

**Representative Policy Board
South Central Connecticut Regional Water District
Consumer Affairs Committee**

**May 16, 2022
Meeting Transcription**

Stephen:

I will call the May meeting of Consumer Affairs Committee to order at 5:31. First item on the agenda is our safety moment, preventing back injuries.

Mark:

You better say we're recording. This meeting's being recorded. I didn't see that yet. Hello?

Jennifer:

It's recording.

Mark:

Yeah, okay.

Tony:

It came across the screen.

Stephen:

The safety moment has to do with posture and lifting, but I can tell you from personal experience, if you don't have good ergonomics when you're sitting all day at the computer, you're going to pay a price for it. So all of these are good hits. Thanks, Jennifer. Item two is the approval of the minutes. Do I have a motion?

Tony:

So moved.

Stephen:

And a second?

Naomi:

I second it.

Stephen:

Thanks, Naomi. I'll give everyone a minute to look at that. I'll ask for any corrections, any omissions. The minutes were basically about our budget hearing and Jeff had reported on one case in progress.

Tony:

That was our three hour meeting.

Stephen:

Three hour meeting?

Tony:

Yes.

Stephen:

If there aren't any comments, I'll call for a vote. All those in favor? Any imposed? Any abstentions? The minutes carry unanimously. Item three is our presentation today. We have Tom Barger, fortunately, and he's going to give us an update on the lead and copper rule. Tom, I'll turn it over to you.

Tom:

Thank you, Steve. I'll just wait for the presentation to be brought up. I want to thank the committee for the time this evening. I appreciate the opportunity to make this presentation. I'm happy to address questions as they come up during the presentation. This is really just going to be kind of an update. It's another high level presentation. As I had mentioned earlier this evening, we're in for a long haul on this particular project, so periodic updates are certainly welcomed. Certainly committee input is appreciated.

Stephen:

Hey, Tom. If I could interrupt for a second, I just want to let the committee know that you did have a meeting with the town of Hamden. I assume you're doing this with other towns as well?

Tom:

That's correct. We'll be meeting with all 15 communities, Steve.

Stephen:

Yeah, to let them know as well and get their help and just keep them informed.

Tom:

Absolutely, yeah. We see the municipalities as very important partners in this effort. All right. So basically the agenda here is in front of you really, just four bulleted items. Just want to give you an update on some of the issues around the lead and copper rule activities to date, what we anticipate is next steps, funding is always obviously an important part of this whole initiative, and then some information around schedule and timeline, which I will ask to be kept flexible as we're not the only horse in this race. Next slide please, Jen. So as you know, we're working with CDM Smith, a national or North American, really, engineering consulting firm with a lot of experience in this particular space of lead and copper rule revisions. I'll just remind the committee that this is a revision of the lead and copper rule, it's a fairly wide and broad federal regulation that has a lot of moving parts, a lot of different focal areas.

Tom:

The one that we're really focused on here and the first one out of the gate, if you will, is specific to service line inventories, and that's really where I'll be spending the majority of this conversation. There

are certainly other components to this, but they kind of fall later in the timeline. We're continuing to talk with CDM Smith. We're at a position now where we're going to be going into the next phase of the contract, it will require an update to the contract. We have had these conversations, we're waiting for a proposal now to come back from CDM Smith for internal review. We anticipate this particular phase of contract may be a 24 month effort because we're kind of getting into the meat and potatoes of things now, and it's going to transition from what I would refer to as the discovery phase of the rule, really, into some field activities. So that's kind of what we're looking at moving forward.

Tom:

We have had the addition of project governance from the leadership team, which is certainly welcome. So we'll be providing some oversight as to what the work group is working on. I'll remind you there's about a dozen or 14 members of the RWA and various facets of the organization that are participating, and as an overarching review type of position, we have the leadership team to provide governance. So again, well welcomed addition to our efforts. We're looking at potential subcontractors in assisting in these following areas, you'll see the five listed there, communications, inventory mapping, field investigation, corrosion control treatment, and then finally the distribution of lead particulate filters. We're currently engaged in the first four of those five various degrees at this point, so all of those four are active. Again, inventory mapping is really the first item out of the gate, and that's where it's spending a lot of time essentially taking all of our historic records and moving those into an electronic format to a point where we can begin to work with those.

Stephen:

Tom, this is Steve.

Tom:

Yes, Steve?

Stephen:

Yeah, how does that differ from what CDM Smith is doing, the other subcontractors?

Tom:

Well, CDM Smith is basically our contractor of record, if you will, so they're helping us kind of form the plan moving forward, the 50,000 foot view, making sure we're paying attention to particular parts. These other subcontractors are going to be providing us with hands-on assistance in the field. So for instance, if we have to do any vacuum excavation in the field to identify service line composition, we're going to be hiring somebody to do some vacuuming ex like Badger Daylighting happens to be one of the contractors that we're talking to. They have the equipment that would be necessary for us to do field vacuum excavation. Communication plan. We're discussing an overall communication plan with WaterPIO. Inventory mapping is being done largely through CDM and their internal processes. We're working with Jacobs Engineering on corrosion control specific to treatment. So they have hands-on/ I'll call them subcontractors on sub-elements of this particular set of revisions.

Stephen:

So they have particular tasks?

Tom:

That's correct. And so they will enter into separate contracts as necessary.

Stephen:

Thank you.

Tom:

You're welcome. Next please. Thank you, Jen. So really, what we've done here, and I've mentioned we're taking a lot of the historic paper records that go back to the early 1890s. We're converting a lot of those paper records to an electronic format in an Excel program so that we can now kind of slice and dice and filter and so forth a lot of those records, really, with the goal to determine how many of these and how many of those we have. So that's been very, very helpful. One of the things obviously that we're looking for is not just where there may be lead lines today, but where there may have been lead lines historically that have since been subsequently replaced, and we also need to know what we don't know, so how many unknowns do we have in our database where either our files are missing as a result of, well, a variety of different things, but more importantly, where are the unknowns on the customer side of the service?

Tom:

Keep in mind that this requirement for inventory includes both the utility side, made to curb and also curb to house, which traditionally we don't have a lot of information on because we don't own it, we really aren't involved with any of that particular plumbing. So this is a lot of the unknowns, the bulk of our unknowns are on the private side. So that's going to obviously require of us plans to access private property, and you can appreciate some of the hesitation on the private property owners and allowing others in their property, especially during times of pandemic. So something you're working through. Yes, Stephen?

Stephen:

Who has the paper records? Do you have most of them or does town have some of these things, or what's the combination there?

Tom:

Yeah, right now what we have, we have quite a few records of our own, Steve. We're reaching out and CDM has reached out to the municipalities to see what paper records they have may have available, dates of construction, dates of installation, those types of things. What we're finding is we may have date records, we don't necessarily have levels of detail specific to service lines, such as diameter composition, that type of thing. At this point, Steve, it's somewhat hit or miss.

Stephen:

Thanks.

Tom:

What we're looking to do ultimately is once we have some of these records converted to an electronic format, it makes the opportunity then to move that data into a mapping piece of software so that we

can look at a geographic placement and see where we may have, again, some gaps. That's going to be particularly important when we begin to talk about environmental justice issues and where some of the prioritization work in the field needs to take place. That's going to be a key element. So we're doing that through our IT department and Prem and his group is heading that up. The next bullet here gets into Rochelle's area where we're looking at finance, and I know that Rochelle has been very active working with the state health department and the DWSRF, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program, looking to see how some of those details are going to be identified. Of course, we have some challenges there for a variety of reasons, but we're continuing to push and gather information.

Tom:

I did speak with Cam Walden. He works for DWSRF in Hartford. He spent the third week in April down in DC on specific meetings associated with this. When I talked to him last week, he said those meetings were productive, however, there still is a lot of unknown information yet to be decided at the federal level. So we're waiting on some of those federal details, and that's important because that's going to define for the monies that are being made available what percentage of those monies are going to be in the form of grant, what monies are going to be available for loan, are there going to be matching fund requirements from the state, et cetera, et cetera. Lot of details and a lot of situational conditional type of information associated with that money, so more to come. So more to come. I know Rochelle has also been working with Connecticut Green Bank and looking at the potential for them being a financing option for property owners.

Tom:

Keep in mind, if service line replacement requirements are made of property owners, the expectation at the federal and state level is the utility is going to be able to provide some type of, quote unquote, assistance, and that's left up to the utilities to determine really what that means. So then we'll have some internal policy decisions to make within the RWA, do we want to get involved with lending of money for private property improvements or would we prefer to see some other options made available? So that's really what Rochelle has and her team have been working on very consistently for the last year, at least, and more work to come.

Tom:

April Capone has been working with both CDM and WaterPIO, another potential subcontractor, on developing the communication plan. As you can appreciate, that's a very important piece of information that we're going to need to be passing around to our consumer so they have an understanding of what we're up against and really what the expectations are and really what is in this for them. We need to be able to solicit their input and partnership. So that is an important plan that is currently under development, and again, will continue to do so. A lot of information needs to be shared. There's a lot of expectations in the regulation around public education, and really, this is an enhancement. If you compare this requirement in communication specifically to the existing lead and copper rule, there are numerous requirements above and beyond current that we're going to have to take into consideration. So it's a, again, very important effort and undertaking by the communications group.

Tom:

Next slide, Jen, please. Thank you. So again, current activities, there's a number of things currently in play around communications, again, development of the plan and what the roadmap going forward is

going to look like. We going to need to make sure that we're sharing this with the care center, our customer service representatives are going to be a very important part of this as well because any of our consumers can pick up the phone and make a phone call. We're going to need to communicate out the same type of information to municipal partners, including health departments, for the same reasons. They're going to be getting those phone calls. This is information we're sharing with the municipal CEOs and health departments' engineering when we have these conversations.

Tom:

We're really starting to take hold of some field investigations. We're looking at prioritization for vacuum excavation. We're looking at schools and daycares. Under the new regulation, schools and daycares are going to be a required point of sampling and evaluation by the utility. We want to take a look at what their current service line materials look like, what they're composed of, how old are they, so we're looking at the schools and daycares within our district. We developed those lists and we're filling out that unknown information at this point in time. We're making appointments with our municipal partners to get into municipal buildings, like the schools, to be able to solicit that type of information, so if in fact those types of facilities need to have service line replacements. These are places obviously where children are congregating and we want to make sure that those are prioritized as they should be.

Tom:

From there, we're also going to look out into the residential sector, again, looking at some information around environmental justice areas where we're going to need to pay attention for a variety of reasons. Certainly those are some of the older areas of our distribution systems dating back into the late 1800s, and in fact, those may be some areas where lead may exist in various forms. Jim Hill and the treatment group are looking at corrosion control treatment. Again, some additional changes as a result of the revisions of regulation around treatment, specifically corrosion control. So we're working with Jacobs Engineering to take a look at what our options as a utility might be, and the timing for those improvements. Like many things, timing is everything and timing is going to be important. We don't necessarily want to pull that trigger sooner than we have to and get ourselves into a situation where we're doing repetitive work. So we're looking to avoid that, but we need to know where we stand. So that is ongoing information that we're gathering.

Tom:

Fourth bullet there, artificial intelligence, specifically looking at machine learning. As we gather information in the field from bullet number two, with some vacuum excavation, we may need to do some in-home or in-business inspections. Once we can start to gather information, and let's say we can do 10% of the unknowns that we have in our system, we can start to build some trends and some patterns, and if we can take that good information and provide it into some software that's been developed by a number of folks, we can get that software to begin to provide us with some predictive analysis.

Tom:

In other words, if we can start to get an idea of where we should be spending our time with the highest degree of confidence, where we may be finding some lead lines or some galvanized iron lines, that points us in a particular direction where we can spend our time and money more efficiently. So this is all about efficiency and effective work. So the machine learning is going to be an integral part of that, but

it's only going to be one facet. We're going to be doing a variety of other things, but this is going to be an important road forward for us because it's going to provide us with guidance.

Tom:

And then really what we have on the fifth bullet here for lead filter distribution and the management of the filtration distribution program, we may be engaging with another subcontractor who has experience in this particular efforts, in-house evaluation at this point in time, but we want to be able to get some of those filters in-house because we can anticipate some supply chain pressure here. Keeping in mind, all water utilities in the United States have to simultaneously comply with this particular regulation, and if everybody is suddenly in the marketplace for lead filters, I can see those becoming a commodity in short supply. So we want to be able to get in front of that particular wave and get some filters in-house, and from the same kind of thought process, the same is true of various fittings and copper pipe. So those are things that Pete Bocciarelli in procurement under Rochelle's guidance are looking to do sooner rather than later. Rather have them in our stock room than be searching the country for them.

Tom:

So next slide please. As we continue to move and try to develop information, field activities, communication plans, corrosion control treatment, our next steps are really posted here, we're looking to intersect with the customers and try to maybe gather some information that they can help us provide. A little bit of skin in the game here never hurts, and if we can reach out to our consumers and they can provide us with some information on their own service line via a questionnaire that CDM will manage and perhaps accompanied by some photographs, maybe we can get some good information coming back in from our consumers. We mentioned vacuum excavation. We're looking to do that out in the field to try to, again, gather information that we can then feed into some machine learning software, which is itemized there in the next dash, pull some information and let's start to learn that what we have out there, let that information guide us moving forward.

Tom:

Ultimately, we're probably going to need to knock on some doors, we're going to need to get into some premises and do some eyeball type of inspection to gather information, we're getting that 10 or 15% to guide us. Communications. Obviously, going forward, when we start to work with the schools and the daycares, obviously we'll have some focused public information, public education materials for those folks so they're not in the dark, they're not asking questions, what's going on. We want to be in front of all of those types of questions. We want to anticipate those types of concerns and challenges that folks may be feeling.

Tom:

Developing sampling protocols is going to be something that I'm going to have to take a look at when we get into compliance sampling. Sampling pool determination, that's a little bit down the road. That's going to be based on inventory data as it's made available, but I'm fairly clear as to what we need to do, and hopefully we'll be able to kind of learn along the way as we're getting closer to the October 2024 compliance date with that. I want to have as much under our belts at that point in time, so there's as few question marks as possible out there. We don't want to be stumbling into the compliance date. We continue to talk with the EPA indirectly, typically, through the American Water Works Association, and directly with Connecticut Department of Public Health to look at funding options and a variety of other

things that need to come out of the federal government, get wheeled through the state government. So we're keeping all of those lines of communication open.

Tom:

We have asked specifically Connecticut Department of Public Health to develop a work group that will include water utilities and the state health department to explore some of the questions and kind of hanging chads, if I can refer to it that way, that we're facing, and we'd rather have these conversations sooner rather than later to be able to provide mutual benefit to both ourselves and our regulator. So ultimately, the consumer is going to be the end of the line, and we want to make sure that we're taking care of our consumers with the information they're going to need to have and have options available to them. That's going to be important. Our IT staff has been very busy working on all of the above because as you can appreciate, all of the information incoming has to be in the electronic format. So they're working with us in various types of software, whether it's independently, in-house development or in concert with a CDM and some of the software programs that they have available, really looking to see which meets our needs most effectively. So doing a lot of work there with Prem's group.

Tom:

Next slide please. Not to belabor the funding issue. Obviously very, very important. I know that we've submitted an original or an initial application to DWSRF for funding. Rochelle's group has since amended that request, updating it with information that's been made available through data gathered thus far. So we do have an application. I know that we're one of the early requesters, which is good. You want to be in the front of this line, not in the back of this line. So that's been good. Looking and following the BIB here, lead service line replacements money's being made available. While \$15 billion is real money, as the kids would say, that's a real number, it is spread over five years. I do want folks to recognize it's a lot of money, but it's only 25% of what the industry had requested. So we're going to do the best we can with what we have, and we're going to continue to go back to the federal government seeking additional monies because I feel as though they're going to be needed and necessary for many utilities to complete the work we've started.

Tom:

Some of the funding, as I mentioned earlier, is going to be somewhat conditional. Part of those conditions are going to be around disadvantaged communities being given priority, and rightly so. One of the things here around funding is what is a disadvantaged community, how is that being defined, who's defining that and is that definition respected by all parties? So that's something that conversations continue. Federal government has left the definition of a disadvantaged community to each of the individual states, so Connecticut has its definition, but then it's also discussing refining that definition a little bit more, and they really haven't talked anymore about that. It's information we need to know because if we're going to be going out to prioritize field activities here in the near future, we need to know geographically where those areas are. We don't want to go too far down a road only to find out we have to reverse course.

Tom:

So that's information that is of importance to us and is one of the primary reasons we're seeking a work group with the Connecticut department of public health. These are the types of questions we need to have answered. Timing of funding versus the project schedule. Sometimes those may be a little bit out

of sync, so I think that's been somewhat challenging as well. EPA had originally said that they're going to have some guidance available on some of these items, including funding in the spring timeframe. Well, that's going to come and go because now they're talking about the summer timeframe. Our project schedule may be waiting on some of the federal and state timing, obviously looking to avoid just spinning wheels here. So we'd like that to continue to move forward.

Tom:

Next slide please. Okay, so really what we're looking at in terms of a schedule, this is a little bit difficult at this point for a timeline. As I mentioned, we're waiting on some decisions to be made by others, both at the federal and state levels. We're doing what we can in the absence of those decisions. There's still work to be done. We're doing that. There's different timelines also embedded within the rule. For instance, the inventory timeline is October 2024. From that inventory, also have to be developed sampling plans and lead service line replacement plans. They're actually due at the same time the inventory is which is going to be kind of a neat trick, but we'll do the best we can. Keeping in mind the inventory doesn't have to be 100% complete in October, you just have to provide the state with something, but of course, because other plans are based on that inventory, obviously, you want to be able to do the best you can and have as complete the program as possible.

Tom:

We are going to have set up a tentative schedule. We're waiting for CDM to contribute some information based on their experience, and then we'll review that tentative schedule in-house with the governance committee and we'll make some decisions around that schedule. I will just ask everyone to have some flexibility in that to the extent we can because a lot of these items tend to be moving targets. We have to be able to pivot when we need to, and we'll need to make some decisions in a timely manner to be able to keep moving forward. October 2024 is not that far down the road, and even with the delays at the federal level, they're not adjusting that timeframe so far. So the clock continues to run. And I think the third bullet I've probably covered already, just we're waiting for some other decisions while we're continuing to do the work that we can. We don't want to run into a situation where we're sitting on our hands waiting for other decisions to be made, so we're trying to push that to the extent that we can't. Is there another slide, Jen? That may be it.

Jennifer:

Nope, that's it.

Tom:

That's it. Okay. Any questions at all? I know I kind of ran through this very quickly and there's a lot of information here. This was at a high-level. There's any number of details in here, but I didn't want to get too far into the weeds because then I can't seem to get myself back out, but I'll certainly entertain any question.

Stephen:

Yeah, this is Steve. Unfortunately, I dropped out in the last slide there, but I was able to get back into the meeting fortunately. Even at a high level, it's obvious how comprehensive this one issue is for the RWA, how much it's going to take to address this over time. Are there questions from members of the committee?

Naomi:

Yes, Tom. I have a couple of questions.

Tom:

Yes, ma'am.

Naomi:

I'm listening to this and I'm just thinking about the funding and things like that, but I'm also looking at the fact of the resident's responsibility. Looking at the current climate we're in, as far as them having to take out loans, they would have to do some portion of this. Is that how I'm reading into this, or?

Tom:

Well, that decision hasn't been made yet, Naomi. I think that's one of the policy questions that's on the table for the leadership team's discussion. Any number of utilities around the country have done this any number of ways, and then in some cases it's been 100% on the resident. I can tell you those programs didn't work real well. Other cases, the utility came and paid for everything. Those programs went a little smoother in terms of getting lead replaced and getting it out at a water distribution system, and then there was a lot of utilities that did anything in that interim space, we're maybe providing some money up to a certain amount or setting up repayment plans, fronting the money and then seeking repayment through billing, any number of ways. So we have that decision in front of us.

Naomi:

Okay. I guess my other concern is the fact that you said you would be going into all the daycares and the schools within the towns, and I know New Haven currently has over 44 schools, and it's just a large area and I'm not sure about the other towns, but that's just something else I was just thinking of, that's all.

Tom:

Yeah. No, absolutely. That's a regulatory requirement of the revisions, all primary schools and daycares within your service territory. It's a big ask, and some of the details have yet to be worked out. I believe we're going to be able to kind of talk to the schools, provide them with sampling materials, provide them with instructions and they can go ahead and do their own sampling. What yet has to be worked out as to whether the RWA's laboratory is going to be doing the analytical work, or we're going to subcontract that out to another approved laboratory. Again, decisions that are going to need to be made based on the bandwidth within the utility that's found to be acceptable or unacceptable. So those are decisions yet to be made. Yeah, that's a big ask.

Mark:

Naomi, you got to hope that all the schools that have been redone in New Haven changed their water lines.

Naomi:

Well, that's what I was hoping.

Mark:

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
May 16, 2022

You got to hope for that.

Tom:

I can tell you, Naomi, that the New Haven health department had sampled all of the schools in New Haven as recently as three or four years ago, and I think you can count on one hand the number of samples that were found to be excessive for lead. So I think the New Haven schools are actually in pretty good shape with respect to this particular issue, for sure.

Naomi:

Okay.

Rochelle:

Naomi, one of the things I'll just add about the funding is it has been made clear to us by DPH that to get grant money, we're going to have to replace both the utility side and the customer side. So that's one of the conditions that Tom was mentioning.

Tom:

Yeah. In order to get the customer side of the service replaced, we can't make it too challenging, right? So I mean, to be able to make that move forward, it's going to have to be in such a manner that it's feasible to folks. So that's going to be an important, obviously, component to keep in mind.

Mark:

Do you have a guess of how many water installations would have to be changed?

Tom:

Yeah, Mark, not at this time. I mean, what we're looking at based on the data so far, and really, we're just limited at this point to what we've taken from the written record, moved it over to the electronic file. We're in the neighborhood of about 35,000 unknowns and the way that the regulation is written, anything that's considered unknown is lead until the utility can prove otherwise. So obviously-

Mark:

Wow.

Tom:

Yeah, it's a big wow. So I mean, we got a lot work to do to be able to cross as many of those off the list as we possibly can because the number of, quote unquote, lead by definition is going to drive other things, and the bigger that number is the more the expectations and the shorter the timeframe. So it's going to behoove us to determine as many of those unknowns as quickly as possible and reduce that number on what's considered to be accurate

Mark:

That unknown figure is not assessment of all right now, that's just where you're at right now?

Tom:

Well, it's an assessment of what we have on file currently for 121,000 total services. It's the best guess we have right now. We expect to fill in a lot of those numbers. Keep in mind, we can begin to make some assumptions. So keep in mind, the Lead Reduction Act was somewhere around 1986. We're hopeful that the State of Connecticut will say, "Any services installed after the Lead Reduction Act, you can safely assume are going to be copper, and then all of those service lines kind of come off your inventory, if you will, because they're all copper and they're not going to be lead. You can fill in those blanks based on assumption."

Mark:

You don't have a figure of the 35,000 how many were done after 1986?

Tom:

I do not. I'm sure we can get that number, Mark. I don't have it off the top of my head. Yeah, what we're looking at here, I'm going to be honest with you, is basically we're looking at services between 1890 and roughly the Second World War, so even if you say 1945. We're looking at that 50 to 55 year period, that's where water conveyance was it could be lead, it may have been iron, it could have been brass, it could have been this, it could have been that. That's where you really have mixed media type of composition of lines. Really after 1950 copper was the standard plumbing material throughout, whether it was utility-installed or whether it was plumber-installed on the private side. So it's that 50 or 55 years that's most concerning to us, and that's where we're going to be focusing the majority of our efforts.

Mark:

Thank you.

Tom:

You're welcome.

Stephen:

Okay. Other questions? Tom, I have a few., I guess the first one is for Rochelle. Back to the finance of this. Is there an opportunity on our for-profit side to be involved in a loan program to residents? Has that been thought about at all?

Rochelle:

If you're talking about it from a cost perspective, there still would be cost involved, and our current commercial side is more on the well side.

Stephen:

Right, but it could be partnered with a finance company to do this.

Rochelle:

Well, I think we are talking to Connecticut Green Bank, and that is one of the options that we're looking at where the financing potentially would be their debt as opposed to ours.

Stephen:

Right. I'm not saying RWA takes on the debt, but there could be an organization where you're bringing them a significant piece of business.

Rochelle:

Oh, yes. Yeah, from that perspective, definitely. We have actually talked about that as a potential target area on the commercial side.

Stephen:

Okay. Thank you, Tom, are we doing anything currently in our daily activities that could add to this and collect some of this information as we go now?

Tom:

Yeah, we absolutely are doing that, Steve, both in our field service group... When those folks go out and they're doing meter work and that type of thing, we are gathering and initial stages of gathering information while folks are in those basement spaces or garage spaces on looking to see what those service lines coming in are. Part of that is going to be a little bit of a learning curve because not all of the folks in field service are able to identify service composition by site. Keep in mind, a lot of those pipes may have been painted, they may be insulated, things like that. We have a little bit of work to do there.

Tom:

We're also collecting that data currently through our cross connections group. Now, those three guys are Connecticut-licensed plumbers, so they can define what those service lines are by site, and we are gathering that information currently, for sure. We're also gathering information from the fields operations group. So any given day, Steve, we're doing service replacements main curb, we're making sure we're gathering data on the tie-in, so where we're tying back into curb valves and that type of thing, we are collecting that type of data while we're out there. So we are taking advantage of those opportunities.

Stephen:

One last question from me. For those of us who aren't in the business, can you tie-in corrosion control treatment to this lead copper that Jim Hill is doing? What's the significance of that?

Tom:

Yeah. No, certainly. Corrosion control treatment, basically what you're doing is you're conditioning your water chemistry so the water is not aggressive to the metallic constituents through which it passes, so copper tubing, iron water mains. Basically, you add a phosphate-based chemistry during the treatment process, which basically I'll say kind of mutes or curbs water's natural aggressive tendencies. So we've been doing that since 1978. We've been using it with a particular phosphate material. We've been very successful. As you know, we've been compliant with the lead and copper rule for 31 years as I knock on wood, but going forward with the revisions, different options are being made available, there's preference to going in certain directions. So what we're looking at is do those options make sense for the RWA at this point in time? So basically, it's a treatment process to mute water chemistry corrosivity tendencies. So that's that in a nutshell.

Stephen:

But if we're moving to, say, one kind of pipe, say, copper, all copper, wouldn't that make that process easier?

Tom:

I don't know if it makes it any easier, it just makes it more consistent in a sense. I mean, when we're looking at corrosion controlled treatment today, Steve, we're not doing so with an eye toward iron or copper based on composition. It's based on the chemistry and the compliance of the current rule with the chemistry being collected. So the proof is in the pudding type of thing. So I don't think it's necessarily going to make it any easier, we'll still have the same compliance framework. It's just the question that the industry is learning from Flint and other places is, is the current phosphate family, if you will, that's currently being utilized by utilities around the country, is that the best option or are there better options, and is it the EPA's preference that we as a utility group go in a different direction? That's really it.

Stephen:

Okay, because actually, this is what makes the lead pipe a problem, right?

Tom:

Yeah, it was the absence of corrosion control that created Flint's problem.

Stephen:

Oh, okay. So to some extent, this is going to be federally regulated too?

Tom:

Well, yeah. Corrosion control will be federally regulated. You will have some options as to how you get there. All roads lead the Rome, right? You have different ways to get back there. EPA is kind of pushing you in one particular direction. So while we don't have to go in that particular direction, we do have the due diligence to determine what's the be best path forward.

Stephen:

Great. Thank you.

Tom:

You're welcome.

Naomi:

I have a question for Laura. Laura, will all the customer service reps be having a script to follow regarding this when this all starts coming down and they'll be able to field their calls out to other people in cases, any difficult questions?

Laura:

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
May 16, 2022

Yeah, customer care is involved in these discussions and these meetings with Tom. He takes lead on these, but we have been involved for the beginning, understanding that they need to be equipped with the information they need to serve our customers and redirect them. So, absolutely.

Naomi:

Okay, thank you.

Stephen:

Any other questions before we let Tom go for the day? Appreciate you being here, Tom. Rochelle, thank you all as well.

Tom:

Well, thank you to everyone. I appreciate the opportunity, and if there's any questions that may come to mind after the meeting ends, I'm always available, so just reach out.

Stephen:

Great. We appreciate that.

Tom:

All right. Take care, everyone.

Tony:

Thanks, Tom.

Naomi:

Thank you.

Tom:

Thank you. Bye-bye.

Stephen:

Moving on with our agenda. Item five is... Or four rather, is the report of the OCA, Jeff Donofrio.

Jeff Donofrio:

Thanks, Steve. Good evening, everyone. Let's see. We don't have per se pending complaints with the OCA. We do have two matters that we've been made aware of that we're monitoring. One is a concern that was raised by a customer in Cheshire concerning PipeSafe billing, and that issue looks like it's very close to being resolved. It's not a big dollar issue, it's really just the customer not understanding the bill and some transactions that took place with respect to the PipeSafe account. The other account is a little bit more complicated. That's an East Haven client whose account looks to be affected by the transition to monthly billing, and the authority has been researching the customer's account and looking at the history of his payments versus the credits that have appeared on his billing statements, and there's a phone call scheduled between the authority and the customer tomorrow afternoon. Hopefully, that gets

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
May 16, 2022

the account resolved to the customer's satisfaction. If it doesn't, then I'll probably need to get involved, but again, it's not big dollars or anything, it's just some confusion in the way in which the account is being presented on billing statements.

Jeff Donofrio:

There's credits in excess of amounts of actual payments, and it looks like it's some type of a computer error, for lack of a more technical explanation, based on what I've seen from the research that's been shared with me by the authority. As you know, there was a lot of time spent last month on the capital and O&M budgets for fiscal year '23. I attended the meetings of the finance land use and Consumer Affairs Committee respectively to discuss those budgets and submitted my letter to the chairman of the five member authority with my comments on the budget and expressed a few concerns about some of the large upcoming projects.

Jeff Donofrio:

We've got a hearing coming up next week on the Lake Gaillard water treatment plant filter valve application. We received today the application from the authority for phase one of the Lake Whitney dam project, which is essentially the evaluation of design alternatives selection of the alternative that's eventually deemed to be the alternative and the best interest of the authority and then the design of that project. So that's going to be handled, that application's going to be handled on an expedited basis, so there'll be a special meeting of the board of finance to find that application complete, and then a hearing in June at which the RPB will be asked that evening to make a decision. So I'm all over that, I'll be able to comply with that expedited schedule no problem. And other than that, nothing's going on.

Stephen:

Jeff, I think at our last meeting you indicated there was one issue. Was that the East Haven issue that you were talking about?

Jeff Donofrio:

Yeah, the Cheshire issue.

Stephen:

Oh, okay. So there's no other, it's just these two?

Jeff Donofrio:

It's these two, right.

Stephen:

You know what I've found in the... Just for Rochelle, just by way of comment here, in the monthly billing it's because of the cycling, I guess. It isn't really a month kind of, and it's just varies some from month-to-month and everything's prorated, so not even your... What is it? The administrative charge is the same each month, so I can see where this is somewhat confusing to residents.

Rochelle:

Yeah, and actually, Steve and others, we're actually looking at that based on another comment that we got. I think that initially we thought that with monthly billing that the billings would be probably between about 28 and 32 days, but it looks like at a variety of reasons and Laura's involved in investigating it that it's not working out quite that way, and the range is still wider than we thought, but we are internally, and I think we're very close to working on solution that will address what you're talking about and what other customers have commented about to make that service charge fair, but consistent for budgeting purposes and other purposes. So we're definitely looking at that.

Stephen:

Yeah. I mean, I'm sure you're charging the right amount for that, but it just... I know one bill was 43, the next one was 64 from what I've seen.

Rochelle:

With the conversion in January, there was such a wide range of bills that I think also probably was a bit confusing, but we are looking and taking very seriously all the comments that we're getting from customers, and as was mentioned, sometimes it's just being able to explain the bill.

Stephen:

Yeah. Okay. Very good. So Jeff's given his report. Item five is approval of the OCA invoice for April, \$5,650. Do I have a motion?

Tony:

So moved.

Stephen:

Thanks, Tony. Second?

Naomi:

I second.

Stephen:

Thanks, Naomi. Any comments, any questions for Jeff on the bill? All those in favor of approval?

Naomi:

Aye.

Tony:

Aye.

Stephen:

Aye. Any opposed? Any abstentions? Thank you. That motion carries. Item six is I guess we're up for attending the authority meetings starting in June, July, August. Is there any of the members on who can make any of those meetings?

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
May 16, 2022

Tony:

Yeah, I can.

Stephen:

Tony, can you take June to get us started?

Tony:

Yeah, what's the date?

Stephen:

It's the 23rd.

Tony:

Yep, I'll take care of it.

Stephen:

I appreciate that, and then we'll-

Mark:

Is it still Zoom? Can you still Zoom?

Jennifer:

Yes.

Mark:

There'll still be a Zoom? Yeah, I'll do July.

Stephen:

Oh, great. Okay, we got two of them resolved. This is Tony and Mark. Anybody else?

Tony:

And those are 12 noon, right, Jennifer?

Jennifer:

Yes.

Naomi:

I'll take August.

Stephen:

Terrific, Naomi. And I will talk to the other members to see if they'd like to attend in September, otherwise I can cover it. Appreciate that, everybody. Item seven. Our next meeting will be June 27th at

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
May 16, 2022

5:30, and I will entertain a motion to adjourn, unless there's anybody has any other comments, questions?

Mark:

Hang on. Wait a second. Wait. You got me there. Can you hear me?

Stephen:

Yep, go ahead.

Mark:

I think that we should, as the Consumer Affairs, be aware of the fact that our water wagon is out of commission with no date that'll be back in commission. The water wagon has some kind of physical problem, some kind of rust in the tank or something, and it's like a really big project and they have no time scheduled that'll be back in service. Now, I don't know how many people know what the water wagon is.

Rochelle:

I can provide a little bit of an update. We are actually working through getting what needs to get done taken care of. I know there is a lead time, but we are going to be replacing the tank to get the water wagon back in commission.

Mark:

What is the timetable for that? Because-

Rochelle:

I know the lead time was about five weeks and I know that they are just about ready to push the button on getting the order in.

Mark:

Yeah, because at the land use meeting, it was said indeterminate amount of time, could be for a long time.

Rochelle:

Yeah, the situation's gotten escalated, approved some additional capital on [inaudible 00:57:39] to do what needs to get done as quickly as possible.

Mark:

As the Consumer Affairs that I think it's very important that that kind of machinery, whatever you want to call it, is out there when people need it. It goes to places that don't have any water, it goes to road races, it's good advertising for us, good will for us, and that it be out for an indeterminate amount of time is not good and hope they use a fiberglass tank this time, or whatever. I don't know if our committee was aware that it was down and it was an indeterminate amount of time when it was going

to be back. So I hope that the five weeks is no longer than that. I mean, it could be down in the wintertime, but not in the summertime, and everybody knows what the water wagon is?

Tony:

I do.

Naomi:

Yes.

Stephen:

Rochelle, is the idea of bottled water completely dead, or do you have any plans to do that again? Even on a limited basis?

Rochelle:

I don't believe so. I think anything like that would definitely be on a case-by-case basis, but I do know, like I said, the water wagon has gotten attention and we are working towards getting it back in service as soon as possible.

Stephen:

Thank you. I know we weren't going to get into it big time, but I thought there was an opportunity to do small quantities at one point in time. I don't know.

Mark:

Anyways. You heard that too. Remember, Steve, you were at that meeting.

Stephen:

Okay. Yeah, I just want to let the committee know too. I attended two public hearings in Hamden on the dam project and April Capone did a great job of collecting information from Hamden residents, people especially that were immediately adjacent to the dam and reached out to the community to see what their concerns were, and there was one virtual meeting and one in-person meeting. I think there probably were about 15 people at each of those meetings, and the questions ran the gamut all the way from financing and kind of structurally what it was, the process, but I was impressed with kind of the quality of the questions and also how much residents were concerned and what they knew.

Stephen:

They asked about invasive species in the lake, what was going on with that, made some comments about other work that had been done before and what the consequences were, what the traffic concerns were during construction and timing, et cetera. So there were a lot of good questions and I'm going to let the whole RPB know as well, but those two meetings did already happen. I think they won't be the last, but it was the start of RWA because this project is in an area where there isn't much of a buffer with the residents, did a good job of addressing to connect with the resident's questions and concerns.

Mark:

And you got to remember it's historic landmark.

Stephen:

It is. It is. Although, it's a question about aesthetic. If it's aesthetics, what's to say that what was good then is the same now? I mean, basically, this is not a new project, this is a reconstruction of an existing structure, so I would imagine the primary focus is on the engineering and what we need to do and then what the options are, but there may be some options for that, and depending upon what people are concerned about, I guess

Mark:

I'm sure they don't want to see a cement slab there. I think that in the report we got that it was how they were going to do it was very good on my opinion. Anyways. I'll shut up.

Stephen:

Yeah. Well, we had some discussion in executive session, which I can't share here. I can say RWA is sensitive to the issue and we'll do what they need to do, but they are collecting the information from residents on what their perspective is. Okay. Any other questions?

Tony:

Will we adjourn?

Stephen:

Adjourn? Thank you, Tony. Second?

Mark:

Second.

Stephen:

Thanks, Mark. All those in favor?

Group:

Aye.

Stephen:

Thanks, everybody. Good meeting.