right after Labor Day. So I anticipate those numbers to increase as we move forward this summer. Not dramatically, but really it's going to be a phase by phase approach and see how it goes. Like I said, after September, after that Labor Day was kind of another larger milestone for us, but we really need to continue to evaluate whether we're seeing any increase of sickness within our staff or even within Connecticut as a whole.

Beth:

So right now we're taking it a day by day.

Tim:

Okay. As a follow-up to that, and maybe this is a question that can't really be answered in this forum, but I think schools have decided that there's mixed blessings with all of this. They're glad they were able to do stuff remotely, but everyone wants to get back to their home places to do business. Do you believe that is the guiding principle behind what goes on with the Authority, the operations, or do you

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see the potential for outplaced workers, so to speak, remotely working for whatever reasons? Again, it's sort of maybe a insider business philosophy that needs to be further developed before you even answer, but it's just sort of a question that's been floating around in my mind.

Beth:

Yeah, I mean obviously as a mother of two small children, I really hope they go back to school in the fall. But while we've been trying to work with people on a case by case basis, I think it's... a lot's going to depend on our operational needs obviously as a critical employer and things like that, but I think it's a hard question to answer right now and something that we're working through as we see. And where people have the remote ability and can work from home, so that could be a great benefit to us going on into the fall if we have to with this isolation.

Beth:

But I think it's a little too early to answer that, but, man if anybody has any pull, let's get them back to school.

Tim:

Well, no, I'm all with you, but it might be great for snow days, anyway. Okay, thanks.

Beth:

Yeah. Yeah, we'll continue to monitor it, Tim, and I think it's going to be... it's such a case by case basis on what people's personal needs are as they enter back into the workforce. We'll just have to take it as we go forward.

Tim:

Thank you, much.

Mario:

Thank you

Steve:

Beth, this is Steve Mongillo. Can you speak to customer service specifically? Are they able to work from home? Do you have them in the building or how has that department been impacted.

Beth:

Yeah, Linda, do you want to answer that or do you want me to? Okay.

Linda:

Sure. We still have five customer service reps at home and we have two other customer service representative individuals at home. We are expected to bring them back by the 29th. We've got some coming in. We're going to put a plexiglass I believe this weekend if that's possible, and then try to bring them back in as far as being able to answer calls and do the work internally.

Steve:

Thank you.

Mario:

Very good. Beth, a question. You're still holding off on construction activities at the treatment plants, correct?

Beth:

As much as we can. We are reviewing them on a case by case basis. If the contractor can access the area through a separate entrance and be isolated. So we are looking at that case by case. Anything outside the treatment plants, obviously that... we had some work on our finished water reservoirs that we were able to continue. We are requiring contractors to provide their own porta facilities and really continuing to limit building access, but we are starting to look at those projects case by case.

Mario:

Very good. Thank you. Okay, Larry.

Larry:

All right, thank you. Well I'm pleased to present our preliminary results after 12 months, with our fiscal year ending May 31st. Our operating revenues are under budget by about \$1.1 million, which is less than 1%. That's due to total water revenues being under budget by a little over two million dollars primarily due to lower than anticipated water billings. However our other revenues, which is from our outside lab and PipeSafe programs are over budget by \$928000. However, our operating and maintenance expenses are about 5.7 million or about 9% under budget.

Larry:

So when you do all the puts and takes on the expenses and the revenues, we are now projecting a coverage of 129% with no draw, and that's compared to a budgeted draw of 829,000 at the beginning of the fiscal year. So to date, the impacts of the COVID-19 on cash receipts so far has not been as severe as forecasted. But remember, the end of our fiscal year, we've only been in this pandemic for about a couple of months. So we haven't really seen the full effect of what impact the pandemic may have on billed revenues. Even though water usage is up, we don't know if people are going to pay for that.

Larry:

So the fact that the cash receipts are being better than forecasted combined with lower O&M, lower depth service, which is due to refinancing and our DWSRF and lower PILOT, we ended the fiscal year in a very strong position as we enter into fiscal '21, which still I think has quite a bit of uncertainty associated with it. So good news there. As of June 15th, our raw water storage was 94% compared to a long-term average of 90% for this time of the year.

Mark:

Wow. The go with the water and the 1.29% over coverage is unbelievable.

Larry:

It's great, but it's still too soon to get real comfortable with that.

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Mark:

Are you seeing increased water usage now because of the hot weather? [crosstalk 00:46:46]

Larry:

We are seeing a fiscal year to date production for the first 13 days of June was up about 7%.

Mark:

Wow.

Larry:

Of course that varies day-to-day, but for instance, yesterday's production was up 12% over last year at this time. Overall, for the first two weeks of June, we're up about 7%.

Mark:

Let's hope we have a hot summer.

Larry:

Yeah, we're hoping for it. The health department, as a matter of fact, are saying that there's a good chance there could be a drought during this summer, at least the way they're looking at the weather patterns at this point. So we'll wait and see. The key though, Mark, as you know, is people paying for it. So that would be key moving forward.

Larry:

Among the management topics that we reported on today also included a brief update on the public utilities management program. Linda and I met with the Dean of the School of Business, Ellen Durnin, earlier this week. The program is three years old and there are now 19 full-time students enrolled in the academic '20/'21 academic year, 14 of whom are freshmen. So they've been doing a lot of marketing of the program to high schools and other places, producing materials. Jim Flynn, who you'll recall retired as Vice President of Operations at RWA, is serving as a resource and he's working there part-time, helping them with some of their outreach efforts.

Larry:

In the spring, they added two management classes as part of the utility management program, and in the fall of this year, they're going to be offering four courses in utility management. When the program was approved originally three years ago, it was a conditional approval and the regions are scheduled to review the program to decide whether or not it will be renewed permanently but the dean believes that with 19 full-time students enrolled in the program that there's a very strong chance that it'll become a permanent part of their curriculum because many times these programs will start, and they'll only have two or three students after a few years enrolled in it. So she was very optimistic about the certification moving forward. They've even hired a full-time professor to work in the program.

Larry:

So lots of good news there on utility management and, hopefully, that will become a pool of candidates that we can hire for the RWA to meet impending retirements.

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Mario:

That's really good news.

Larry:

Yep. So with that, that concludes management's report.

Mario:

Tony, anything else? Jeff Donofrio, do you have anything?

Jeff:

I just would like to express appreciation from the Office of Consumer Affairs for the Authority's proactive approach to waiving interest for consumers for the remainder of the calendar year. I think that it's not going to have a material impact financially on the Authority, but it could very well have a material impact on customers who are not only eventually feeling the financial strain, but quite frankly the stress that comes with having bills pile up and having finance charges and interest on those delinquent bills could be a cause of quite a bit of emotional distress to our customers.

Jeff:

So I think getting on top of this early and letting customers know that the Authority certainly isn't going to be a source of additional stress for you is just a really good move.

Mario:

Thank you. Thank you. Any other business? Seeing none, I want to wish all the father figures a happy Father's Day, and I'll take a motion to adjourn.

Steve:

So moved.

Naomi:

Second.

Mario:

Thanks, Steve. And it was a second from someone.

Naomi:

Naomi.

Mario:

Naomi, thank you. All in favor?

Group:

Aye [crosstalk 00:51:25].