

**Representative Policy Board
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
December 17, 2020
Meeting Transcription**

A regular meeting of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”) of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District took place on Thursday, December 17, 2020, via remote access. Chair Ricozzi presided.

PRESENT

RPB

Ansonia	Thomas P. Clifford III
Bethany	Brian Eitzer
Branford	Mario Ricozzi
Cheshire	Timothy Slocum
Derby	Frank Pepe
East Haven	Michelle Verderame
Guilford	Charles Havrda
Hamden	Stephen Mongillo
Killingworth	Jamie Mowat Young
Madison	Joseph A. Oslander
Milford	Richard Smith
New Haven	Naomi Campbell
North Haven	Anthony P. Rescigno
Orange	Jasper J. Jaser
Prospect	Robert E. Harvey, Jr.
Seymour	Mike Horbal
West Haven	T. Gregory Malloy
Woodbridge	Mark Levine

Absent

Beacon Falls	Peter Betkoski
North Branford	Peter DeSantis
Governor’s Rep	Vincent Marino

Regional Water Authority

Anthony DiSalvo
Kevin Curseaden
David Borowy

Management

Larry L. Bingaman
Beth Nesteriak
Rochelle Kowalski
Edward O. Norris III
Jeanine Reckdenwald
Premjith Lakshman Singh
Tara Augur

Counsel

Bruce McDermott, Esq.

Office of Consumer Affairs

Jeffrey Donofrio, Esq.

Staff

Jennifer Slubowski

Mario:

Yes. All right. Well, it's 6:30, I think. I'm looking at the screen that we have a quorum. I believe we can get started.

Frank:

There's only 29 of us.

Mario:

Yes. Well, first item on the agenda, the meeting is being recorded at December 17th. Mario Rizzo. It's the meeting of the RPB, regular meeting. The safety moment of December is how climate change affects workers. This was an interesting one, so please read through it, and try and minimize your carbon footprint so that we can all continue on for a long time.

Tony:

Get out the lighting on the back porch.

Mario:

The next item on the agenda, unless there's questions on this, is the approval of the minutes of November 19th. Does anyone have a motion?

Mark:

Yeah. I make the motion so move.

Mario:

Great. Second?

Naomi:

I second it.

Jeff:

Second.

Mario:

Is that Naomi?

Naomi:

Yes.

Mario:

Okay. Second from Naomi. Any additions, corrections, amendments to the minutes? Okay. Hearing none. All in favor?

Joe:

Aye.

Naomi:

Aye.

Frank:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? And any abstentions?

Naomi:

That's great.

Mario:

Okay. So, it stands approved. Then we're on to communications and update on the RPB appointments. Naomi, I believe you were on the agenda for the December alder's meeting.

Naomi:

Yes.

Mario:

And do you know if they acted or they sent it to committee? Which they like to do.

Naomi:

They sent it to committee.

Mario:

Okay. Yes, not surprising. Sometimes that's just the way they go. And we still have a couple of people. I think Michelle and Ben, so we'll keep looking out for those reappointments. Naomi, if you need anything or they ask any questions, let me know, we'll try to answer.

Naomi:

Okay. I will.

Mario:

Moving along here, items for consideration and action. Tim, I believe the finance committee viewed possible charging zero interest-

Tim:

That is correct.

Mario:

... beyond the 31st.

Tim:

That is correct, Mario. That is correct. And we are prepared to advance a motion if you were so inclined to receive one.

Mario:

Long as you read it.

Tim:

Okay, you got it. Here goes nothing. Proposed resolution is dated December 17, 2020, whereas executive order 7W which extended executive order 7S section 6 applicable to municipalities, to quasi-municipal corporations extending the tax deferral and the interest rate reduction program to water charges among other types, including sewer and electric, and which executive order ends July 1, 2020. And whereas management recommended extending the time period concerning abatement of interest, a zero interest rate, through December 31, 2020, and presented such recommendation that the representative policy board finance committee meeting of June 8, 2020, and at the RPB consumer affairs committee at the June 15, 2020 meeting. And whereas the RPB finance committee and RPB consumer affairs committee agreed to recommend to the full RPB management's recommendation and concurs that this is the right approach in light of COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic impacts.

Tim:

Whereas on June 18, 2020, the full RPB approved a zero interest rate through December 31, 2020, whereas the COVID-19 pandemic continues and the associated economic impacts management recommended to the RPB finance on December 14, 2020, extending the time period of the abatement of zero interest through at least March 31, 2021. Whereas the RPB finance committee agreed to recommend to the full RPB management's recommendation and concurs with their recommendation. Now, therefore be it resolved that the full RPB approves the continuation of the abatement of interest rates on arrears authorizing a zero interest rate through at least March 31, 2021, and not longer than May 31, 2021. Here is that long motion.

Mario:

Motion and a second.

Michelle:

I'll second it.

Tim:

I'll second it.

Mario:

Okay. Michelle, thank you. Questions? Comments? I think we're-

Brian:

This is Brian.

Mario:

Yes, Brian.

Brian:

Just a quick question. How do we decide on the date of not longer than May 31st and the March 31st dates for continuing? Just out of curiosity.

Mario:

I believe the May 31st is fiscal year.

Rochelle:

That's correct.

Mario:

And your March 31st, Rochelle?

Rochelle:

That is just based on what we think could potentially happen over the winter, just looking at what [Pure 00:07:09] is doing not following that exactly, but making sure that we can get over the winter in particular and then we can reassess what the economic conditions are at that time.

Brian:

Okay. I just was curious, it came out of a hat.

Mario:

No, there was thought behind it.

Tim:

An informed hat.

Mario:

Yes. Other questions? Hearing none, all those in favor?

Tim:

Aye.

Frank:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed and abstaining? Thank you very much. That will bring us on to report, so we're just cruising here tonight. I hope that's okay with everyone. Before we get into reports, I didn't know if Jeff, besides your hard work today, if you had any comments that you wanted to bring to the RPB as OCA.

Jeff:

The only comment that I was going to make, thank you, is that some of you may have seen this maybe not, but last night, the governor did issue executive order 9R, which provides the opportunity with respect to the deferral or low interest program that was initiated by executive order 7S to be applied to January, 2021 tax payment. So I understand that the authority opted for the zero interest program rather than the low interest program, but I want you to be aware of the fact, of course I waited till after you voted to tell you this, that your vote is consistent with the executive order that was issued by Governor Lamont last night and executive order 9R.

Mario:

Great. Thank you.

Jeff:

Sure.

Mario:

Did see that, but didn't read through it all. That's good. In that case, thank you, Jeff. Finance committee, Tim.

Tim:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The finance committee met on December 14th. It had to be a special meeting, but it was a meeting just the same, and primarily other than that motion we just discussed we had a presentation by Beth and Mr. Burns regarding risk resiliency and redundancy. And it was very interesting. There was a system overview, operating strategy, near and long-term vision for risk, resiliency, and redundancy. It was a very informative discussion about how to be prepared and how best to respond and look for opportunities in the event we have mechanical breakdowns or other, such things. I guess the bottom line, the takeaway is that I certainly, for one felt that while we've always had a robust capital program, we're always looking into taking care of things and moving forward in a sound way, this is sort of an aim at just an overview of really everything, just to see where we are and how we can respond in the event of a surprise. And we all know there are surprises.

Tim:

So it was very informative, well-delivered, concise and short. I'd recommend that the full board have the opportunity to see that whole program along the way and it certainly may well have that opportunity. So that was essentially yes. Our next meeting is going to be in the new year, January 11 and by then we'll all be experiencing a new year and having said happy new year. That's about it.

Mario:

Okay. Thank you, Tim. Any questions?

Brian:

Tim, I think I saw that that is also going to be presented at the Consumer Affairs meeting-

Tim:

Consumers Affairs.

Brian:

... next meeting, next time.

Tim:

Yes. And it was-

Brian:

And I saw it with you guys and it was great, and I would recommend to everybody else who didn't get a chance to see it to go ahead and see it.

Tim:

Yeah, it was. I would agree Brian. And it was joined, I think we were joined by at least four or five other board members. So I'm sure it'll get unanimous viewing by the time it gets to Consumer Affairs.

Larry:

You should be sure and catch it at Consumer Affairs because the price is going to go up after the first viewing.

Tim:

That's true. That will actually... There'll be zero interest though by then.

Mario:

Okay. That's good. Very good. Any other questions for finance? Hearing none. We'll move on to land use. I know Peter is out and about.

Bob:

I guess I'll take it. I know the land use committee met on last Wednesday, the 9th, and we had a presentation by Will Henley and also Josh Tracy about removing the water chestnut infestation down at Furnace Pond, and it was a very good show because they took pictures of Furnace Pond with the drone showing before and after and during. And it was quite a good presentation. I believe they estimated it will probably take six years to get this under control, but it might be something the whole board may want to see the presentation.

Mario:

Okay.

Mark:

I think that'd be a good idea if the board saw it.

Mario:

Very good. We can do that at a future meeting. Any anything else Bob, or any questions for Bob?

Stephen:

This is Steve. I have a question for Bob. You're making... It's going to take six years for that to completely... Well, I don't know if completely, but to remove what they expect to get?

Bob:

Yeah. That's what their estimation is of the... while they were there for the two weeks or a little longer, because they had some breakdowns, because Furnace Pond was down. There's some areas that they couldn't get the machine into to remove some of the material, but they were of the belief that it would probably take six years to get it in check so that it's not so bad and maybe it could just be controlled by people going in by hand picking out the water chestnut.

Stephen:

How much were they able to do this year? Was it noticeable?

Bob:

Oh yeah. In the presentation I think showed that they cleared four and a half acres or something like that.

Stephen:

Wow.

Bob:

Yeah.

Brian:

Steve, I think what you're missing is the six years is because every year it recedes so they expect the seed bed to be extensive and so they have to exhaust all the seeds that are already in the sediment from bursting and redoing so that it was never in, even if they pulled everything, all the acreage this year, they'd have to go back again next year and the following year, because every year there's a bloom.

Stephen:

Oh, thank you. So it looks clear, but it's not.

Brian:

Yes.

Bob:

Yeah.

Jamie:

It doesn't look clear because the edge around where the machinery couldn't get in, there's still a bit of a rim of material still there.

Bob:

The presentation was very good and I think we probably should look into having it made available to all.

Stephen:

Do we have that same problem in any other water body?

Bob:

Not to this extent, no. They did some mapping of where it is further upstream and there are several places, but they're trying to eradicate that by hand, but...

Stephen:

In [Saltonstall 00:15:34]?

Bob:

Yes.

Stephen:

Okay.

Mario:

Okay, any other questions for Bob? Hearing none. Move on to Consumer Affairs. Steve?

Stephen:

Yeah. Consumer affairs we'll meet on Monday and we're scheduled for the same presentation on risk, resiliency and redundancy. So again, if anyone couldn't make the presentation that was given to finance they're welcome to join us on Monday. So that's pretty much it since we haven't met yet.

Mario:

Okay. Questions for Steve? 5:30 Monday. If you don't have the invite, Jennifer will be happy to reforward it to you. Okay. Thank you. Bylaws and rules review. We met again this month. I believe we've chopped now one month off of the project, the standard project we'll say, or smaller projects timeframe and larger projects will still pretty much get a longer timeframe. We started looking at rate applications and the timeframes involved in that. We'll go through the details. It's probably in February, we'll have some proposed revisions, but keeping it open for us to still have an opportunity to review the applications and get the public hearing scheduled and allow the public to participate, the OCA to participate in the hearings. So there'll be another report in January and probably February we'll have some action items for you. Okay. We move on to the nominating committee. Greg, did you have a meeting?

Greg:

Yes we did. We had a meeting on the 10th, December 10th and it was brought to everybody's attention that the mayor finally submitted three names. Unfortunately, the incumbent is not one of them and so we did discuss what the next steps of the interviewing process would be and we decided to interview three separate nights, the three candidates. And that will start, beginning in January. And that was-

Mario:

Okay. Very good. Thank you. Any questions for Greg?

Stephen:

Greg, That's Joseph Moe's term?

Greg:

Yeah. Yeah.

Stephen:

Okay.

Greg:

His name wasn't on the list. That's too bad. It's unfortunate.

Brian:

And we're constrained to going with the mayor's list on this, correct?

Greg:

Yes.

Mario:

Yes. New Haven has one position, if you will, that they provide names and then we pick off the names.
Okay. Any questions?

Greg:

Is Larry there?

Mario:

Larry is here. Yes.

Greg:

Hey, Larry, did you see the three names that were submitted?

Larry:

Yeah, I've seen the three names.

Greg:

Okay. If you have any questions, you or Tony on any of the three names, please let us know.

Tony:

I have a question, Greg. I am on the nominating committee. This is Tony Rescigno but it dawns on me, I haven't seen the letter with the three names. That is in addition to Joe. Is it, or is it-

Greg:

No.

Tony:

Okay.

Greg:

He's supposed to submit three names and we have to pick one from the three.

Tony:

Right. Okay.

Mario:

Yeah. Okay. Thank you very much, Greg.

Greg:

You're welcome.

Mario:

Appreciate you moving that along. We turn to, I guess, Tony, are you taking the lead here?

Tony:

I am. Thank you.

Mario:

Thank you very much.

Tony:

I just wanted to share with the RPB before we talk about our own business and I am facing health issues too, which I have to devote a larger portion of my available time. I have been concerned with my ability to be at all my duties as chair of the RWA. So accordingly after consultation with my family, I have decided that I will step down from the chair of the RWA effective 12 31 20. I do plan to continue in my appointment as director of the RWA, which continues through 12 31 23. Given all of that today, we met in a meeting and I encouraged the five members to choose a new chair to fill my unexpired term of one year through 12 21. They have chosen David [Borrowing 00:21:14] to serve that unexpired term and in turn they have chosen to elect me vice chair to fill Joe's unexpired, or Joe's term. Joe doesn't have a term. It expires but he had a year. But I've been appointed to become vice chair through 12 31.

Tony:

So I have to say that while, if I had a choice, a real choice, I would have liked to continue to do this because this has been very close to me, but I cannot in good conscience continue it without some concern for succession planning within the RWA and for the safety and security and support of the band. I had some discussion with Larry about whether or not I could continue to do the job. He's convinced that I can, I'm not convinced that I can. And my family had said if they do that, they'll disown me and that's just [inaudible 00:22:35]. So I want to let you guys know that before I go on, but I think that the RWA is going to be in good hands with David. I will be close by to support him however I can and we'll see where we go. I don't have a lot of answers to your questions except to say that my health will not be good.

Mario:

Well, Tony any support that you need, please don't hesitate.

Anthony:

Our prayers are with you.

Jamie:

Yes.

Tony:

Thank you all.

Frank:

And our support.

Tony:

I wanted you to know that I will continue to be close by in Jones' old position and David will get my support and Larry will get my support. So going on to the five member meeting today we met in almost every committee imaginable, one of which was environmental health and safety. Kevin, can you report on that?

Kevin:

Sure. Thank you Tony. Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. We had three presentations today. The first was by Lori Vitagliano and it was the 2021 legislative outlook. Lorie focused on a few key issues, one being that some of the key leadership has changed. Senator Looney remains as majority leader, Senator Fasano has retired and we also know Themis Klarides has retired. Topics that are likely to be discussed this year, and by the way, the meetings my understanding are planned to be each I think legislative committee is going to have their own YouTube channel and the meetings or public hearing's going to be conducted by Zoom. It's how I understand it's going to work. But the topics of interest once again, PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances in drinking water hoping to form an advisory council on that. The Department of Public Health Safe Drinking Water assessing fees on utilities. Laurie will be in the RWA. We'll be watching that to see what those fees are and that they're not excessive.

Kevin:

Virtual net metering with respect to solar and... Which right now the RWA and other political subdivisions is not allowed to do and that's been an ongoing issue because we have electricity that we can't share internally and we can't sell it. And then a water treatment operator reciprocity with other states to increase the employee candidate pool. Lastly there will be some potential water industry issues to look out for, one being backflow device installation requirements, levels of chlorination concerns and public water supply resiliency that could include drought management and interconnections between systems.

Kevin:

Then we heard from John Triana twice, once regarding the update on the 2020 deer hunt and John discussed the results of the deer hunt this year. It was held in four areas. I think there's been no expansion and no reduction in the areas, Prospect Bethany and Sonia Seymour and North Branford on a total of about 4,400 acres. The RWA for some new members on the board has been allowing regulated hunting on some of these properties since 2009. And when it first started, it was a controversial concept. It's now been accepted and the real reason for it is it helps maintain the deer population, which in turn helps with the vegetation, which in turn helps with water quality. So participation in the hunt increased over last year by about 7%, which is 12 hunters more than last year. John thought this probably related to more people wanting to get outside. The harvest this year was a total of 45 deer taken across the four hunting areas with does taken at 26 and bucks at 19. There's an incentive for does which helps reduce the breeding.

Kevin:

The harvest was similar to last year when 47 deer were taken by 168 hunters and is slightly above the numbers taken between 2015 and 2018. The RWA has been collecting data on research plots, which shows deer, the areas that... how deer have impacted vegetation and how they consume it. There's less deer sightings. There's a decreased harvest as compared to early years of the hunt. And then the Connecticut Agricultural Station conducting population assessment using feeders and cameras. So the goal is not obviously to allow people to hunt deer, but the goal is to... the research is to find out what exactly, what impact the reduction in the deer population is having on vegetation and ultimately water quality.

Kevin:

And then the last thing I'll be brief, but this is a really interesting one, an important one, and it might be intuitive to people for this year, the number of recreation permits. This was also presented by John Triana The number of permit holders at the end of November of this year was approximately 5,900 compared to 3,800 in February. And compared to a running average of about 4,000 permit holders over the last four years. There was a large increase most likely attributed to many other activities and avenues of entertainment being shut down, and also people wanting to get outside because of being inside, due to COVID and outside in the fresh air.

Kevin:

John also discussed the increased advertising posts on social media and about the rec program. There was a digital billboard advertisement on 995. They had a coupon and... I don't know if anybody has any specific questions about that, but if I can't answer them, I'm sure John would be able to, I'll get you an answer after the meeting. Thank you.

Tony:

Thank you, Kevin. Any question guys?

Mark:

Great report Kevin. You didn't even move your lips.

Kevin:

You're really hard, Mark.

Stephen:

Tony this is Steve Mongillo, I have a couple of questions. For the fees on utilities, what is the reason for that Kevin and what do they expect to use that money for?

Ted:

How do you [inaudible 00:29:49].

Kevin:

Are you talking about the Connecticut safe drinking water, Steve?

Stephen:

Is that what you were saying? You were saying those fees on all the utilities or are you talking about just a water utility?

Kevin:

I think it's on all utilities, but my understanding going back, this goes back a year and a half, two years ago is to bridge the gap in budgeting and their ability to fund their agency.

Stephen:

Okay. And somehow they think that the utilities can do this, huh? Or obligated to do this? I just don't get that.

Rochelle:

[crosstalk 00:30:30].

Larry:

Steve if I could clarify.

Kevin:

Yeah, Steve, I think that's been the discussion over the past couple of years. Oh, go ahead, Larry.

Larry:

I was just going to clarify that it's a state drinking water fee and it's fees that water utilities put on their bill to collect from customers, a small amount of money that is then turned into the Department of Public Health to fund the state drinking water supply section of the department, so they can enforce the requirements of the environmental protection act, safe drinking water act.

Stephen:

Okay. Thank you, Larry. I got it now. And then the other thing I wanted to make is just a comment on the land use recreation program up at the Lake Chamberlain, there've been cars parked out on the road, outside the park parking lot, because a lot of people on the nice weekends have wanted to be there. So Mark, are you aware of that? And are those people going... Are they recreation holders or they're people that bypass-

Mark:

What road are they on again?

Stephen:

They're on... I guess it's Sperry Road there, at the end of-

Brian:

Steve, this is Brian. I've been out there and I've seen it too and-

Mark:

It's Bethany.

Brian:

... my assumption is that it's people who are not permit holders who are walking then just walking in because there's other ways to get in other than the gates. So if you're not parking, the only control we have is we have a lock by the gate, but you also can walk past things and walk around the gate and get in. And so that there are people who are coming in are not permit holders. I know that John has told us that they go out all the time and view but I've walked around there and I've never seen any of our police or anybody check me for a permit and I've been out there a couple times a month probably.

Stephen:

Yeah. Something the police might learn... Water company, Police might want to be aware of.

Mark:

Yeah, but Sperry Road is a road and they just... They could just be walking down Sperry road and you can't do anything about it. That's a public road, Sperry Road.

Stephen:

No, I understand, but still if they're on the property, they should have a recreation permit.

Mark:

Well, what I'm saying is their walk could be that. It's a beautiful walk, just walking down Sperry Road.

Stephen:

Yeah, that's true.

Mark:

Okay.

Kevin:

Hey Steve, this is Kevin again. John did mention that there was increase of patrols and increase of enforcement because of the, not only the increase of permit holders, but the increase of people, non permit holders trespassing and accessing the property. So that is something that they're aware of and enforcing. He actually got comments from permit holders that they appreciated that the permit holders were either required to get permits or asked not to be on the property.

Stephen:

Okay. So they know about it.

Kevin:

Correct. Yeah.

Tony:

Okay, guys. Let's move on. We also met as audit and risk today and Joe will run through that. Joe? Is he not here tonight?

Jennifer:

I don't see Joe here.

Tony:

Okay. Thank you. We met also as a non-core business committee and David has that.

David:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for your service. We met at the non-core business committee and we reviewed strategies that will continue our operate trajectory of our pipe stay suite of programs through continued diversification and expansions. We are holding our numbers which is, but the pandemic that may not have always been the expectation. And we continue to talk about ways to increase our water testing program because that is a quite a lucrative business for us and we continue to review that as well.

Mark:

Hey, Dave. It's Mark.

David:

Yes, Mark.

Mark:

How are you doing?

David:

Good. How are you?

Mark:

Good. What's going on with that try... What's it called trifecta? That's a non core business for us investment, what's going on with them? Do we lose our money or is it they're still around?

David:

They're still around.

Mark:

[crosstalk 00:34:53] us?

David:

No, they're not. They're still around. And we also did discuss that and the status of that. The note is due in two years. So we've got some time to see what they recapitalize or workout something or write it off. There's-

Mark:

Do they have any assets?

David:

They do have some, and they do... And we still have a member on their board and they do meet monthly.

Mark:

And do we have a UCC filing on any of their stuff?

David:

That technicality I don't know. Larry?

Larry:

You know what? I'm reluctant to discuss this in public session. It's an investment that we have in another company and I'm just reluctant to discuss this in public session.

David:

Okay.

Larry:

I'll be glad to answer your question offline, but...

Tony:

Anything more, Dave?

David:

No, no, that was it, Tony.

Tony:

Okay. Are there any other questions from folks? Larry, do you have a report?

Larry:

Yes. Before I get into my financial report, I'll have Beth give an update on COVID.

Beth:

Good evening everyone. I'll provide a quick update on where we stand with COVID. As of December 15th, we've had a total of 16 confirmed cases among our employees. That is a total that dates back to March when the pandemic first started. We have had 13 of those 16 have happened post Labor Day. We have seen obviously a more of an increase in the fall. We continue as we find positive cases or people report symptoms to contact trace, and ask those that might've had potential contact to self quarantine. As you know, and I've been previously reporting we are continuing to disinfect our buildings, including our treatment plants and our [inaudible 00:36:55] drive on a weekly basis.

Beth:

And in terms of occupancy, we have as I reported last month right after Thanksgiving, we entered our... we went back to phase two, I should say, and ask those that could work remotely to work remotely through mid January post the holidays. In terms of new items, just to keep you all aware, the city of New Haven issued an executive order on December 7th, asking all businesses to follow certain protocols around plans and the like. We have been compliant with all that. The new requirement for us is that we now submit any positive cases to the city health department for their information and we've been doing that.

Beth:

The other new information is that as you know, with the vaccine starting to be deployed, regional employees would be considered... are considered under the critical infrastructure and would be prioritized under the 1B group, as a result we wanted to get a feel for employees feelings on the vaccine. So we issued a pulse survey on December 11th asking a few questions, mainly the first asking if that when the vaccine would become available, if there would be an interest in taking it. So far we've received a little over 130 responses from our employees and just over half said, yes, they plan on being vaccinated with about 30% unsure and 18% declining. So that was just some more information as we prepare and help try to prioritize water utilities among that 1B category. So with that, I will be happy to answer any questions.

Tony:

Beth will the option to take the vaccine be extended to a members of the two boards?

Beth:

We will have to look into that.

Tony:

[crosstalk 00:38:50] question.

Beth:

We'd have to look into that.

Tony:

And please do.

Beth:

I'm not quite sure. Yes.

Stephen:

And I was just-

Brian:

Is there a requirement, an employee requirement on vaccines, or is that totally voluntary when it comes to taking it as a frontline employee?

Beth:

There is no policy right now, even the flu shot is optional, obviously. I don't envision RWA requiring this as a mandatory vaccine. In talking to some of our sister utilities, other utilities are thinking of things like opt out options for their employees, but I don't foresee us having this be a mandatory vaccine. We also have learned that other healthcare systems and large employers have not made this vaccine mandatory. We want to promote it. We want to encourage our employees to receive the vaccine but I don't see it being mandatory.

Stephen:

Beth this is Steve Mongillo. Did you determine, or did you get any information about the people who did not want to have it, what the reasons were?

Beth:

No, it was a simple, yes, no, maybe. We did ask the question about how much they thought the vaccine would reduce the risk of getting it, kind of low, medium high, in terms of what they felt from a reduction perspective and that was moderate. Most of the people said they moderately felt. So we didn't ask why, we just wanted to have an idea of how many... where people felt.

Stephen:

Yeah. My understanding is that unless 85% of people are immunized, we're not going to have herd immunity.

Beth:

Correct. That's what I've heard as well.

Stephen:

So it's important. I guess it's a huge problem to overcome with educating people on what might be the risk involved.

Beth:

It is. I think that's why we wanted to start early just to feel, to get a sense of how our employees were feeling. So we have a lot more work to do.

Stephen:

Yeah. Good work.

Mario:

Thank you, Beth.

Larry:

Thank you. So for the financial report for after six months of actual results through November 30th, operating revenues are over budget by \$4.9 million and that's because total water revenues are over budget by 4 million, obviously due to the higher than anticipated consumption that we had over this past summer. But our other revenues, both miscellaneous charges, as well as our non-core businesses are over budget by \$925,000. Our operating and maintenance expenses are about \$1.8 million under budget. And right now we believe that probably the majority of that about 1.5 million is just timing at this point. But with all of the puts and takes, we are projecting now that we'll only have to have a draw of \$600,000 to meet our coverage of 114% and if you recall, we had originally projected a shortfall in our revised budget of about \$12 million, but cash receipts have been coming in strong and billings are higher than anticipated and our non-core revenues continue to be higher than budget, even though our interest rate is lower than what we had originally anticipated.

Larry:

So there's still considerable uncertainty regarding the financial impact of the pandemic. We had originally thought that we would have normal, go back to normal in January. That looks less likely at this point, given the resurgence that has happened. So we'll have to continue to be very careful about our expenses going forward the last six months of the year in order to make sure that we maintain that 600,000 or even less going forward.

Mark:

Larry.

Larry:

Yes.

Mark:

Would that advertising campaign from Pipes safe? Did it increase our membership or whatever you want to call it?

Larry:

Well, we had spikes in months where last year it was lower, but overall since the campaign and this is really kind of a two edge sword, since the campaign started, we've had fewer enrollments than we did last year, but you have to remember if we hadn't run it, given the pandemic, it might've been even lower. So I think we had around 2000 enrollments last year, this year we've had around I think, 1400 since the campaign began. So that's comparing the same period in 2019 is the same period in 2020 when we ran the campaign, but I think it probably helped blunt some of the decline that we would have occurred if we had not run it.

Mark:

Okay. Interesting. Thank you.

Larry:

And then Mark our raw water storage was at 75% as of Monday compared to a long-term average of 69% for this time last year.

Mark:

Are you sure?

Larry:

I'm positive. I'm positive.

Stephen:

Larry, this is Stephen. Just to be clear, are we collecting the usual kind of rate or amount for what we've been selling?

Larry:

Our cash collections are running about what it would have been with a normal budget and it's significantly higher than the lower revised budget.

Stephen:

Okay.

Rochelle:

If I can just add, I mean, we are seeing some erosion in our collection, so receivables are up, but nowhere near what we had originally anticipated.

Stephen:

Well, things are wearing on and it's... You're right. It hasn't all played out yet.

Larry:

No, it hasn't. That's why we're still cautious.

Tony:

Anything else, guys? Thank you all very much.

Larry:

Thank you all.

Stephen:

Thank you Larry.

Mario:

Thank you both. And I wanted to, as we end this meeting, thank everyone for all their efforts and energies in 2020, because it's been a hell of a year and wish you all the best of health and peace in 2021, when we get together again. Enjoy the holidays, spend time and look forward to seeing you all in-person, in-person alive soon.

Jay:

Absolutely.

Mark:

Happy holidays to all.

Jay:

Hey, happy holidays to you all.

Mark:

[crosstalk 00:46:17].

Greg:

Take care. Happy-

Kevin:

Happy holidays.

Brian:

Stay safe.

Beth:

Hey, stay safe.

Frank:

Be safe.

Clifford:

Before you adjourn-

Mario:

There's a motion-

Clifford:

... Mario.

Mario:

... from Mr. Clifford. Second.

Clifford:

Yes, please. Before we adjourn, I just want to commend the chairman of the five member authority. I can say this as a former chairman of the RPB is that under his leadership, he's provided good judgment. We've had some tough times. I'm delighted he's going to stay on the five member authority, but we'll lose him as the chairman and I think that's a loss and I think we ought to acknowledge his contributions.

Mario:

No, absolutely.

Mark:

Absolutely.

Greg:

True.

Tony:

Listen, they survived without you. And so if they survived without you Cliff, they'll survive without me.

Charles:

It's still a loss though, Tony. Good luck.

Tony:

Thank you.

Greg:

Take care.

Mario:

Yes.

Jamie:

You'll be our constant prayers Tony for full recovery.

Tony:

I'm going to be in your face as much as possible.

Mario:

Expect nothing less.

Mark:

Take a motion to adjourn.

Mario:

Okay, Mark. On a second.

Greg:

Second.

Mark:

Second.

Mario:

Okay. On a second. All in favor.

Group:

Aye.