

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

**June 17, 2021  
Meeting Transcription**

Mario:

Thank you, Jennifer. Right on time. Okay. I'd like to call the regular meeting of the representative policy board to order on Thursday, June 17th, 2021 at 6:30 PM. Mario Ricozzi, Chair, the RPB, and welcome all to the meeting. First item of business is the safety moment, Sustainable Gastronomy Day later this week. I'm not sure if Jennifer's trying to tell us something or not. But we should be thinking about being sustainable and not wasting food, so please read through that. Be extra careful on the 18th, which is tomorrow. Next item of business is the approval of the minutes from May 20th. There's a motion?

Frank:

I'll second it, Mario.

Mario:

Greg, and then Frank seconded it. Any questions, comments, amendments, to the minutes as presented?

Mario:

Hearing none. All in favor of approval?

Participants together:

Aye.

Mario:

Anyone against? Anyone abstaining? Okay. Thank you very much. Minutes are approved. Thank you, Jennifer, for putting them together. We have some communications, the weighted vote count, which is done annually. And if I recall the summary correctly, there is no change. Is that correct, Beth?

Beth:

Correct.

Mario:

Okay. Had to get you to say something, you're so quiet there. So we don't have any action on this, this is just for informational purposes. So everyone votes remain the same as they were last month. There's also the committee preferences for 2021-2022. If you would please submit that if you haven't already, and if you can't get the form filled out and then fax back to Jennifer, just send her an email with your name and what committee you want to be on, so that that could be set up in time for the July meetings. Okay. Anything else, Jennifer?

Jennifer:

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No, I think that's it for communications.

Mario:

I had a minority item come up. Double check on Milford vote count.

Bob:

Yeah, it looks like it went down.

Ted:

Mario, I can answer that the Milford vote count did go down. You're right. One vote. Based on changes in the number of customers.

Mario:

Okay.

Beth:

Apologize for that

Mario:

Nope. No problem.

Stephen:

Where did that vote go? Does anyone know?

Ted:

Stephen, it doesn't go anywhere. So the total number of votes decreased from 102 to 101, as prescribed in the formulas.

Stephen:

Okay. Thank you.

Mario:

Yeah. So it's a rounding essentially.

Ted:

Correct.

Mario:

Okay. All right. So I stand corrected, it was an adjustment. Sorry about that. We move on to the nominating committee recommendations for RPB officers, and Mr. Clifford, are you out there?

Tom:

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I am. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The nominating committee met twice. In the interest of brevity, I am referring the members on the RPB to the minutes. We do have a proposed slate for action by the RPB and the following resolution. Be it resolved that the following officers are hereby elected to serve for the year, July one, 2021 through June 30th, 2022, or until the respective successors are duly elected and qualified. Chairperson, Mario Ricozzi, Vice Chairperson, Robert E. Harvey Jr., Secretary Charles Havrda, Treasurer Jasper J Jaser, that's the resolution.

Mario:

And that is a motion. Is there a second?

Bob:

I'll second it.

Mario:

Okay. Are there any other nominations, or any discussion? Okay. Hearing none. All in favor of the resolution?

Participants together:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? Abstaining?

Mario:

Resolution passes. Thank you very much, Tom, and the committee. Thank you all for your confidence and re-electing me, and the board. Appreciate that. Going to keep moving in the positive direction and maybe even get together in person, hopefully soon. The next item of business, Jennifer, is the finance committee recommendation. They have a proposed resolution on zero interest rate. And Mr. Slocum, if you wouldn't mind?

Tim:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to propose anything close to zero. So with that, I introduced the motion of the policy board as of June 17th, 2021, whereas executive order 7W, which extended executive order 7S, section six, applicable to municipalities, to quasi-municipal corporations, extending the tax deferral and interest rate reduction program to water charges among other types of charges, including salt, sewer, and electric, and which executive order has ended. Whereas the management recommended extending the time period concerning abatement of interest zero rate through December 31st, 2020, and presented such recommendation that the representative policy board finance committee meeting of June 8th, 2020, and the RPB consumer affairs committee on June 15th, 2020. Whereas the RPB finance committee and RPB consumer affairs committee agreed to recommend, to the full RPB, management's recommendation, and concurred that it was the right approach in light of COVID 19 pandemic and associated economic impact.

Tim:

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And whereas on June 18th, 2020, the full RPB approved zero interest rate through December 31, 2020. And whereas on December 14th, 2020, the RPB finance committee recommended the full RPB management recommendation, and concurred that it was right approach in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic impact. And whereas on December 17th, 2020, the full RPB approved a zero interest rate extension through March 31, 2021, and not longer than May 31, 2021. And whereas the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have associated economic impacts, and executive order 12B extended the protection, and public health and safety, during COVID-19 pandemic and July 20th. And whereas on June 14th, the RPB finance committee further recommended to the full RPB, management's recommendation and concurred with its recommendation. Now, therefore be it resolved, that the full RPB approves the continuation of abatement of interest on arrears, authorizing a zero interest rate through July 20, 2021, or later at management's discretion. If there is a further extension, via executive order. And there ends the motion, I will seek a second.

Mario:

A second please.

Jamie:

I'll second it.

Mario:

Okay. Thank you, Jamie. Discussion.

Tim:

Well, essentially, Mr. Chairman, Rochelle explained to us that based on, obviously you can read in this motion that there's been extensions approved, based on management recommendation over a period of time. And whereas the essential thinking is that we need to do this a little bit longer, that we really want to continue to do this, to the extent we can limit the impact on the customers. So, the committee agreed that this was a right and appropriate thing to do, and that's probably essentially the statement needed to be heard. But if Rochelle has a comment, and she's present and wants to put more bean out of the bone, that's up to her. So that's essentially it, Mr. Chairman.

Mario:

Thank you.

Rochelle:

Tim [inaudible 00:10:26] correctly. We do think this is the right thing to do. We're monitoring closely what the per regulated companies are doing, and what plans they have in [inaudible 00:10:36], and there is a relatively minor impact on the financial position to just extend the interest just a little bit longer.

Mario:

Okay. Other questions for Tim or Rochelle? Okay. Hearing none. All in favor of the motion, say aye.

Participants together:

Aye.

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Mario:

Anyone opposed? Anyone abstaining? Motion carries unanimously. Thank you. The next item is the land use committee's recommendation. Mr. Betkoski?

Peter:

Yeah. First of all, congratulations on your reappointment, Mr. Chairman, you're doing a great job and I do have a motion here, and I will make this motion. The representative board of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, June 17 2021 proposed resolution. Non-substantial amendments to a land use, plan creation of new trails and authority property at lake Chamberlain in Bethany. Whereas the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority, RWA, on May 20th, 2021 filed an application to the Representative Policy Board for the approval of the non-substantial amendment to the land use plan, to create trails, authority, property at Lake Chamberlain and Bethany.

Peter:

Application, and whereas the land use committee of the RPB reviewed the application and recommends that it be accepted as completed, consider non-substantial without public hearing required. Whereas the RPB concludes the amendment in a non-substantial, and the proposed action is consistent with the advances in the policies and goals of RWA, as no expected impact of the public water supply, no conflict with existing land use plan, designation of forest and recreation, and no financial impact on their authority. Now, therefore be it resolved that the RPB thereby accepts the application as complete and approves without public hearing. The RWA application for non-substantial amendments to the land use plan creates eight new trails on authority property at lake Chamberlain and Bethany, filed May 20th, 2021 in accordance with section eight of the Connecticut Special Act, 77-98 as amended. Do I have a second?

Brian:

This is Brian Eitzer.

Mario:

Brian, thank you. Peter, anything to add?

Peter:

No. I just think it's a positive input, Brian. Thanks for the second there, that's your town. And it's just going to be cleaned up and we're going to add trails and Lake Chamberlain is used an awful lot, and I just think it's positive for the regional water.

Brian:

Yeah. I'll comment quickly that. I read through the plan, and I wasn't at the land use meeting, but it certainly looks quite reasonable, everything seems good, and it is used for fishing and if they give fishermen easier access, then won't go tramping through. So I'm all in favor.

Mario:

Okay. Questions? Okay. Hearing none. All in favor of the resolution?

Participants together:

Aye.

Mario:

Anyone opposed? Anyone abstaining? Okay. That passes. Thank you very much. That brings us down to reports Tim Slocum, finance committee.

Tim:

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and also congratulations to you and the rest of the board for agreeing to stay on another year. We appreciate that, I'm sure. We had our meeting on the 14th, which was Monday of this week. And basically there was a lot of information, one item, which we did obviously vote on this evening. But more interestingly, we did have a presentation by Christine Dickinson, regarding their presentation for water conservation program. She presented a PDF, which I think should be shared with the entire board, because obviously this would be of interest to anyone, I would think. But she certainly made the presentation more fulsome because of her presence.

Tim:

She was a former member, well, she was employee of a water company, now she's a part of this, although she has recently retired, this Alliance for water efficiencies. But the bottom line within this organization, is to try and create a model where water authorities can provide conservation efforts without suffering revenue losses. Because we all know there that there's that indelicate balance between consumption declining, the need to conserve, and all those appropriate things, but the enormous capital spending that's behind any water company environment.

Tim:

Now the Northeast is somewhat blessed as she defined, by more abundant resources in many respects, compared to the Southwest, the west in general, where they're drawing water from rivers and there's concerns about droughts. We have our droughts here, but clearly it's not quite the same, but we certainly recognize that we have declining revenues and things of that sort. So, her organization was brought in by management, basically, to sort of inform the management as to efforts that can be made, that sort of create this balance. And it was informative, she did a great job, I thought Rochelle's idea to bring them on board was helpful. Rochelle might be able to speak to the fact that they've actually engaged them, and gained valuable information from them. And I thought that's good. Basically that's a pat on the back to management.

Tim:

But the bottom line, is a good presentation. I think despite her absence in presenting it, I think there could be some favorability to each member having the opportunity to see it, I would just suggest that it be forwarded to the group at large. But that was more or less the important aspects of the meeting. Rochelle, if you want it to add anything to that, you may feel free to do so. But other than that, that was basically essentially it. A good meeting, a good presentation, more food for thought. But we're sort of all have this in the back of our minds anyway, because management's been taking the lead on making this information available to us. That's it.

Mario:

Questions for Tim?

Stephen:

Tim, this is Steve.

Tim:

Steve.

Stephen:

Couple of comments. Consumer affairs is going to get the same presentation on Monday.

Tim:

Good.

Stephen:

And I looked at the presentation, and quickly had the same thought as you did. This was an important enough future issue that the whole RPB kind of [inaudible 00:18:24].

Tim:

Right. Right.

Stephen:

So I don't know if that's possible, but I would certainly suggest it as well.

Tim:

Well, Steve, I agree. And if I could just come back at the one thing she did say in all of her reportage, was that communication is key to better consumer understanding of what's going on. And I think the RWA attempted to do that, and I think they're doing a pretty good with some of their conservation newsletters that go out to all consumers, stuff like that. Because people can complain about rates going up and "Why should I conserve? It's charging me more anyway." But somehow informing them as to why the rates went up, and how we're still doing our best to save money, to save the water resources, is critical. So I think that that's why this could be valuable to all of us. I agree, Steve.

Stephen:

I just had a thought while you were talking, I know about all the communications, but perhaps, the people now who communicate with the different communities at RWA, and actually go into the community and give a presentation on water issues for the future. Somehow that, or larger public, the news, just something to get people, make sure people are [inaudible 00:19:50].

Stephen:

It really is that critical, fortunately we have the water here, but still comes down to the same problem, using less and having to maintain your infrastructure, and try to balance a rate structure that's reasonable for that. But I think the key thing is to get to know the value of water, because it has been inexpensive for so many years, just taking [inaudible 00:20:18].

Mario:

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So, if there's anyone interested in attending the consumer affairs meeting, Monday at 5:30, I believe.

Stephen:

Yeah. That's certainly a good idea, Mario.

Jamie:

Could you just send out the message to all of us, so that we have a Zoom connect to get to it?

Mario:

You hear that, Jennifer? Thank you. I can't, but Jennifer can. Any other questions for Tim, finance committee? Jennifer?

Jennifer:

I have a question. Tim, the compensation increase freeze...

Tim:

Yes?

Jennifer:

Was that-

Tim:

Oh, yeah. That's true. Yeah. I think Jennifer is correct. We did talk about, we did indeed talk about, but I thought there was actually going to be a motion to that effect tonight, and I didn't see that. But we did obviously talk about, in our meeting, the fact that management was recommending, delivering with the end of the quarter, a report, the back. The back pay, I guess, is the way to put it. Whatever increase we sort of had forgone over the past year, to release it in the next round of payout. And we did recommend to the full board that that be done. I thought that would have meant maybe there was motion tonight and I didn't see it. So I apologize for not bringing that forward, because that was important.

Mario:

I believe next month is when that comes up.

Tim:

I think you're right. So, that was discussed and it was a recommendation forthcoming. So thank you, Jennifer, for bringing that up.

Mario:

You just remember it next month again.

Tim:

Well, by then I'll have a motion and you'll get to hear me, I guess. See, I learn a lot at these meetings.

Mario:



Very good. Any other questions on finance? Thank you very much. Land use committee.

Peter:

Land Use. Good evening, everyone, again. I learn a lot at every meeting too. We had our regular meeting, June 9th, 5:30, it poured. I didn't get there until to six something. Thank you, Mr. Harvey for taking the reins. Our meeting was up in Lake Hammonasset, up in Killingworth/Madison, it's very easy to get to. I'm being sarcastic, I was in deep river, don't ask. So, we went through our safety moment, approved all minutes, and then I stepped in. We also did a John [inaudible 00:23:02]. You almost had to go through all the minutes, because we'd be here for an hour or so. He went through the all the property in Lake Hammonasset, and how important that dam is and that reservoir. And it was very interesting. It never ceases to amaze me that this whole regional water, the property we own and how it all connects and works.

Peter:

We also discussed the Lake Chamberlain and Bethany, which we just passed tonight. Went through updates on the regional water properties, John's awesome with that. Few other items. Next month, well, actually now, notification for committee chair election. Our next meeting is July 14th. Ted Norris was there, if he has anything to add, and any board members would like to add anything that I'm missing. But I'd also like to thank Bob Harvey for filling in for me until I got there. It poured out, I didn't know whether to have the meeting, but we survived. There was a rain rainbow at the end of the meeting, so that says something.

Mario:

Very good. Any questions?

Jay:

Hi, this is Jay. Just checking in. I'm sorry, I was blocked out on my phone.

Mario:

Okay. Congratulations, Jay. You got elected.

Peter:

Yeah, he did.

Jay:

You know what it is? I had to come across the street to my neighbor's home, and use his phone.

Mario:

Okay. Very good. Any questions for Peter and land use committee?

Jamie:

I'd just like to add for the record, that the rainbow is on a Killingworth side of Hammonasset, not on the Madison side.

Mario:

Okay, so noted. hearing no other comments, we will move on to the Consumer Affairs Committee. Steve.

Stephen:

Consumer Affairs has not met since the last meeting, but as mentioned we will be meeting Monday. And again, any anyone from land use that would like to see that presentation, please join us.

Mario:

Okay. Thank you very much. Nominating committee, Mr. Clifford, anything to add?

Tom:

Nothing to add.

Mario:

Thank you and the committee for doing all that work, and trying to put together a team for officers. Appreciate that.

Tom:

Thank you. Our pleasure.

Mario:

Authority and management, Mr. Borowy, we left you three minutes.

David:

Yeah. Thank you. Good evening all, and congratulations Mr. Ricoszi and the other returning and new officers, or returning, new officers. And thank you for your support of the land use amendment tonight. That was very helpful. In lieu of the time I'll do a quick summary and note that our commercial business committee met, and had some substantial activity today and that Kevin will send out a report on that so that you can all have some more information, but he'll get Jennifer to make sure it gets out to everybody.

David:

But we did ask management to move forward with an acquisition that will significantly help us grow our revenues, and move us forward in additional services that we also met as a strategic planning committee, and we reviewed the 2025 plan. [inaudible 00:26:45] activities that we're moving forward with in this fiscal year, to make sure that we meet our goals in the five-year plan. And then our business update, we had \$17 million that we disbursed as our end of year revenue, that we dispersed mainly to the construction fund, so that we have that much money that we don't have to borrow. And you'll see that reflected in the rate case, which will be coming to you folks the end of next month, because we will need to resume borrowing to continue our construction projects, and capital budget projects starting in January. So you'll be seeing a rate case coming for that. We've delayed it for a year, but need to continue on with our activities, and can't delay it anymore. So I'll answer questions, but I think I used up most of the time you have left.

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Mario:

Very good. Very good, David. Questions?

Mario:

I know Mark wants to know what the reservoir levels are.

David:

I'd have to guess 97%. Larry, what is it?

Larry:

Actually, as of Monday, it's 96%, compared to long-term average of 90%.

Mark:

We got plenty of water. If we could figure out how to get it to California and Arizona-

Mario:

Oh my gosh. Yeah.

Mark:

... we'd make a lot of money.

Mario:

Yeah. [crosstalk 00:28:16].

Mark:

We can run a hose out there. Thank you, Larry.

David:

Mario, your question?

Mario:

Yes. So you anticipate sending out an update on the commercial enterprises?

David:

Yes. We'll send out a summary update, okay?

Mario:

I think that will be interesting for all the members of the RPB.

David:

Yeah.

Mario:

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So, thank you very much. Any other questions or comments? Larry, do you have anything to add?

Larry:

I'll just say that given our strong financial close through May, preliminarily, we are projecting a coverage of 126%, without a short fall, with operating and maintenance expenses being at a reduced level, and our higher than expected operating revenues.

Mario:

Excellent. Excellent. That was real good planning a year ago, when you all decided to tighten in the reins and hold everything down. So it made out, and worked out. And we were prepared in case there was a crisis on the business side. Great, well done.

Larry:

According to plan.

Mario:

Yes. I do want to thank Beth Nesteriak, is she's still out there? All of your assistance over time, and I wish you well.

Beth:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Mario:

Hopefully we will continue to run into you.

Beth:

Hope so.

Mario:

Good. Don't be a stranger. Mr. Donofrio, anything?

Jeff:

Yeah, we've got a public hearing now.

Mario:

Yes. I know. Beyond that?

Jeff:

Let's get to it.

Mario:

This is a tough audience. Okay. If there's no further business getting your committee preferences, please, to Jennifer, we'll stand adjourned at seven o'clock. Okay? And-

