Stephen:

Good evening, everybody. I'd like to call the December Consumer Affairs Committee to order, and it is... We're trying to read the time at the bottom here, 5:34. First up is our safety moment. Good job, Jennifer, on this. This is a perfect example of solving one problem and creating another. So just some great hints here on how not to do that as you take care of one thing. So everybody should take a look at that.

Stephen:

Second on the agenda is approval of our minutes of the November meeting. Do I have a motion?

Tony:

Oh, moved.

Stephen:

Thank you, Tony. Second. Do I have a second?

Tony:

You want me to second it too, Steve?

Mark:

Second.

Stephen:

Thanks, Mark. Are there any omissions, corrections, additions? Hearing none. All those in favor?

Tony:

Aye.

Stephen:

Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Okay. The minutes passed. Our presentation today is Prem and his staff, Dana and Laura Oran talk about customer care improvements and the CIS timeline. So I'll turn it over to them.

Prem:

Thank you. Jennifer, you would like to present the screen? We actually...

Jennifer:

Can you see the screen?

Prem:

Hold on one second. Oh yeah, yeah. Sorry. I see it now. Perfect. Yeah.

Jennifer:

Is that better?

Prem:

That's better.

Jennifer:

Okay. Thank you.

Prem:

Thank you.

Tony:

Hey Jennifer, I have a pro... On my screen something came up. Trying to get rid of. Go ahead please.

Prem:

Okay, perfect. So for today's agenda, we wanted to cover a couple things again, as you're aware we are looking to put some of the customer care improvements, product initiatives. So today's agenda, if you go to the next slide. And so today's agenda is very focused on customer improvements. We'll be talking a little bit about most recent update that we had put in place. After we installed AMI meters, we actually had started reaping some of the benefits on continuous consumption process, helping the customers. So Laura is going to cover that along with the customer escalation dashboard. And then now we have Dana here. We'll be talking a little bit about some of the critical customer initiatives that are happening as we speak. She'll also touch upon a little bit on RFP update. I know there's an RPB application planned for next March.

Prem:

So we are trying to prep up for all the upfront work that's happening for that as well. So Dana's going to cover a little bit of that. That's for today's agenda. And please stop us if you have any questions as we go through. We'll try to keep it at a high level. So as we go through the details, if you have any questions, you can ask us. So can we go to the next slide?

Prem:

So very high level, as you know, one of our strategic objectives or goals is about internal business process improvements. So just to set the stage, so we have kind of categorized this in two sections, one, improving the customer experience. The other half is really looking at our employee experience. So if

you think about how we're improving our customer as well as employee experience, we track these process improvements and as part of our dashboard.

Prem:

So today's topic while we are not going into employee experience, I thought it's better to share what's also happening on that side, but our focus today will be mostly on customer experience. Laura's going to cover those two next topics on to alerts that we have put in place and the dashboard itself. I would want to also mention that as part of experience, if you remember, we talked about a little bit on transactional surveys. So just for this team to be aware, as you go through some of the annual surveys that we do for like in the today's wall, we do annual surveys. So we go through some of the customer app stories. We look at some of the results from there, but we are also trying to launch a transactional survey sometime in February.

Prem:

So what that means is every time a customer reaches out to us for some service, we will be launching a transactional survey where we can capture the moment-

Stephen:

Prem, you're going in and out.

Prem:

Oh, really? How is it? Is it better now?

Stephen:

Yes.

Laura:

Yes.

Prem:

I need to stay close to the laptop, I guess. So what I was trying to say in summary is that transactional survey basically is to really record a customer experience as it happens. So when a customer is reaching out to us for, let's say, a property closing process or a billing question, et cetera. So we are also going to look to launch a transactional survey, helped by Grade Blue. Grade Blue does it for many other companies in our territory, like for example, Aquarion is one of them and there are other companies they actually also provide service to. So we are looking to collect that so we can improve our experience with our customer.

Prem:

So, Laura's going to touch a few of these critical ones that we are looking to put in play. A couple of other things, as you know, you probably had seen in the water cooler, water lines, we've been talking a little bit about our flushing innovations, the NoDes process as you will, this is to really kind of conserve water.

Prem:

As you know, when we do flushing, a lot of water actually is used as part of the process. So this is a new process where you roll the truck in and you actually use very less water in terms of flushing process itself. So we have learned it from other, I would say other states that have actually put this in place. So we tested this out and it worked out pretty well. And as part of our budget next year, we are looking to include one of these vehicles. So it's been working out pretty well. So there are couple other things that we are actually trying to put in play as well, but I would hand it over to Laura to talk a little bit about our customer consumption, our continuous consumption, also our customer escalation network. So Laura, if you could.

Stephen:

Prem, can I ask you about the flushing?

Prem:

Yeah, sure. Yeah.

Stephen:

Did you mention using a truck so that you could sort of use the same water again in like a continuous kind of cycle?

Prem:

That's right. Yeah. That's exactly what it is. And it's more innovative, Steve, where not a traditional approach, this is more newer, modern approach. And this is a proven one. It's not that we are doing it. We are not the first one to do it. There are other companies that actually have employed like New Jersey have I know couple companies that are actually put in place. So we are trying to learn from them and we are trying to improve our process here. So it's pretty efficient. Maybe one of the times we do it, you guys can get out and see how this really happens. It's pretty cool.

Stephen:

Yeah, it'd be great. So I would imagine the other advantage is that you're not putting dirty waters through the line. Not that it's bad, but when you flush, you get all the sediment runs that's deposited on the inside of the pipe. So you can probably collect that. And when you do restart the line, you'll have clean water in there. Is that the case?

Prem:

That's right. That's exactly right. And that's how it actually works. Looks like you could actually be the spokesperson. So that's exactly how the system works. And again, there's also another, again, this is on the AMI side, we are looking at doing a small prototype or remote shots. Again, the idea is to be able to reach to remote places. Sometimes some of our meters are in remote location. So we are trying to do a prototype on that.

Prem:

I wouldn't comment anything. We are looking at our budgets and everything, but the idea is that if the prototype is good, we are trying to use couple meters to do a test. But if that works, then we know the functionality works. Again, this is a proven model out in other... I would say other states they have tried this, but in our case, I think we have not tried this before. So now we try to do some prototyping. If that works, then we have an option in the future. We'll go through all the application, all that regs if we get to that point, but at least we know it works. So there's some prototyping happening as well for that.

Prem:

So, but again, today's focus is going to be the top two topics on customer experience. So as we go through, you could ask any questions. So why don't we roll with Laura first Laura, you want to cover the next.

Laura:

Yes. All right. Good afternoon everyone. As we're closing our year and our holidays, I just want to say, everybody, please let's stay safe. Two people on this call already I hear not feeling so well. So I do hope that you recover soon and that our families continue to use caution and be safe over the holiday season. The topic that I have to cover today is continuous consumption notification update. And it's interesting. We are using this. If you recall, the board did approve our rules and regs to include the fact that this is a courtesy to our customers. So far, 1070 letters have been generated since October.

Laura:

And we have also launched some calls. And it was most interesting, last week I got an email from Yale and Yale is one of the customers that did receive notification, also received one of the emails. And one of the things that we learned was where you have a customer that has multiple properties. They don't know which properties. So Yale was one of those. And they didn't know who it was. We had worked with our technical person to try to get that on the notification, but we're not able to do that.

Laura:

But fortunately, when the notification goes out, it requires that the customer reach out to us. So we would have to reach out, troubleshoot with the customer, advise them what's going on. And in doing that, the agents are able to determine which account. So it's very easy for us to do that. So when she reached out, this is Yale, to ask which property, we were able to then respond very quickly via email in that case to say, it's this property. And they would therefore be able to contact us specifically on that account. So it's proven very effective. The staff is embracing it. They became knowledgeable, it was not a large learning curve. Our customers are responding to it. And we're able to address some of this usage that used to be impacting customers for as long as a 90-day period. So we're catching it in a very short period of time. So I think it's a very good process improvement for our WA.

Stephen:

Laura, did you say you had a thousand of these instances?

Laura:

A thousand, yeah. A thousand letters we generated since October.

Stephen:

Wow. For continuous consumption and...

Laura:

Correct, yeah.

Prem:

And I think of that, Steve, we also look at the patent. So when a customer gets a letter, et cetera, they address it. And then we have seen a dip in terms of those numbers going down, which tells us that it's working, which means now the customers are taking care of... there's an issue on their side, et cetera, where we don't see the same customer coming back on, because we monitor this and we are trying to help the customer. Again, it's a courtesy, right?

Stephen:

Yeah.

Prem:

So it is effect it's working. So one way we're conserving water, another way, other side, we're also trying to help the customer, so they don't end up getting some bills, big bills.

Stephen:

Yeah. It's amazing. If this had to be go on before at this kind of level and we haven't seen the complaints in consumer affairs that sort of matches the numbers here.

Prem:

Yep, exactly. It was working, whatever we did is working.

Laura:

It is working.

Rich:

And just so I'm aware of when we say continuous consumption, the trigger is that it falls out of some algorithm of normal use.

Laura:

Correct. It's like one CF continuous consumptions like 72 hours. So it has to be quite a bit of time.

Dana:

Just for clarity, that the algorithm looks at consumption never going to zero over that duration. So if you think of a typical home or something, you're typically going to go to bed, you should at least have a couple hours in there where there's no water usage at all. And so it looks for those anomalies over time and that's how we identify those customers.

Rich:

That makes sense. Thank you.

Stephen:

So it can vary. It's not one thing. It's a function of that account.

Dana:

Yes. It's specifically by meter.

Prem:

So you can go to the next one, I guess, if there's no question on this one.

Laura:

What you're looking at here is we have, and again, Louis Damico is an employee that we have on staff, over 25 years' experience at RWA in the utility business. Some of you have interacted with her as a result of complaint, for example. And so what we were asked to do was to gather more information around what kinds of complaints are we getting. Now she's in a role that she's dedicated to the customer experience. And in her role, she's dealing with escalations. And that would be escalations to the board, senior management and so forth. So we're trying to track, "Okay, what is going on in regards to our customers? Why are they reaching out to us? What can we do better?"

Laura:

And so what you're looking at in front of you is the dashboard that we've created that is tracking the number of escalations. The escalations will be tracked by the type and the source. Escalations are tracked by the status and the average numbers to resolve. And we have like a internal goal. Again, this is baseline we're learning. And about five business days, it would take on average to resolve an escalated complaint that requires reaching out to other departments and utilizing different tools. So this is not... By the time it reaches this level, it becomes a little bit more complex. And so that is a goal that we've set for ourselves.

Laura:

The dashboard would help us better understand volumes and why, and may also help identify training needs. Sometimes we have escalations and it's really about how the staff perhaps was equipped to handle that tool. So it's an opportunity to look over our training documentation, maybe do some refreshers and the like. So we have a down to total escalations for a fiscal period. So we just recently started. How many there are, whether they're still open or closed. You'll see whether they went to OCA or the board, the leadership customer care itself or a town official. So those are the ones that are being tracked by Louise. And I have to get this little box out of my way. I'm sorry. I can't see it.

Laura:

And here you'll notice on the side is our average tracking. Our goal is five days. We're tracking at 5.3 days right now. So we're still doing relatively well, again, pretty new. We are tracking how many of these escalations have we closed so far this year. And so again, we are closing most of them and how many

remain open for the period. So that's the main dashboard. And then if we wanted to know, reporting to the board, for example, and we wanted to share the town, so we've broken it down so that we can speak to how many escalations have we had in a particular town Ansonia, New Haven and so forth. And of course some of our towns are... Milford would have more. Something changing on your side?

Rich:

Yeah.

Laura:

I'm sorry. My screen changed.

Prem:

I think...

Jennifer:

That was me. Sorry.

Laura:

Okay. So it gives us information about the towns and you'll see that not all the towns have complaints, but you would expect more coming in from perhaps New Haven and Milford and things like that. It also gives us some categories after the type billing and collections. For example, generally the drivers, we just started disconnecting accounts at the end of October, if you recall, we had not been disconnecting for non-payment for quite a bit of time. So the minute we start rolling trucks, we start getting people struggling to pay their bills and so forth. And so there are escalations, regardless of our flexibility, our customers are challenged and they would seek to speak to someone higher.

Laura:

Not too much, but that is again, we would expect to see a trend up before we start coming back down. And that is a result of our actually disconnecting accounts from non payment.

Prem:

I think one of the critical things I would say is if you remember we actually launched our campaign last year, where we have had our public relations team, government affairs team members kind of mapped to our individual RPB members. So they are talking to them and having conversations. So this is kind of an enhancement on top of it. So now they have additional data, they can actually talk to our members and really kind of be our advocate and also be the transparent partner here to make sure that we talk about if there are any escalations. And I know Laura mentioned about average 5.3 days, but some escalations as you know are probably simple that you could just close it out in small escalation versus some could take a longer duration where if this work on the field side, things might take longer, but this is just an average.

Prem:

But all in all, as you see, the numbers are all the main ones are all closed out and probably handful, maybe a couple of them left for us to kind of...

Rich:

You're fading in and out again, Prem.

Prem:

Oh, okay. So I don't know what's going on.

Laura:

And I just wanted to add it just one final point is if at any point we wanted to drill down on the data, it's very easy to drill down from the dashboard and provide details if it was to be requested. So we have behind the dashboard is all the details we'd like related to any complaint, whether it be an email, whether it be a spreadsheet, whether it be the bills themselves. So anything that's related to the dispute and the activity to resolve that dispute is underlying this data.

Rich:

Laura, could you walk me through just an example of an escalation. We have city, it looks like town complaints and we have consumer residential complaints. Can you give me like a walkthrough of a typical escalation? Does the client escalate or do we escalate? [inaudible 00:20:36] complainant have to agree it's closed. So could you just kind of give me an idea of what an escalation looks like? How does the consumer know that they can escalate and how to escalate?

Laura:

So when a customer calls into the call center, their first level to help resolve a matter is the CSR. The CSRs are trained to resolve matters. But then it comes to the point that they don't agree. They don't agree with the bill, for example. They don't agree that they could have used that much water and they'll ask for an escalation. So the next level escalation is to the senior. It's a more seasoned rep. For example, there are two of them and the seniors would help, again, to get more information, to see if they have... Because they have more time off the phone. That's the other difference. So they have the time to call the customer back, provide more information.

Laura:

At the end of that conversation, if that is still that the customer is not happy, again, or satisfied, that call will now go to Louise. And the seniors do report into the manager of the customer experience. So now there's, again, more time to go ahead into it, whether we have to reach out to field service, field ops, there's maths, sometimes it's beyond just the bill, but those are the steps. So is it out communicating anywhere else? I don't think so, but in the first conversation point of contact with our call center, they would fully explain that these are the steps.

Laura:

Now, when it's closed, it's closed in regards to we've taken all the steps, we've agreed, we've done an adjustment, for example, we've done a payment plan, for example. We might have gone longer terms

on a payment plan. We may have to consider a late payment charges and fees. For example, we may waive things. So when we get to that point, that item is closed.

Rich:

Okay. A lot of times they call it tier three, tier two, tier one. You come into tier three and you escalate to tier two and then tier one. So we're not using those terms, but the concept's the same.

Laura:

Correct.

Stephen:

Laura, this is Steve. I have a question. Every call gets put into the data for the escalation dashboard, correct?

Laura:

Not every call. This is specific to all our calls are recorded, but the only thing that's tracked in this dashboard are those calls that are escalated to the level of the manager of customer experience, or it's something that may go to Larry, for example, the board. These are the ones that attract.

Stephen:

How many steps before you get to this dashboard? I mean, is it just, if it doesn't get solved immediately, it goes here or are there two steps? I mean, it would be nice to know how many you resolved right off too.

Laura:

Well, many are resolved right off by the staff, meaning they never make it to escalation.

Stephen:

That's an important metric, I think in terms of what else goes to escalation.

Prem:

Yeah. I think what you're referring, Steve, is there are two things. One is customer inquiries or questions they may have sitting on escalation where we do have a separate metrics we track on, for example, average speed of answer and inquiries that come in in terms of closure, like Laura said, we record everything. So those are there. This is more around where it's not just a question, but they have a problem with the bill and they're like, we don't want to pay the bill, for example. And then it goes through that kind of cycle, and now like Laura said, it goes to the senior and then to the customer experience manager, and most likely, 99% of the time the issue gets resolved right there.

Prem:

But there could be a scenario where it's a large customer commercial or something. It may be a bigger bill, they're asking for leak adjustment, et cetera. So then it goes to Laura. So there's the whole channel

of escalations. And then it comes to myself, and most likely, it get resolved there. Rarely that anything goes to Larry for example. So, that's the idea. So we have a whole process behind it to make sure we track these things. And as a part of a governance, I sit with Laura and rest of the team every week. Every Friday we go through everything to make sure that that's one of the reasons why you haven't heard a lot of escalation coming through for the past many, many months. So while we resolve it and make sure that everything is taken care of.

Stephen:

So this dashboard is after the senior person has not resolved it.

Laura:

This dashboard is coming to the manager, that's right, of the customer experience. And also, what we're learning recently, we have customers that sometimes go directly, for example, to Larry. Is Larry still on the call?

Prem:

Yep.

Laura:

So a lot of people do take that route. They go directly to the president of a company. They either call, they leave messages and so forth. So we've asked that those calls be directed back to Louise. So that will be tracked and handled as a focused approach. But if otherwise we lose time and trying to resolve it. So that again, we just realized that recently. So customer of a customer too will go that route. And we said, "Okay, Larry, or his administrative assistant, can you redirect them to us? And we'll be sure to resolve the matter."

Tony:

Hey, Steve.

Stephen:

Yeah, go ahead, Mark.

Mark:

We just had a meeting with Lori Vitagliano and our people in top echelon here in Woodbridge, where she comes and her main thing was just that, unless I misunderstood it, but her main thing was that monthly billing started and that you wanted the town to be aware that monthly billing started. And then the sprinklers, the increased sprinkler billing is starting too often monthly, I believe, but she didn't mention this. And I brought this up because I knew this was coming. I didn't know it was in progress already. And she didn't mention this at all. And I think that we have those representatives that go to the three towns. I mean, there's four or five representatives... I meant three or four towns. They should have brought this, bring this up to the towns so that the First Selectmen or Mayors know about this procedure too. I think it's very interesting that the town should know about. My suggestion. I think it's something that should be done.

Prem:

That's a great suggestion, Mark. And to be honest, I think that's where we are trying to connect this with everything else that you said, in terms of talking to the town. I acknowledge what you're saying. So we will do that. That's the idea. So we are talking now-

Mark:

I forgot what that Lori's called now, when she talks to the towns, I forgot what her...

Prem:

That's the public relations campaign we did.

Mark:

That should have come up when we had our meeting. This did not come up. I brought it up. Not knowing yet that we were already in progress.

Laura:

Yep. No, I think this is going to be there in the next agenda. So, but that's a great suggestion. That's exactly what we're trying to do. So we are making sure that everybody's aware. So it's helpful for everyone. As a matter of fact, Jeff might kind of also recollect. This is also providing a lot of transparency where we went ahead and shared. Like some of the customers are sometimes not being really fair because they come back on escalation and it takes a lot of our employees time. And sometimes I get involved, even Larry gets involved. So we do a full due diligence in some of the escalations. And we are also being transparent to share with Lou and Jeff.

Laura:

There was one more recently we shared just to be transparent about what's going on and we are trying our best to make sure we are having every customer satisfied. So we are really trying hard. So that's the idea. And more we go into the future, this is going to be much more visible and it's going to impact in terms of better customer experience. That's the whole idea here.

Mark:

Well, I think it's also very important that the topics around the towns know about this, that it's available to residents at the town and to businesses because our town had a couple problems and this would've solved them. That's for sure. Just wanted to let you know.

Naomi:

Laura.

Laura:

Yes.

Naomi:

I have a question. In that part that's called other what could possibly be in that section?

Laura:

It would be something, I don't know. Let me see. I have collections, water suit. Not sure what would fall out of these other broad categories.

Prem:

So I think, Naomi, I think the-

Laura:

Wait, I'm sorry. I think it's something like you know when we do work for, and I'll get back to see exactly which ones fall into this category, Naomi, I don't know the answer to it, but I do know that there was a situation where a customer was not satisfied with field work that was done by RWA. So let's say we did something and he had just seated the lawn or done something to his lawn, and then, so it became a matter of what is it, his lawn keeping and what we had to do. I believe that's the one that fell into other, but let me get back to you on that. I do just want to be sure.

Naomi:

Okay. And the second part of my question is here in the city of New Haven, we have lots of businesses that have multiple properties. And I heard that you mentioned that the addresses, what did not go out on the letter for the multiple properties.

Laura:

Right. The premises were not listed on the letters. Correct.

Naomi:

Now, have you received a lot of calls about that from anybody besides is now... Are you talking the university or are you talking the hospital?

Laura:

I was talking, must have been the university. Her name is Catherine. I forget her name. I forget which account, but it was a Yale account that called, but have we gotten a lot of calls? Yes. Immediately. I'll have you know that when the letters went out, we were getting falls and that's what took us right away back to our data. MeterSense data. Can we get this information on the letters and so forth? So we had an analyst working with Louise to see, we need to give this information to the staff. So the staff wasn't able to resolve it quickly either because it wasn't in the database that they use. So what we were able to do was get them the information at their desktop, meaning the staff, the CSRs have the information and are ready to serve the customers.

Laura:

So that didn't happen on day one. That happened been as a result of the letters going out, we realized that that was a critical piece of information. However, we also could not get that on the letter. So we

have markers within MeterSense that provide them the tools that they need, meaning the staff is able to have the conversations today.

Prem:

Thank you. Great questions. Jennifer, you want to go to the next slide, essence of time? Okay. So let's transition to Dana. Dana, would you like to give a little bit of an update on the different initiatives and then out of-

Dana:

I'd love to. Yeah, thanks for having me, great to see everybody again. So covering some of our current initiatives, we have the commercial business launch that went live in our system just a couple weeks ago at the end of November. We are very excited to be able to with what this solution offers, which is the ability to add new products and services into our offerings for customers. So that's how we are able to get the well safe products out and sold to our customers. We're still learning some of those processes and what means to be selling these types of products to new areas of the state. But we're very excited about the interest that we've already gotten, over 20 customers have already expressed interest in purchasing the well safe products.

Dana:

And really that work that the team has done to sort of augment the SAP system to enable some of this new billing functionality has been really helpful in enabling those capabilities, new pricing, bundles, discounts, and certainly a more easy way to launch new types of products and services as we begin to expand those offerings. We are also working on the customer portal and mobile app that is actually scheduled to do a cut over tomorrow night. This is a new web-based... It's both web based. So you can access it from ourwater.com as well as an actual apple location that you will be able to download, say, from the App Store, or the Google Store to download an app onto your phone really is bringing a new way of doing some self-service to our customers.

Dana:

So we have been offering e-billing and e-payment for many years. We've also in the last few years introduced a consumption portal to our customers through WaterWatch as part of the AMI project. One of the really great things that this new portal does is it brings a single sign on approach to all of that functionality.

Dana:

So we'll have the ability to have one username, one password. Makes it very simple for the customer to be able to access their information. And through the portal, we'll be able to see their billing history, request paperless electronic billing, make payments against their account, see their payment history, do some documents upload and sharing. So if we need to get, for instance, a marriage certificate to validate a change of name on an account, we can use the portal to communicate with that customer and get the relevant documents.

Dana:

We also kind of offer for them, again, that single sign on out to the WaterWatch portal so that they can see their consumption data and kind of just really is a way to help reduce some of the inbound call volume to the call center, as well as for those customers who are comfortable and leaning towards those self-service electronic options gives them that new mechanism. This doesn't change anything about the types of services or products offered by the contact center.

Dana:

It just really kind of giving customers an option to kind of go where they live. Many folks are sitting, if they're anything like me, sitting on their phone in the evenings, if they wanted to do a quick check on their bill, even submit questions, they can do that online as well and make basic service requests.

Dana:

So we're really excited about that launch. With monthly billing, so this is our conversion from quarterly to monthly billing. As I believe Mark, you had mentioned, we have been out at the towns with the communications team sharing that transition and letting the towns be aware that that is happening. We've done a lot of communications with our customers, both in the inserts and the water lines inserts on their bills, as well as an additional insert that will be coming in the first monthly bill that they'll receive in January.

Dana:

That transition is something that will help both the customers in terms of making their bills more manageable. So instead of a whole quarter, it's just a month. Puts us in line with their budgeting, from a timing perspective, with their other bills and utilities. And we're really kind of hopeful that this will also help change the perspective of the water bill a little bit, that people can understand relative to their cable, relative to their phone bill, that water is a very affordable and necessary service and that that will help with our collection and timeliness of bill payment as well.

Naomi:

I have a question for Dana.

Dana:

Yes.

Naomi:

Dana, when customers are calling into the water company, are they hearing all this new stuff that's coming about?

Dana:

I guess I'll defer to Laura to confirm, but I think unless the customer has a question that would be specifically related to how some of these self-service options might come into play, or if they're asking about leaks and how they might be able to protect their home. I don't think it's proactively offered unless it's relevant to the situation.

Naomi:

Because I know in most companies that are trying to launch something or promote it, when you're placed on hold for a couple of minutes, that's the first thing you hear, everything that they're offering, whether you want to hear it or not.

Dana:

And actually thank you for framing that a little differently, Naomi, thank you. Actually, our IVR does do that. I was thinking about the CSR conversation, but yes, our IVR does talk about our pipe safe programs and I believe it still might be the first option in our IVR menu when we're trying to, again, make that an option awareness for customers as well.

Naomi:

Thank you.

Dana:

Yep.

Prem:

The essence of time, let's just keep moving. I mean you spend a lot of time here, great discussion, but you need to keep moving.

Dana:

So the next topic is the CIS RFP. Again, we've been talking about this for quite a while now and again, talking about the need for our technology and some of the obsolescence that we're facing in terms of some of the capabilities for the organization. We have gone to market with the RFP. We did that at the end of September. That means that we put forward all of our requirements out to the vendor community and we did receive a great response. We were actually quite happy with the response we got from vendors. We completed some of the discovery sessions, which is essentially an opportunity for those vendors to come and speak with the RWA and ask questions about the types of information we had in the RFP, clarify any types of information that they might need in order to prepare their proposal.

Dana:

And on November 4th was the final response date. And at that time we got 11 vendor response. Again, it represented the gamut of the industry from standalone systems, from companies like Cayenta or Itineris as well as your typical as you would expect SAP and Oracle solutions as well. So we really did receive quite a wide range. The selection team evaluated those proposals and using an evaluation matrix and criteria developed with AAC Utility Partners, the vendor we've been working with through this process. We were able to shortlist those vendors and we sent those notifications last week to let those shortlisted vendors know that we're interested in continuing discussions with them.

Dana:

Our next steps with those shortlisted vendors will be scripted demo sessions in January. So the idea behind those demos is not sort of the dog and pony show that you might expect during a sales

presentation, but the various areas of the organization, including finance, customer care technology, have all developed very scripted tasks that we are asking these vendors to perform.

Dana:

So we're going to ask them, how do you do a property closing, show us how you do a cancel, rebuild. What does it look like to create new rates and structures in your solution? So we're really trying to put each of these vendors through their paces and understand what a day in the life of working with their solution will be. We're going to focus also significantly on their implementation plans and how they anticipate sort of walking the organization through standing the system up as well as their technology components. There's a whole half a day with our security, cyber security and technical folks focus just on those aspects of the system.

Dana:

So it's both business functional and technical in terms of how we're going to be evaluating this shortlisted group of vendors. And I don't know, we're really excited. It feels a little daunting. The team did a ton of work between November 4th and again, just last week, evaluating those and coming to that shortlist.

Dana:

We are expecting actually based on the demo schedules that we've confirmed with the vendors, our RPB application is actually anticipated for March. That was a recent change based on the four shortlisted vendors and the demo schedules that we were able to secure. We shifted that application out to March.

Prem:

I mean, just wanted to add a couple things. Thank you, Dana. That was great. And we also wanted to make sure that there's a great due diligence and transparency in the process. So we are actually... I've asked Dana to see if we can... I mean, you could imagine, each one of these vendor demos are like three days long. So we can't... Especially a core team is going through that, but not for executive teams. So Dana's also working on, and I would say in our session as an executive summary navigation, et cetera. So the idea is that again, this is open for discussion, I would like to extend that kind of invitation, if you will, as optional where if any members were interested, can also participate for that our sessions so we get a look and feel.

Prem:

Again, still get to kind of finalize, but the idea is that we would like to address any question that may come, et cetera, but it's going to be a process we want to put in place where everybody feels more comfortable, inclusive, as we go through the process. So that's the idea.

Dana:

Yeah, as Prem said, we're basically looking at about the first hour-ish, maybe just over where each vendor on the very first day. So the first hour of the first day will be an opportunity for them to introduce themselves, give us a high level overview and sort of show us the navigation, why their solution is great. That's their hour for their dog and pony show. But we really are interested as Prem

said, in that transparency and making you guys aware and an opportunity to participate and see the different types of solutions that are out there as we're trying to navigate that selection process.

Rich:

One question, did they modify a core tool to meet your requirements, or are they basically bringing in their off the shelf solution and demonstrating that?

Dana:

So I think it's going to be a little bit of a hybrid. I think I'm going to answer it that way, Rich, because what will happen is because we've been very specific in the demo scripting, and they do get that ahead of time. Each vendor will get the demo scripts in advance. So they have the same amount of time to prepare. And essentially, some things will ask them to do, like we will expect them to have set up a particular rate for us in advance and then show us how that works. We're also going to ask them how to create a rate. So they're going to actually show us how to do that live and on the fly. So their solution.

Dana:

So I would expect that most will have some level of custom configuration, I'm not even going to use the word customization, configuration to address the different types of things that we would need. How are they solving our problems? That's really what we're asking them. So show us how you're going to establish the non-core billing and bundling functionality. That's something we've just been introducing. We want to make sure that our new solution can continue to support that. So they should come in with some level of pre-configured suggestions for how they would anticipate addressing the scenarios in the demos, as well as reflecting some of those business capabilities, functional requirements that we expected from the RFP.

Rich:

Laura, do we have our own backend or is this a front end tool? And is it feeding a backend database that exists or are we replacing the whole infrastructure?

Dana:

The idea is to replace the whole infrastructure. So the vendors who made this shortlist include two SAP implementers and two, what I'll call standalone solutions. In either case, even the SAP implementation, it is what they would consider really a green field. It's essentially a start over on the HANA platforms and using some of those new tools. So in either any of these vendors would be a replacement of our current CIS.

Rich:

One last question. Are we open to re-engineering or re-imagining our processes based upon what these vendors bring in or do they have to basically build around our existing process?

Prem:

Can I answer that question because this is very critical, Rich? I know where you're going with this. We customize hell out of our system. So when we did it 12 years ago, we did a lot of customization, et

cetera. So what direction is that? If it works for everybody, why not it work for us? So standardization and not much of customization. So all the vendors were given that initial input. So we are trying to standardize the solution, industry best practice. What is going to be used as best practice? And when they come in, like Dana said, it's not customization, it's more preconfigured. So we are really looking at making sure that the amount of effort and the resource is to manage that is very minimal.

Prem:

So that's the whole idea there. So again, we'll go through a due diligence process and we'll make sure we pick the best solution. And as you could imagine, we are not biased in any way, so that's why we open it for everybody, all the solutions out there. So that's the idea there. And one thing I also wanted to mention, I know Dana touched up on all these initiatives and projects. All of those solutions that we are trying to put in play, the customer portal, and we are talking about monthly billing, all of those solutions are just using our existing technology. So there is zero O&M cost increase. There is no O&M cost increase. We are using everything as it is. So I think the idea is to really keep us moving forward and use the best industry practice. That's what we're trying to do.

Stephen:

So Dana or Prem, is there more to what you were presenting?

Dana:

That's the end of the slides I think that we had for you today. If there's any other questions, certainly we can answer them or not, Larry.

Prem:

Hey, Steve. This is Prem, I apologize. I had to pick up my son.

Stephen:

Oh, okay.

Prem:

Steve, I'm actually on the car, so I apologize I had to pick up my son, I'm not on video.

Tony:

Not a problem. That's okay. Thank you.

Mark:

You missed the best part.

Laura:

I just had a quick thing for Naomi. Naomi, you had asked a question about what that other might be. So I had to swing all it to the other side, and it was the town of North Haven. And it was a situation having to do with RWA's job regarding construction on the field op side. And then the company did some

remediation to satisfy the customer and it wasn't his lawn, it was his driveway. So it's one of those really unique situations, doesn't fall into anything else. So it had to do with work that we did, and then customer is now wanting more. Although he had agreed to... This was it. "If you do the driveway for me I'd be satisfied." And then after the fact, he's claiming some crimp in his sewer line. So there's more to come on that. There's a couple of departments involved on that, but it fell into that other category. It's not billing, it's not collections and so forth.

Naomi:

Okay, thank you.

Tony:

Hey, Steve, with all due respect, can we get the votes in that we need because I have to get to an event. So I was hoping to get this done.

Stephen:

I said to Jennifer today, I think this is going to be a short meeting tonight. So, so much for that appraisal. I think Dana, Laura, and Prem are finished. So we can move on. I want to thank them very much, folks, for the presentation and for answering our questions. The answers were quite good and to the point.

Tony:

Very thorough.

Dana:

Thank you. Thank Wish everybody a happy holidays and I'm sure-

Tony:

Certainly, same to you.

Dana:

Talk to you soon. Thank you. Bye.

Naomi:

Same to you.

Laura:

Bye.

Stephen:

Item four-

Larry:

Everyone, happy holidays.

Tony:

Thank you, Larry.

Stephen:

Thanks Larry.

Larry:

Thank you all.

Stephen:

Item four is the confirmation of dates for the joint meeting. Jennifer, I assume these are all confirmed with the committees. I'll just entertain a comment if anybody wants to say anything about it, but we're going to accept these dates as the dates that we will be doing the reviews. We don't need to vote on this. Do we?

Jennifer:

No. Just if anybody had any problems with it, just to kind of let us know, but it's a regular meeting of the consumer affairs committee anyways.

Stephen:

Okay. And we already have our meeting dates confirmed.

Jennifer:

Yeah.

Stephen:

Our regular meeting dates.

Jennifer:

Okay. Onto item five. Hopefully Jeff has a short sweet report for us tonight.

Jeff:

Actually I have a very long presentation that I want... That 13 years of escalations and giving you about a 20-minute summary of each. No, there's no active escalations with the OCA. The item that Laura mentioned involves a North Haven customer who had some work done and signed a release. I was made aware of it last week. It's not been escalated to me. The customer hasn't contacted me. The RWA is trying to resolve it internally. So as you can tell from my bill, not a heck of a lot going on.

Jeff:

Well, the issue is that the context in which it was raised was a heads up on the timeline for the coming application. We're told it'll be an application in March. So the idea isn't just that everybody have the same information, the idea is that there not be any prejudging one way or the other of the application.

Mark:

Excuse me, for Tony's benefit, can we vote on his bill? So Tony can get out of here.

Tony:

Thank you. Thank you, Mark. It's Christmas. I mean, I got to get to a party.

Mark:

Steve, I have nothing to do. So he wants a meeting to last all night. I have to apologize about that. It's just when I saw those prices, I thought-

Stephen:

You took up half the meeting, Mark.

Mark:

I know.

Stephen:

Onto item six. That's all, Jeff, right?

Jeff:

Yep. That's it.

Stephen:

Approval of Jeff's invoice for November for 850. Do I have a motion?

Naomi:

I say move.

Stephen:

Thanks. And second was?

Together:

Second.

Stephen:

Second. Thank you. Are there any questions on the bill? Hearing none, all those in favor?

Together:

Aye.

Stephen:

Any opposed? That motion carries. Our next regular meeting item seven is going to be Monday, January 24th because of holidays. Item eight is new business. I don't believe we have any and I'll detain a motion to adjourn.

Mark:

I make a motion we adjourn.

Tony:

Happy holidays to everybody. Thank you.

Naomi:

Happy holidays.

Mark:

Happy holiday.

Prem:

Happy holidays, everyone.

Jennifer:

Happy holidays.

Stephen:

Thanks, everyone. Great questions tonight. Good meeting.