

**South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
Strategic Planning Committee**

**November 19, 2020
Meeting Transcription**

The regular meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority took place on Thursday, November 19, 2020, via remote access. Chair DiSalvo presided.

Present: Committee Members Present– Messrs. DiSalvo, Borowy, Cermola, Curseaden and Ms. Sack
Management – Mss. Collins, Kowalski, Nesteriak, Reckdenwald and Messrs. Bingaman,
Norris, and Singh
RPB – Mr. Oslander
Staff – Mrs. Slubowski

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING STARTS AT 1:21 P.M.]

Joe:

Here it is.

Tony:

Thank you.

Larry:

Let's see. And then I would ask that because we're going to be covering matters of strategy, that we go into executive session for this particular session.

Tony:

Entertain a motion to move into executive session. It's getting monotonous.

Joe:

Yes. It's so moved.

Tony:

Second.

David:

Second.

Tony:

All in favor, aye.

Donald:

Yep, second.

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Group:

Aye.

Tony:

We're in executive [inaudible 00:08:14]

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 1:21 P.M. TO 2:31 P.M.]

Joe:

Can you hear me?

Tony:

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

Joe:

I'm up here in this corner.

Tony:

You're in a corner?

Joe:

He's in a lower left hand corner.

Jennifer:

Oh, I see, Joe. He's here.

Tony:

Oh, there he is. Hi, Joe.

Joe:

Good afternoon.

Tony:

Good. We are going on to section C3, which is the strategic plan update with Larry and Prem. Okay, guys.

Larry:

So, thank you. I'll take a shot at reviewing, providing an overview of our 2025 strategic goals and the fiscal 21 targets. And then Prem will walk through the fiscal 21 specific actions. So the next slide is just by way of background and as a reminder, we have six goals across the four perspectives of the balanced scorecard, which includes the customer perspective, putting the customer first, the employee perspective by enabling our workforce to continue to improve, and retaining employees operational through managing our business effectively. And then exercising fiscal accountability from a financial

standpoint. So those six goals across the balanced scorecard have been essentially what we've been working on since 2009 when we put together the first strategic plan using the balanced scorecard as the foundational approach.

Larry:

The next slide reviews are strategic themes and targets. So in goal one, in terms of the customer service area, are themes there as we're trying to get customers to use more self-service options and we're providing multiple channels to interact with the customer so that they can have a seamless experience with the RWA. Second goal concerning employees focuses not only on safety, but also part of our succession planning, using both recruitment as well as a utility management program to achieve water industry trades and utility management in terms of and increasing the diversity of our workforce as well by 2025. And then finally, in the third goal we're looking to take on a number of programs to focus the RWA on being a 21st century environmental services organization.

Larry:

Next slide, please. In the operational management area that concerns all of our asset management and water quality efforts, the next goal is essentially focusing on gaining efficiency in the organization through the automation of processes and process improvement rather than just cost cutting. We really feel like that we have kind of gone to the bone in terms of cost cutting and that now we need to get better at improving our processes and become more efficient so that we can do them better. And perhaps without having as many people get involved in a particular process as we do now.

Larry:

And then finally on our sixth goal concerns are financial update and that's all about improving our financial position and improving our market based commercial revenues. So with that as a foundation of strategic targets, I'd be glad to take any questions that you might have on those.

Tony:

Anything guys?

Larry:

Okay. So, I'll turn it over to Prem, who will highlight our fiscal 21 action plans by each one of the balanced scorecard perspectives and the goals that I just outlined.

Prem:

Thank you, Larry. So, again, I don't want to bore everybody with all the details, but I'm going to keep it at a very high level, very specific actions. If there are any questions, this is more of an interactive session. So you could ask questions as we go. As Larry mentioned, for the need to exceed customer expectations, we talked about the goal of 42% that you saw in the strategic target for [inaudible 00:13:23] customers and multi-channel etc. So in order to cover that, we are looking at doing a couple of things. For example, restructuring our customer care group that, as you know, we pretty have done it, pretty much done it. We have a full AI collection focus now. We had started to work on that collections targets that we have. Along with that, we also have looked at technology supporting as part of our monthly billing business case. If you remember, we talked about technology helping to reduce costs. So

one of the key things they're looking is developing a customer portal and a mobile applications development. So we need to increase our multi-channel experience for our customer.

Prem:

We are on target for our Bill Redesign project. This is a project where we are outsourcing some of the bills that we print in-house today. It's much more cost effective to have them printed through [COBRA 00:14:17] So there's a project going live in February of next year. So that's one of our action items that we have and will continue to work on our monthly billing project that's planned to go live January 2022. So those are some highlights here.

Prem:

Jennifer, next slide, please. For the Attract, retain and develop high quality talent, obviously, we are trying to beef up our safety protocols and training around that. A couple of things we are trying to do is more customer centric training. We have prepared some of the modules. We have come up with a hybrid model, if you will, for training. An online system in order to get it more effective, especially with the COVID environment we are right now. As you're aware, we do have a challenge from a resource standpoint. That's why you see a Yellow there. But at the same time, we are trying to make sure that we can complete this training. As I mentioned, the modules have been completed. We just have to make sure we enable the training to a hybrid model.

Prem:

Right. As you could see, one of our global metric is preventable injuries. If you recollect, we had a situation in September with the meter reading employee spraining his ankle, etc. So that's why you see a red over there. But other than that, I think we have been doing pretty good in this space. You've heard multiple times from Beth and Jeanine on the return to work plan. We have been really focused on and more recently, there was a communication from Larry, if you remember, that talked about extending our plan to Jan 19th as a date. We are reducing our workforce, going back a little bit to kind of reduce the number of positive cases that we have recently seen.

Prem:

There's an uptake in Connecticut so we're being vigilant about making sure we have a more robust plan. So that's as high level update. Any questions on this specific one? I know there were a couple of things. If not, I can move to the next one.

Tony:

Move. [inaudible 00:16:24] move.

Prem:

Okay, next slide. So this again, all green here. Except if you remember, we talked about two new recreational service. I know Ted is pretty close to more than myself. We are looking to do [inaudible 00:16:39] fishing as one of them. We looked at an activity for mountain biking as being one of the recreational facility. But now we're looking to put together more trails in Lake Champlain and Lake Saltonstall. So those are the two we're working to the plan. We'll get it ready. Right now it's yellow. That's on this one. We go to the next one.

Prem:

High quality water. You heard loud and clear from Lisa and Beth. We talked about the Centennial Plan for Asset Management, the three Rs presentation that Lisa did more recently, kind of ties back into that. We have been doing some of bidding on hydraulic modeling, for example. We're also looking to put together a DNG and operational plan. So all that is in progress. Everything is in green here. We want to make sure we tie our asset management plan to our 2025 capital plan. So there's been some work that's been going on with that. So far so good, so it's all green here.

Prem:

And go to the next one. Technology, I know, process improvement that Larry mentioned, we are trying to pick our innovation hub, it's very focused on process and center of excellence. We have internally formulated four different teams. Meter to cash, procure to pay and looking at source to consumption and recruit to retire. Those are the four streams. So, a lot of work happening to put more process improvements. So, there are bare bones, as Larry mentioned. So there's some work going on in that space, we're all green here. Cyber security is also an interest. We completed our phishing test, penetration test. We have a full plan in terms of things that we need to do from a DHS standpoint. So all green here. More to come. I'll be presenting something for the next committee, for this committee about cyber security. So far, so good here. There are no issues in this space. Go to the next slide.

Prem:

This is, again, financial health, a lot of resonation that happened today. Again, to Larry's point on amount advisers presenting next month, we have a whole non-core focus there. So a lot of work happening in that space. We are looking at extending PipeSafe [inaudible 00:18:52] So there is a plan that is put in place to actually meet town officials and decision makers. We're also looking at our [inaudible 00:19:00] program. Some work has started with actuaries information there. So a lot of good stuff happening, but we have a target to really achieve the goal by end of this fiscal year. Capital efficiency program, as you remember, we did have some unplanned capital projects because of all the pipe bursts and more than myself, Beth knows about it. So there is a little bit of that. But we are trying to contain our capital projects within the dollars we have. We are underspent at this point. In terms of efficiency, I would say a 3% efficiency is work in progress, we don't have the number yet, but hopefully we'll have it next month. But that's the only yellow. But we'll be working through the plan.

Prem:

So that kind of concludes all the high level highlights on all these different areas. Overall, it looks green unless anybody has any questions on any of these six goals.

Tony:

Thank you. Any questions?

Prem:

Oh, so by the way, we do have a detailed plan. Again, not to go through in here, if you'd like, there's also an appendix that Jennifer had shared. So there's a detailed plan. Every one of this is in a detailed plan.

Tony:

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Thank you.

Prem:

Thank you, Larry. And thanks, Tony.

Larry:

Thank you, Prem. Okay. Well, that wraps up...

Tony:

We have to approve the minutes.

Larry:

Yes, I know. I was going to suggest that.

Tony:

Okay. Entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the August 20 meeting?

Joe:

So moved.

Tony:

Second.

Kevin:

Second.

Tony:

All in favor, aye.

Group:

Aye.

Tony:

And motion carries. We have to come out of executive session. We already did that, right? So we are recessing the strategic planning committee and resuming as the authority. So, motion.

Joe:

So moved.

Tony:

Second.

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Kevin:

Second.

Tony:

All in favor, aye.

Group:

Aye.

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ENDS AT 2:44 P.M.]