

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

**August 19, 2021
Meeting Transcription**

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING STARTS AT 2:52 P.M.]

David:

All right. So we are now meeting as a Strategic Planning Committee. Can I have approval of the minutes, please?

Tony:

[inaudible 02:36:33].

David:

Is there a second? Catherine seconds, all those in favor signify by saying I.

All:

Aye.

David:

So we have couple items on the agenda. We're going to talk about our self-assessment results. Jennifer was able to tabulate them. She was able to add them this morning. I don't know if you guys all had a chance to update into your program. But she's got them here.

David:

I did take a look at them and there's only one or two areas that we did not improve or stay the same from two years ago. They were by tenths of a point or something. Pretty much where we're on target or consider ourselves in our self-assessment to have done as good a job or better than we had been doing, in regard to our initial. I was happy about that as being a review that we don't think we're going backwards. I was concerned about a couple of items that were threes. Only because they were the lowest of the items. It still wasn't well, but it was lowest of the item. I was concerned about those. I just wanted to spend a couple of minutes on that before I opened it up to questions that anybody might have.

David:

The first one there is RWA knows the strengths and weaknesses of each product and service. Premise talking so frequently now about the increase in products that we are having and the organic growth that we're having and new growth that we're getting from these. Maybe it would be a refresher to get a one or two page information out about the four or five various items within the suite of pipe safe products. We do get it in the board report. But that's part of a 14 or 15 page report. It might be nice to get just something if we could on that in the near future. Doesn't necessarily have to be an item on the agenda even. If we could just get that and send it out as informational, not to bypass anybody. Larry, that would be all right with you.

David:

If we asked that we could have that just a summary of our Type Safe Program. It's me and what they actually do and how they're working.

Larry:

That'd be fine.

David:

All right [affirmative]. You and I, Larry, talked about the fact that we want to have one of our special topics, be the discussion of this. It's funny because you and I were working that together and almost everything on this list in the self-assessment that came in at a three of the four or five items in there, they are items to be discussed as a special topics. Larry and I are working on the list. I think in about two weeks and in-between time, you'll get a list, what we'll call special topics that we will fit into agendas to be able to devote a certain amount of time to them and maybe have a special outside person come in and talk to us with their expertise about this.

David:

The first one was somebody that could come in and talk about our products and services about the pipe. There may be a marketing person to come in and give us an explanation of how's our penetration with that. Quite frankly, Dennis sent us a very good report. Which has a lot of what I would look for in our products. But it was about the expansion into wells. So, maybe we'll get something like that with some kind of an expert. But it is going to be one of our topics that we'll be discussing over the next year or so as we get into these special topics. Next item, Jennifer, if you want to slide that down a little bit, we'll see what else was in a number three.

David:

We know, where is it there we are, our RWA Members refrain from attempting to direct the work of management members. Now, I don't know who said which items and who made which comments. But I'm a little concerned about this because we have a member who feels that people are getting too much into the weeds with directing staff what to do. I'd like to discuss that a little bit and see if there's a concern that we, as a big group, are having. First hear from Larry, because it would affect him first as our Chief Executive.

Larry:

That used to be an issue where we had former authority board members that would call vice-presidents or even directors directly and ask them to either look into something or to respond to questions rather than coming through my office. I'm not trying to be a bottleneck here. I just like to know what the vice-presidents might be working on. I haven't noticed that as much of an issue certainly. I'll say the recent past. I was a little bit surprised to see that because I haven't noticed that as being a problem. Certainly not to the extent that it used to be.

David:

What are your thoughts members? Anybody else have some thoughts regarding that? All right. Maybe it's not an overriding concern, but one just to keep an eye on and just make sure that we don't get down into the weeds and into the management area. But rather keeping the policy area. All right. Another

item was committee structure contributes to the RWA productivity. Most people thought it was fine. And then there's somebody that did have a concern. I wonder if maybe that means that person would like us to look at the committee structure a little bit and maybe change what committees we have or change what we do with those committees. I'm not exactly sure what to do with this. I don't necessarily mean these are supposed to be anonymous. I don't necessarily mean for the person to come forward. Maybe a one-on-one conversation, to me, would be helpful.

David:

So I could understand what that meant. That might be a way to handle with that issue. Understand the organization's mission. I think that's always important that we do review that because sometimes we can continue on and on and on and lose sight of the very basic 35 word or however many words recall that is our basic mission of the organization. So I think it would be good to get a reminder of that and how everything that we do flows from the mission of our organization. So I think we'll ask Larry to have something put together just as a reminder for us about that. So we don't get too wrapped up in what we're doing and forget our overall mission and have that top of mind. Following trends and important developments in the water industry. I do think some of our special topics are going to be helped by the Tom Berger's report today was very helpful because that's a significant item.

David:

We have heard that before. I don't know if this particularly means that we need to hear more of that. But I think when you get the list in a couple of weeks of the big topics that we want to discuss, the special topics, we'll see if that's included in the person who had a concern with that, maybe we can go into more detail if that doesn't address some of the concerns.

David:

There was one member who didn't feel we necessarily have a good working relationship with the Chief Executive compared to what other members said. Again, three is average. Although, it's just happens to be the lowest of what anybody rated these here. I'm a little bit concerned about that. I think I would like to consider a different type of self-assessment possibly, cause it's been the same one for a long time. I would like to get your opinions over the next year of what we might want to do for a different type of self-assessment. If, if one is that maybe allow us to have a morning session where we meet with a facilitator to help us talk about different items that we don't necessarily get to talk about in a structured meeting. Larry does that with the Senior Executive teams several times a year. I think that might be something that we might, in the future be able to get some benefit out of as well.

Catherine:

David, I'm just going to say that that one was me. [inaudible 02:45:01] I knew and I've not gotten to know Larry in a way that I would like to. That's not about Larry, that's about me.

David:

`Well, thank you. It makes me less worried now.

Catherine:

I wouldn't. You could not worry about that.

David:

Okay. All right.

David:

Then suggest agenda items for future FMA and committee meetings. So certainly we're going to address that issue with the special topics. I think I'm open. I try to have a lot of communication with you. But I talk to every one of you in between meetings. I really do think that I'm open to items that need to be put on the agenda. The draft of special topics is going to come out a couple of weeks. It's a draft or a reason it's to get your input. You're adding onto it and other items that you want. So hopefully that will address this issue when you get to see that and can add on items that you think should be addressed. That's what I wanted to get across at today's meeting. I'd like to hear what you folks have to say. If there's any elaboration on the survey and items within it, please.

David:

Where's that cricket sound? All right. Well.

Catherine:

I thought it was a good exercise. It made me think about I was probably more critical of myself than anybody. I'm new I'm still learning. Trying to get up to speed as quickly as possible. But I thought it was great, good exercise.

David:

I can absolutely empathize with your role because I knew it my role as well. So I think we're both learning in that regard. And that's good. It keeps us on our toes and keeps us fresh and good with that. So thank you for your comments. Others? Or are you just ready to move on?

David:

All right. Sensing we're ready to move on. Then we'll go to the next item on the agenda of our Strategic Planning Committee. Which is to be an executive session because we're going to talk about succession planning efforts. We're going to get Jeanine to give us a report on that. So I would ask because we are going to discuss personnel. If we could have this, an executive session inviting the members, plus the executive team to be part of this.

David:

Is there a second? [Crosstalk 02:47:49] All those in favor signify by saying I. [crosstalk 02:47:52] .

[EXECUTIVE SESSION BEGINS AT 3:03 P.M.]

David:

Alright. We are in and I'll ask sure the strategic planning committee and reconstitute as the authority. Catherine's big smile means you're moving that motion, who would like to second that, [crosstalk 02:48:10]. All those in favor, adjourning and meeting again, as the authority say I [crosstalk 02:48:17] .

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE ADJOURNS AT 3:35 P.M.]