

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
August 20, 2020
Meeting Transcription

A regular meeting of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority took place on Thursday, August 20, 2020, via remote access. Chairman DiSalvo presided.

Present: Authority Members present – Messrs. DiSalvo, Borowy, Cermola, and Curseaden
Authority Members absent – Ms. Sack
Management – Mss. Kowalski, Nesteriak, Reckdenwald and Messrs. Bingaman, Norris and Singh
Claire C. Bennitt Watershed Fund – Mr. Stone
RPB – Mr. Levine
Staff – Mrs. Slubowski

Tony:

So let me call the meeting to order. And the very first thing we're going to do is the safety moment.

Larry:

Yeah. Safety moment is apropos for August. It's a flying insects; bees, wasps, and hornets online. And they list the eight or so things that you should do to prevent insect stings. And then it lists the five things that you should do if you are stung by a bee, wasp or hornet. Some good lessons there, and I ask you to take a look at that and to observe the precautions and have the remedies at hand.

Tony:

Thank you, sir. Moving on, we're going to meet as the Claire C. Bennitt Watershed Fund meeting, and I introduced Brian Stone to you. If you haven't met Brian before, Brian, why don't you go ahead and take it away.

Brian:

Okay. I think in front of you is pretty much all the information concerning the fund itself. I don't want to waste anybody's time going through it all. We have essentially used up our funds which are in our account for scholarships. So we had to, this year, approve exceeding our cap of 5.5% draw on the amount that we expand. We had fewer scholarships this year than usual because of COVID, I'm sure applications were down so our scholarships this year were down. The other side of the coin, we've had many more applications for grants. We struggled with the fact that some of those grants didn't fully fit in with our mission, and we declined some that I'm sure could use the money, especially in these times.

Brian:

So we are of course doing much better because of the unusually strong market which nobody would have expected. So our funds are up at this particular point in time, but certainly there's a lot of uncertainty coming down the road. But the Watershed Fund remains very strong. We have over 1.8M in our unrestricted fund balance. And we should be able to supply grants and scholarships. We'll have another round of grant applications in the fall.

Tony:

Glad to hear it's strong Brian. Are you getting all the support you need?

Brian:

Just as an aside, because I don't want to really go through all these reports with you. These questions, I'll be happy to answer them. But I've gotten involved in these leadership meetings sponsored by the Greater New Haven [inaudible 00:04:51].

Tony:

Community foundation?

Brian:

Community foundation, excuse me. And we were a blessed to organization, the Watershed. We started off with, I think it was \$1,250,000 from the water authority. We basically have no operating expenses, and we give away money. We have a remarkable position compared to what I hear at these meetings, the difficulty that people have in raising funds, particularly now, when grants are being cut off. So, we're very fortunate. I'd like to see us be a little more aggressive and try to expand our ability to provide services to the community; grants, scholarships, by raising more money. Obviously, this year we didn't have the golf tournament, which normally raises around \$20,000 to \$25,000 for the fund. So that's a loss. But we need a couple of things.

Brian:

We're a board that's getting older and we certainly need some young blood on the board. We need some new people who are more able to devote time and we can have new and young ideas that we lack, we could use some diversity on the board. And those are things that we've touched upon and we're going to be discussing as this coming year unfolds. And hopefully we'll be able to report some progress in those things to you the next time we meet. Outside that, I'm happy to answer any questions you have, on my letter to you and on the budget. Either the current budgets we're about to get our audit report in September. Did you receive a draft of the proposal of the budget for 2020, where we ended up? Besides [crosstalk 00:07:30].

Tony:

The financial report?

Brian:

The financial report.

Tony:

Yes I did Brian.

Brian:

Okay. And also the budget for 2021?

Tony:

I think it was buried in there, yes. The rest of the board has not seen that.

Brian:

All right. So maybe, we are projecting a deficit budget for 2021. Let's see if I can pull that out.

Tony:

Is that with or without the golf tournament?

Brian:

[inaudible 00:08:20] see it. Here it is. No. That's without the golf tournament.

Tony:

And if you decided to hold the golf tournament, would that bring you into line?

Brian:

No, we'd still have a deficit budget. But it's a very conservative budget. For instance, the investment income would probably... We're well over the projection in that budget. The investment income gain for instance, was 1.5% for the first six months, and we're well over that between the end of the fiscal year and now. In fact, that would fill up the deficit, from this point forward if we just met our budgetary goals. We're showing a \$64,000 deficit [inaudible 00:09:36], but right now [inaudible 00:09:38] showing positive budget even without the golf tournament. Any questions?

Larry:

Have you all discussed other fundraising mechanisms rather than just the golf tournament?

Brian:

Well, we do. We send out request letters every year for fundraising, we generate some income from that. But certainly, we're open to suggestions. And actually I'm asking that of all of you, if you have suggestions both for fundraising efforts and for, perhaps, potential numbers for our board, those would be very much welcome.

Larry:

Okay. I'll circle back to you and call you offline.

Brian:

Okay. Great. Anybody else?

Tony:

No.

Brian:

Great.

Tony:

You want to move on to the second element? Brian.

Brian:

What?

Tony:

You want to move on to the second element? Which is your proposal.

Brian:

I'm sorry.

Tony:

You have directors to elect, you have a proposal.

Brian:

Oh, I'm sorry. Yes, we have three members; Rev. Scott, Gordon, and Tony DiSalvo, who you all know, who have all been great members of our board, their terms are up and we are proposing that they be renominated... Well, we have renominated them, and we're requesting that they be elected as members of the board for a three year term.

Tony:

I'll entertain a motion to resolve that.

Joe:

So moved.

Tony:

Joe. Second?

David:

Second.

Tony:

Dave. Okay. We're going to count. Any comments before we vote? I'm going to recuse myself from the vote for obvious reasons. All in favor, aye.

Team:

Aye.

Tony:

Opposed? Motion carries. We'll note that Suzanne is absent today, we think she's somewhere out in sea. But not close enough to shore to call in. Thank you, Brian. I appreciate [crosstalk 00:12:34].

Brian:

Thank you. [inaudible 00:12:34] because it looks like I lost you.

Tony:

No, we're here.

Brian:

I'm not dumb.

Tony:

I see you.

Brian:

I can't see you.

Tony:

[crosstalk 00:12:44] Brian.

Brian:

I can hear you but I can't see you.

Tony:

Okay. But that's not our fault.

Brian:

No, that's not your fault.

Tony:

We can see you very well. And thank you for bringing all of this before us, and we'll bring you some suggestions to you either privately or formally.

Brian:

Thank you.

Tony:

Thank you again.

Brian:

Have a good day everybody.

David:

You too Brian, thank you.

Brian:

Bye.

Tony:

We have the consent agenda. Anyone interested in taking anything off the consent agenda? If not, I'll entertain a motion to approve the consent agenda.

Kevin:

So moved.

Tony:

Kevin, and who's second?

Joe:

Joe.

Tony:

Okay. All in favor say aye.

Team:

Aye.

Tony:

Opposed? Motion carries. Thank you. We're moving on to finance, Rochelle.

Rochelle:

All right. You might recall that in May we talked to you about potentially putting a credit line in place, given in particular the reduced capital budget that we have for fiscal 21. So what we wanted to put in place was a mechanism to be able to fund emergency or critical capital programs. So this resolution will allow us to move forward with that interim financing. We already do have verbal approval from the bank that we want to work with. And the resolution also allows for issuing RWA bonds or, if applicable, drinking water state revolving fund money to pay off the interim financing note. And if you [inaudible 00:14:31] and approve it today, the next step would be to bring it to the finance committee and then the RPB.

Tony:

What bank are you considering doing this with?

Rochelle:

We're doing it with Citizens.

Tony:

Okay. Any questions from anyone? You have a resolution for us?

Rochelle:

Yes. It should be in your package.

Tony:

Okay.

David:

I'll move the resolution.

Tony:

Thank you, second? Joe?

Joe:

Second.

Tony:

Any discussion?

Larry:

I just wanted to mention that Rochelle had talked to a couple of banks about doing this note. And was really able to get the best deal with Citizens. So it's not like we're just taking it because it's convenient. She had really done some nice market research to determine what might be a good rate for us and provided us with the flexibility. And we have an existing note with Citizens already, and so we ultimately decided [inaudible 00:15:39] to do this one with them, although she had contacted a couple of other banks about that as well.

Tony:

Thank you. Anything to say in defense of yourself Rochelle? Okay. Everyone in favor, say aye.

Team:

Aye.

Tony:

Opposed? Abstain, no one? That's all set. Thank you.

Rochelle:

Thank you.

Tony:

Let's move on to updates.

Larry:

Okay. So the first item we have is our standing discussion on the COVID-19, Beth Nesteriak will provide an update on how we're doing from an operation standpoint. And then Rochelle will give a high level overview of how we're doing financially in terms of cash collections.

Beth:

So good afternoon everyone. As you know, we had been working on a three phase approach to our reopening in terms of COVID-19. I just want to provide you a little bit of update on that. And also, as Larry mentioned, some of the operational sides of that. We are still technically in our phase two reopening plans, we are planning to move into phase three after labor day. Obviously, we're watching health metrics in the state, as well as all around the country. We have implemented an electronic version of self-certification in anticipation of more employees returning to work, as well as potentially resurgence of COVID-19 in the fall. And what that means is daily employees are asked to report through an app and answer five questions. Yes/no, regarding whether they have a temperature, any signs or symptoms, or whether they have any family members who are under quarantine. We launched that in the middle of July and plan to continue to use that as we respond to COVID-19.

Beth:

In terms of what phase three looks like, that phase will begin, as I mentioned, after labor day. We're currently asking managers and leaders to look at their staffing levels and determine schedules for part time reporting back to 90 Sargent Drive. We have a variety of departments working, whether it be or be it full time. Most of our field operations and field service folks are working, treatment is obviously offered full time. But we are asking people to revisit schedules to be more of a steady schedule of part time reporting to 90 Sargent Drive after September 8th. We have requested schedules be provided within the next week and then Jeanine and I and our team will look at capacity levels of the building. We're trying to maintain a 50% occupancy level of 90 Sargent Drive.

Beth:

In terms of operations, customer service is reporting full time. We are still suspended dunning in any shut activity through the end of this calendar year, which you're all aware of. In September, we are planning to do soft reminders by letter, of any delinquencies. But call volume and call appointments still remain low, we are about 50% of where we were last year this time for the month and appointments are even less than that. So still affecting operations from that perspective. In terms of operations, treatment is obviously one of our critical areas. We're trying to maintain isolation, all of our facilities still remain limited access. We do review contractor access on a case by case basis that has a lot to do with where the work needs to be done, the criticality of the work and the duration, but really trying to keep our operators isolated as much as possible.

Beth:

Overall, we're continuing to increase disinfection procedures, not only at our 90 Sargent Drive building, but also at our treatment plants as well. That includes a twice a month Clorox 360 treatment, which is actually where we take a Clorox solution and use an aerosol method to spray down the buildings. We also have increased cleaning at 90 Sargent Drive as well, including a midday cleaning. So not only do we have our cleaning staff come in overnight, but they are coming in during the day to clean down bathrooms and high touch areas. Other than that, we have had no new reported cases.

Beth:

We have been dealing with things like, and Jeanine's very familiar with this in terms of vacations, traveling to red States, or States that are considered red, where there are existing travel advisories. We've put some procedures in place to ensure that people are quarantined when they get back and ensuring that their managers are aware that they could be out of the office for three weeks, if it is a

week vacation. So just things like that. But overall, still operating and thankfully have had minimal impacts of any infected employees. So that's the good news.

Tony:

Right. Any questions?

Larry:

I don't have a question. Just remind you that Beth and Jeanine had shared a return to work committee, which set the protocol in place for employees returning to work and the three phases of the return. And it's really worked out well, so kudos to both of them for their leadership, and to the committee that they've been working with to put the program together so employees can return safely and feel safe while they're here.

Joe:

And what about our board? When are we going to meet face-to-face?

Tony:

Well, we had a discussion with Mario just this past Tuesday, and our position basically was that we should not meet up face-to-face unless they meet face-to-face. And it seems unlikely at this present time that they figured out a way to do that. Although, I think Jennifer and Beth are continuing to look at ways that we can take the big room and restructure it so people can sit six feet apart. But Mario generally felt that there would be morale issues if we were meeting face-to-face and they were not. Does that make any difference?

Joe:

No, I just wondered, especially comes January to May, whether I book flights back here or we continue Zoom.

Tony:

You're just doing something simple. I was complaining about whether or not I was going to get deliveries of hot soup or not.

Prem:

As a matter of fact, those are really good comments. And I had a conversation with Mario. And we reflect our usual RPB meetings. We have more members participating now than we ever have before, there are more people coming in. I mean, I feel that that's actually a very big positive that we can be able to communicate with each other. So it's worth it.

Tony:

Mario said that too.

Prem:

Yeah?

Tony:

So you're right, Prem. That's a major consideration. They get good attendance and they get people responsive. I don't think it did improve our attendance at all.

Kevin:

Tony, I just wanted to say, I think what a good job that the team and everyone's been doing, because this is an obviously very unique circumstance to coordinate and plan and figure this out while doing your regular job. I think it's an extraordinary amount of work and performance, I think.

Tony:

Thank you, Kevin. I was under the impression they were relieved from doing the regular duties.

David:

[crosstalk 00:23:52] got clean water.

Prem:

I thought they're still working.

Tony:

That's not true Beth?

Beth:

Everybody checked their taps, all right. And then we'll talk.

Tony:

Thank you very much. Go ahead Larry. I'm sorry.

Larry:

If no more questions, then Rochelle will talk about the financial impact so far of the COVID-19 on our cash collections and overall financial position.

Rochelle:

Thank you. So to date, the impacts of COVID-19 on cash receipts have not been as severe as we have forecasted. This is currently being offset by lower expected interest income, given the lower interest rate environment. But as we continue to watch cash and we are continuing to look at cash every week, to see what the trends are, we do need to keep in mind that there are still significant uncertainties. That includes; is there going to be a resurgence, what's going to happen from an employment perspective with the school opening plans and is that going to preclude some parents from returning to work and also what's happening with the additional unemployment benefit supplement. And also, just a reminder that, in our revised budget, we did assume a full back to normal in January. So those are all the things that we're keeping in mind is we continue to update our projection for the end of fiscal '21.

Tony:

Thank you. Any questions? [inaudible 00:25:33].

Larry:

Okay. So the next item is, Prem is going to provide an overview of PipeSafe Marketing program to raise brand awareness. And just for your background, for the past few years, we had used an outside advertising agency to perform that work. And while they did a satisfactory job, and we did see some increase in some segments of PipeSafe, last fall we made the decision to bring this in-house. And so, Prem has been working with Phil Vece to develop really a comprehensive brand awareness raising program that uses all of the different types of media. And normally we would advise you of this program a few days before its launch, and we would send you an email. We're still going to do that, but because this is going to launch in early September, we wanted to give you an early preview of the elements of it, and then we'll show you the actual media outreach in September before it's actually launched. So Prem with that, you can take it away.

Prem:

Thank you, Larry. I'm on mute, so I was just talking on mute. So a couple of things, we have seen some of these information so for the board it's not really new information. But at the same time, some things to keep in mind is that as you were aware, we have a tight budget constraint. So we haven't really put extra dollars towards our budget, we are trying to be creative on using our existing budget. So it adds an additional layer of challenge for us to be able to manage within our budget as well. But that being said, we have done an outstanding job, especially for [inaudible 00:27:31], where we looked at launching this, as Larry mentioned, we used to only do the direct mail campaign, pretty much that's the only omnichannel that we use for campaigning, for PipeSafe, but we have gone through a whole round of nine different channels now. So I will take a look at that.

Prem:

Just to also level set, we have looked at launching this in two waves. As you are aware, usually people are not looking at, especially during Christmas time, it's usually a low participation rates and people are pretty much spending time with their families. So we came creative on the timing of it. So the way one is focused from September to November, and the wave two is from March to May. So it covers this throughout the year for what we are trying to do here. So that's the high level overview. And our target audience, obviously, we're looking at 25+ for homeowners. We also have creatively thought about sending this campaign only for people who are already not signed up. For example, in the past, we send direct mail for everyone who are residents, now we are focusing and targeting people who are not yet signed up for. Because as you are aware, we actually do an auto renewal for our existing participants. So it kind of makes use of our dollars efficiently, at the same time cover the overall big picture.

Prem:

We also have looked at doing, as part of the campaign, one of the channels was to really have, as you know, lawn signs and other things that we are planning to do. It's really trying to focus on the neighbors of our current plan participants. Like for example, some of our crews are working out there, and we need [inaudible 00:29:16] to finish up their work. They put out a long sign or other mediums where people who are the neighbors could be aware of what's going on and they can actually sign up for. So those are the new ideas that we're thinking in terms of how we can put our outreach out there. And to Larry's point, it's also a high level of very much of a brand awareness. We haven't tried newer channels, so we want to educate our customers and be able to say with various media, I would say reaching out to different channels to be able to say, this is what we do and our purpose which is [inaudible 00:29:53].

Prem:

So going to the next slide. Again, as we talked about, and the board is really aware of this as well, we said PipeSafe to the rescue. It's very important that we really message to our customers as to why we do it than what we do. So really driving our purpose. And keeping it simple for our customer, that's why we came up with the whole branding of PipeSafe to the rescue. This way people not only just think [inaudible 00:30:23], but we are there for them at any point when they sign up with us. So that's the idea there. And obviously, we are trying to engage with our customers with these channels. And our goal is to really get to a [inaudible 00:30:38]. We did look at some of the, if you remember in terms of the numbers, biopsy of water, for example, is highly hype on has been great that we have today versus areas like sewer and plumbing, which is two years old. We are really making sure that with this messaging that we are going out there, we're able to increase the participation conversions for the overall program. So that's the idea there.

Prem:

If we go to the next one, and as a matter of fact we also have done some of the videos with our existing crews. And I know I spoke to Beth the other day and we are trying to find a participant to put a video, it's a 30 second clip that we are trying to create for all these different channels. So we are really making sure that we really emphasize on, what are we trying to support our customer with? So again, this is a list of [inaudible 00:31:36] list of items here. But just to give a very high level, we are looking at covering two of our main health division areas. So the TV 8 and TV 59. We have planned for, like I said a 30 second video, and the plan is to really air this in a fashion where we have a three window, like in the morning, in the mid-day and in evening.

Prem:

So this is where we cover as much as we can to get the word out there. We're also doing weekends and special days, et cetera. So the idea is that, as you are aware, these two are the main television channels that usually people are at, I know there are other things that people look at, but we thought to really make it more localized. From a radio standpoint, we covered at least three of them. As you're aware of these channels; 99.1, I think is WPLR, we are looking at WKCI, that's basically the 101.3 and the last one is 94.2. These are basically the local frequently used channels. Like people when they travel, basically they tune into the radio if they will, and they could hear this. And again, we are making a 30 second air as continuously running and different frequencies and in terms of the mornings, and mid days and evenings as well.

Prem:

So I think they should give us the leverage of putting the word out there. We have never done this and in our mind, I think we are going to be prepared, because not only just putting the word and as we have more enrollments come in. A great example is if you remember is if you remember the recreation, the board that we had on 995, that had a lot of good integrity and feedback coming in for more of a customer signing in, and that probably got all the numbers. So we are introducing this as an awareness, at the same time we are prepared for more enrollments to come in and be able to sail our customer.

Prem:

And we also looked at the outdoor poster panels, basically looked at all our towns, all the 15 towns. And we looked at one of those various spots that people usually [inaudible 00:33:49], either main street or downtown area. So we're trying to really put these poster boards where people can see us as they pass

through. And the chances are that when people are traveling between towns, they ended up seeing at least two to three boards, right? So the idea is that really make it more visible. So that's also happening.

Prem:

And obviously the other, I would say, technology related stuff like social media, we're trying to do something with the Google ads, I'm trying to really help fill on some of those as well. And then we're also looking at the thing that I talked about, like lawn signs and custom featured app. So just to give a realistic perspective, we are ready to launch this in September. And again, all of it is now going to go on day one, it's going to be like a staggered stock. We really want to make sure that the word gets out there and it also becomes a brand awareness for us. So that's all I had, and I can take any questions or comments from the board and anything here.

David:

Just a quick comment if I could. So essentially, you took the budget that we were using and you're just expanding the different channels and doing it in-house. So if we happen to see the same registrations and same use then that's great. How are we doing with this? Now that we've opened the door to the subject of the pipe size, how are we doing with the COVID with that? I think the last numbers I saw were pretty steady, right?

Prem:

Yes. I think you're thinking about the budget numbers, Dave, right?

David:

Well, the registration that people who are participating, yeah.

Prem:

Yeah. I think right now, I guess, for example, for plumbing, we have close to 370 people signing up every month. That's pretty good, the way we're seeing. At lower level, I think we have close to 58,000 PipeSafe water customers today. The way that I think about it is that, if you remember, we did have people opt out, close to 700 people opting out every year. So our goal is to somehow be able to tackle that, and we could get to a neutral scenario because for the past two decades and all two decades, we've been doing good, but we do have that situation of the 700 customers dropping off. So we got to tackle that. So there's 58,000 on pipeSafe water.

Prem:

But for PipeSafe sewer, we close to 34,000 customers and there's a great room for us to grow. So we are actually really making sure that with COVID now it's become an opportunity and we're seeing a consistent rate of growth. On the septic side, it's a very small number. We had like 898 or so customers. I did see a small percentage too of the customers opting out, but that's a very small population, as you could imagine. For plumbing, we had 4,268 as of last week. So I'm trying to constantly track that. And as I mentioned, 370 of them just by doing what we're doing today is great, but I see a great potential for us to outgrow there in that space. So, again, with all the positivity and optimism, I think it would just easily doubling those numbers up the way I'm looking at the market.

Prem:

So again, we're not spending [inaudible 00:37:08], no additional budget. We have \$328,000 that we had, that's exactly what we're using to do this. I mean, one thing you could ask Dave, is that, how are we doing it because we have the same money? But one of the things that we are doing is that with direct mail, although we cut cost on there, the way we are approaching is that we are replacing that with the billing side. So it's the same thing, they get it in the bill. As part of the customers who are not yet signed up, they would get it and we are making it more creative there. So we're saving dollars there, but just not sending to everybody every time and then using those dollars to channelize into these channels. So that's the idea there, that's what we're trying to save and try to put it back on. And if it picks up, then we'll end up doing more. But this is just initial onset of providing the brand awareness and opening the channels.

David:

Right. Well, I still got the floor for another moment if I may. Beth mentioned earlier that we're getting about half the number of phone calls. So if we have a lot of idle staff time, are we able to somehow channel that extra time into making this more top of mind or even some proactive outgoing calls?

Prem:

Well, that's a great point. And as you know, we have reduced hours to [inaudible 00:38:26] on the contact center side. But one thing we also learned was that, if you remember from the past history, the contact center was addressing the PipeSafe, and we got ourselves in a situation where it was not working out. In the sense, there was incentive that was added on to every customer that we could get, but that got diluted to becoming every time you talk to a customer, will be an incentive. So that was not working well, so we backed off on that. To answer your other dynamics on the [inaudible 00:38:56] more hours, we have now started taking all the calls. In the sense that we had an answering service, Edwards. So now we made that as a secondary.

Prem:

So for seamless customer experience, we are bringing all the calls to our contact center. So we're managing that fashion. But you have an excellent point, and that's why, what I did was, I'm trying combine the customer service team... The PipeSafe context and the team together so they can start doing more. And we are trying to figure out how we can get over that hurdle that we had in the past. And we can start doing more of our marketing channels with our contact center. So that's coming next, but that's a great point and exactly I'm honing in on that.

David:

Okay. Thank you.

Larry:

Any more questions for Prem?

Kevin:

Yeah. I just have a quick comment. And actually, I had emailed Beth the other day about a question that came up as a result of a client looking to get PipeSafe or PipeSafe Plus for a small office use. And I had thought about it and I looked at the website and I know the focus is on homeowners. And then Beth had enlightened me that it's a six inch lateral, at least for sewer anyway, I think that somebody can purchase

PipeSafe plus four. But, it just raised the question to me is that, is there ways that we could seek small businesses or small offices versus just homeowners that could sign up for these programs? So I don't know if that's already being done or there's something that's prohibiting that or...

Prem:

Well, I think, I would say Kevin that's a great point. And the same concept applied for a multifamily situation, because we look at single family, but why not multifamily? And a lot of times the answer that came back was that it's a multifamily. So the owner of that building is mostly concerned about taking care of their own maintenance because it's more cost effective for them. But I did not leave that [inaudible 00:41:06] I've asked the team to look at that. I mean, that's a great point. And we're looking at small businesses and how we can really make it work for them. And I think you should have some of this on that because the team is still looking at some of the details and especially with COVID now, it's been a little hard, but we will come back and talk about it. But the idea is to expand that, and really make sure that we can go out there. And also we talked about the neighboring towns. So we're doing some work on that as well. So we will come back on those updates.

Kevin:

Yeah. Like for example, I know Milford anyway the sewer department, there is a pretty user friendly and they could tell you who has six inch laterals, at least by their records and who doesn't. Because over time these old houses are being converted to offices or dental offices or doctor's offices or whatever, or it's a smaller building that maintains the same six inch lateral. So, there may be a way to get data information from the towns about who's got a six inch lateral, at least for the sewer aspect of it. And then send mailers out to the businesses and in addition to those addresses, in addition to the homeowners.

Prem:

Excellent. Thank you. I think that makes sense.

Larry:

Kevin, I remember that we looked at doing commercial buildings and for some reason it didn't work. And I think some of it had to do with pavement restoration, the length of the lateral and the service, the cost of the repair, but well, we'll see if we can dig up some background on that and get a more complete answer because it was evaluated at one time. And maybe it's time to take a second look at it.

Kevin:

Okay.

Larry:

We'll look at it. Thank you for the suggestion.

Tony:

It would seem to me is that we could price it right if we knew what price we needed to charge.

Larry:

Right.

Tony:

It's a service that we ought not to cut off just because we're not ready for it.

Prem:

Right. Thank you. Thanks Tony. Thanks Kevin. [inaudible 00:43:10].

Larry:

Okay. So if there's no more questions, I want to take a moment and call your attention to the board report, which you may not have had a chance to look at. But Jennifer, can you share the screen with that? Yeah, there we go. So this is the new board report that was in this month's board package. And I want to call your attention to this for a couple of reasons. There have been some changes to it. One of them is, there's a cover letter now from me, but our goal here was, in the spirit of continuous improvement, to make a more useful board report that's both concise and informative. And some of the changes in this particular report has to do with organization and formatting for readability and efficiency. So we made a value judgment on key facts and information that we thought would be not only of interest to you, but important to know.

Larry:

And if we've missed something that you saw in the previous reports would be glad to put that back in. We're also adding a section here on the cover letter that highlight key initiatives that I'm leading and would be discussed at each of the upcoming board meetings. So certainly we would welcome your feedback. In this initial board report, we have one envisioning the future of the RWA and we'll get into more of that in a few minutes. But it's the vision for RWA of the future. Secondly, there's some commentary in there on advancing our non-core strategy. We are partnering with a firm called Amane advisors, which is a consultancy group that takes market information and transform that into a strategy, and they're focused solely on the water sector. So they're going to examine our four pronged targets sectors that we are looking at, and they'll be able to give us information like what the growth rates are and the margins and competition and things like that so we can better prioritize which sectors to go after.

Larry:

And then the last section here is leading RWA's transformation and growth and there're six areas that are linked to the strategic plan for fiscal 21, and fiscal 22. And they all relate to our transformation into a 21st century environmental services organization. And so those areas are one, my continued focus on growing and diversifying our non-core initiatives, pursuing acquisitions, having a laser like focus on our internal and external customer service, building better relations with the steelworkers and the company leaders, attracting and growing talent while increasing the overall diversity of the organization. And my working with the leadership team members to help develop their skills and abilities to really help lead RWA's transformation and growth. So what used to be a 20 page report is now down to about 10 pages. We think it contains the key information there. We had in mind what we thought you needed as directors of the organization to eat well-informed on the business and some of our major initiatives.

Larry:

So we'd be glad to take any comments now. If you've not had a chance to read it and you look at it later, I'd be glad to take those comments offline or at a later date.

Tony:

I want to draw everyone's attention to the second paragraph, and the name Gene Buccini in the middle of it. You're going to be contacted by him during the next week or two about your vision for 2050. Try not to duck him. I know you guys.

Larry:

There'll be updates on each and every month in the form of this cover letter that you see on things that have happened in the previous month that involve my leading the business and working with the individual leadership team members on those six initiatives that I had previously outlined. That's all I had under updates.

Tony:

Thank you. Let's go to the committee meetings. David, did you go to finance?

David:

I did then that Monday of last week and they reviewed various criteria for the ten-year model.

Tony:

And Kevin, did you go to land use? You're muted, Kevin. Kevin.

Kevin:

Yeah, I know. I'm trying to unmute it. Thanks.

Tony:

Trying to remember.

Kevin:

Yes, I went to land use and was actually an in person meeting. It was at Lake Bethany, and it was an interesting meeting, Mark Levine was there. I had never been to that location even from being on the land use committee, but they had cleared some trees there, they had shown us some of the walking trails and the area there has been a project there that was on the other side of the dam and the road that had been done recently in the past few years. So the forester was out there.

Kevin:

Cody, I think one of the engineers has been there two or three years, was also there and John Triana. It was very well attended. It was an interesting beautiful location and it was interesting to see the amount of trees that had been cleared that I guess that had been planted, had been there for about 40 years. And just a sampling of some of the work that the forester does and his team and staff to deal with invasive species and also to clear area to grow for future forest growth. They also talked about an option on the Oland property in Hampton, which did not seem like a viable option due to a contamination, but Ted said we may hear more that in the future.

Tony:

Thank you. Joe, did you go to consumer affairs?

Joe:

I did. We did it by Zoom. The main topic was the conversion of quarterly billing into monthly billing and Prem made a detailed presentation indicating the additional costs to go from four bills a year to 12 bills a year. And then all the benefits that's derive from that coming up with eventually a no extra costs to do that, but actually possibly savings.

Tony:

David and Joe, in the committee meetings that you were in around the monthly billing, general reactions of the RPP were?

Joe:

I think positive.

David:

And they didn't talk about it in finance that I was attending.

Tony:

The finance committee didn't talk about it?

David:

Not this month. They may have been a previous meeting.

Tony:

I see. Was it presented this month?

Prem:

No, I think we did the consumer interface, Tony. So we did the consumer affairs. And I think in the prior meetings, they have seen through the monthly billing, but we really wanted to get participation from the RPB members. So Mark was there, Mario, I know Mario had some concerns in the past, but he came back with very positive comments in our discussion this time. And again, we strive to get to a cost neutral scenario. If you remember we had a close to a cost neutral scenario as the best case scenario. So I think all other team felt pretty good. And I was expecting some questions from Mark but he himself came in even more positive. So there was not really many questions challenging it, but it was more around it seems to be a positive thing for us to move forward. You agree, Joe?

Mark:

You've doing a great job, Prem. I think your things are conservative, your figures. I think you're going to do better than that.

Rochelle:

You do try to be conservative.

Prem:

Thank you, Mark. And I know it was a different scenario before pre-COVID, right? And I think this time it was very good... And again, some of the opportunities came by pretty good. So we are able to get to a constructive scenario.

Mark:

Good job.

Tony:

Do you think there are things that we need to do, Prem before we roll this forward or are we moving pretty much in shape?

Prem:

We are pretty much moving in shape, Tony. I think we are good.

Tony:

Okay. Thank you. All right. And anything else about [inaudible 00:53:01]? Thank you guys. The option is to take a quick break now or go through the strategic planning committee and to meet after it. What's your choice? Hearing none, let's keep moving on. Usually your clamor if you want to get out. Entertain a motion to recess as the authority and to meet as the strategic planning committee.

Joe:

I so move.

Tony:

Is there a second?

David:

Second.

Tony:

All in favor, Aye.

Team:

Aye.

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETS 1:23 P.M. TO 1:55 P.M.]

Tony:

Thank you. About how long do you think the executive committee is going to take?

Larry:

Probably, I'm thinking maybe half an hour at tops, depending on how much-

Tony:

Why don't we move right on into the executive... Well, let me say, is there anybody interested in taking a break now? Okay. I entertain a motion to move into executive session.

Joe:

So moved.

Kevin:

Second.

Mark:

Do I have to get out?

Tony:

Yeah.

David:

Bye Mark.

Tony:

Anyway, Mark, I know what you were missing.

Mark:

Hey, you guys, I'm always impressed at how you guys work. I think you're doing a great job. Might not always agree with you, but you're doing a great job.

Tony:

Mark, does that mean we get our raises now?

Mark:

No raises. When we get our raises.

Tony:

Okay. Thank you, Mark.

Mark:

Thank you. Bye-bye.

Tony:

Bye now.

Larry:

I might ask that the leadership team excuse themselves with the exception of Jeanine.

Prem:

Thank you everyone.

Larry:

Thank you everyone.

Tony:

Jennifer, can Jennifer stay?

Larry:

Oh yes, absolutely.

Jennifer:

Okay.

Tony:

I can hear you, Larry.

Larry:

Yes.

Tony:

Thank you.