South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
Environmental, Health & Safety Committee
May 26, 2022
Meeting Transcript

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING BEGINS AT 1:19 P.M.]

Kevin: Okay. Good afternoon. For the environmental health and safety committee, we have the approval of the minutes from our... Yep. Go ahead. Sorry.

Catherine: I move approval of the minutes of the March 31st meeting.

Suzanne: And I'll second it.

Kevin: Thank you. Any discussion? All in favor.

Catherine: Aye.

Tony: Aye.

Suzanne: Aye.

Kevin: Okay. Thank you. The minutes are approved. William Henley, our senior, excuse me, senior aquatic resource specialist here to talk about new stream flow standards, unless Sunny, did you want to do any introduction of anything, or you want us to just jump right into it?

Sunny: Oh, I think we can jump into it. I mean, I think he's just going to talk about the stream flow standards and goals, I think, that's emerging, DEEP has come out with. I would say some changes to the world once, so he will dive right into it. I think he kind of walks you through what the existing was, what's the new is, and how, I would say, regional is going to adapt to the, I would say, coming standard. So Will, I mean... Will, take it away.

Will: Great. Thank you. How's everyone doing today? [inaudible]

Keviny: Yes.

Larry: See that, but can't hear you very well.

Will: Cannot hear me very well?

David: [inaudible] a little louder.

Will: You want to just talk a little louder? How's that? Is that better?

David: That's better. Thank you.

Will: All right. Excellent. How are we doing today? So I'm going to briefly talk to you guys about some of the new stream flow standards that DEEP has issued over the last few years and what those requirements are, and how regional water authority is going to meet compliance there. So some of the regulatory goals of these stream flow standards are to basically allow for a release of water below dams when the reservoirs are no longer spilling. So when there is no natural release down stream, these regulations mandate that companies like ours, who have dams on various water sources, are releasing water below those dams to maintain the downstream ecosystems and downstream rivers. Hang on one second. [inaudible] automatically [inaudible] don't know how.

Will: The goal of this is to oxygenate these downstream streams, to maintain the habitat below dams, and to maintain a flow that's adequate for downstream fish, aquatic plants, recreational uses, and other downstream uses. And the goal of the updated regulations is more to match the natural characteristics of incoming water courses. And I'll discuss a little bit the past regulations and their current regulations. So the existing regulations were implemented in 1979. So we do make a release from all of our reservoirs that fall within these regulations. We have four reservoirs that currently fall within the regulations that were implemented in 1979. We released water from those four reservoirs to maintain any downstream ecosystems. Essentially, there were some lawsuits in the early 2000s that basically dealt with another public water utility, I believe it was Waterbury. And basically, that lawsuit was looking for additional flow below the dams. The lawsuit came back, and they lost the lawsuit because-

Will: The lawsuit came back, and they lost the lawsuit because those water companies weren't meeting the compliance at the time. But that pushed forward basically a new process to change the stream flow regulations. Basically one of the judges that presided over the case said, "Waterbury was in compliance with the existing stream flow regulations. However, if you want to see a change in those regulations, you should proceed with that with DEP."

Will: So DEP in collaboration with various stakeholders, recreational groups, fissuring organizations, public water utilities, waste water utilities, they adopted a new set of regulations in 2011, which utilized the scientific advances that have occurred over the last several decades to guide new regulatory goals. And there was a period of negotiation between 2006 and 2011 that people here at our organization were involved with, specifically John Hudak. And he was basically represented our interests coming up with a balance between both human and ecological needs below our doors.

Will: So like I just talked about, these new regulations were designed to better balance human ecosystem needs. The prior regulations did release water below these regulated dams, but not in a natural way and not in a way that was

sufficient. So the new regulations basically were based on what kind of use was being used. So if your dam was a large reservoir, you would have a more complicated release that you have to make, a seasonal variability. If you have a small reservoir, there's just a consistent small release that's required. And then small impoundments, be it small ponds or stream diversions, those are generally exempt these. In addition to that, during the process for creating these new regulations, there were several drought off ramps that were created. So in a period of drought, many of the releases that are required are reduced.

Will: And so that was a big plus for water utilities like ourselves, where in a drought situation you don't necessarily want to be releasing water downstream. So these next couple slides kind of get into what the new regulations do. So if you look at this graph here, the blue line is what we currently do for a release. In this specific example is that lake [inaudible]. You can see that we make the same release year round, and we make a slightly larger release during what would be considered the March [inaudible]. So this larger release is to scour the stream banks and to create habitat downstream. The red line is what the new regulation will be for release. So you can see that this has more of a natural curve to it, and I'll give you a comparison here in a second. But basically, you have a baseline release during the winter, a larger release in the spring, and then a low release during the summer, which is what you would expect from more of a natural ecosystem.

Will: And as I said, this is an actual example from what would be required of [inaudible]. Here, I've compared these new regulations to a stream that we use in some of our water supply planning, which is Eightmile River. And you can see here that a stream is not a consistent flow year round and this new curve, which is the new regulation, more closely mimics the natural flow.

Will: So how is implementation going to go for this? Basically in 2016, the entire state was classified. There were four different classifications of streams, a free flowing stream, a minimally altered stream, and moderately altered stream and a severely altered stream. As part of the negotiations that John Hudak was involved with, we basically, there was a concession from the environmental groups that all water supplies would be class three or higher. So even though these are streams that are extremely altered because there's a reservoir on them, we were able to get all of the reservoirs put into a slightly higher category requiring slightly less release. So these classifications were completed in 2016 for most of our system, and the regulation reads that 10 years after the classification occurs, we have to begin the new release regime. So one year prior to that in 2015, we have to have a plan of release prepared for DEP, and then in September of 2026, we have to begin making releases.

Will: So here's just a little bit more about that implementation process. So we currently have five dams that make releases, and these are, like I said, just a single release year-round, the same flow. After these new regulations are

implemented, there will be nine dams that we have to make a release, and this is in 2026. Here, this map down below, you can kind of see what some of the regulations are guiding some of our rivers. Basically, the green rivers are exempt. We don't have to make any release. The yellow rivers are areas that we will make a consistent low, like a summer release. And then the red streams are areas that will be required to make a variable release. And this is just for the Eastern part of our system, this doesn't include west river, but I thought this would give a good example of how the classification process went.

Will: So through the entire process, some rivers were completely exempt. Some were such a small stretch of river or such a little impairment that just a single release is going to be required year-round. And some of them where we have a larger impact, we have a large reservoir there, those are going to require a multi-level release like I showed you before.

Will: Here is a map of the entire system. Basically this shows every site that we have to make a downstream release. There's three in the west river system on Lake Stephanie, Watrous, and Dawson. The farm river diversion in East Haven requires a release lake. Lake Lord requires a release. The farm river in Northford requires a release. Lake Manukatuck requires a release. Hammonasset requires a release and Iron Stream requires a release, which is one of our diversions. The map here shows which sites needed capital improvements. Four of the sites that will be required to make releases in 2026 needed some, either improvements or addition of infrastructure to measure the flows. The remainder of the sites have sufficient infrastructure to make these new releases.

Will: In addition to looking at what kind of infrastructure improvements we need to make, we also engaged in some modeling of what kind of impact this is going to have on our storage and system reliability. Obviously we're going to release more water at some of these lakes than we have before. Basically we did some modeling with a company called Vizen using historic lake levels, historic storage, and comparing it to what the new releases will be and what new storage is predicted to be. Basically, if we continue to operate the system with Lakewood [inaudible] operation, the Lakewood water treatment plan operation, there is very minimal impact to system reliability. We're nowhere near the DPH margin of safety. There is a small impact during these big drought years. I can point out here, right in the middle of this graph, you can see that this is the 1960s drought, and the blue line is what we experienced, the red line is what we would experience under the new stream flow regs. So you can see that in these drought years, there is an impact, but it's a marginal impact, or a small impact.

Will: So I'll go over some of the capital improvements that we made to meet these releases. And again, we have to start, we have to have a plan of release by 2025. And we begin releases in 2026, here is Iron Stream diversion. So everything you see here in front of the dam is all new infrastructure. [inaudible] capital planning played a big part in implementing these improvements. But basically

what you're seeing here is a small weir that'll allow us to release water from below the stand and then measure it. So this will allow us to make our downstream release and measure it and report it to deep. Iron Stream was one of the larger improvements that we had to make, because there was no structure for releasing water below the dam until this year.

Will: Another site that we made some capital improvements was at Lake Dawson. Lake Dawson is one of those sites, like I mentioned before, that there's a tiered release. So we're going to have to make changes to that release multiple times during the year. There was infrastructure in place to make the release at Dawson, but not to measure it. Capital planning, again, assisted us with design construction of a new weir with a monitoring system so that way we can remotely monitor the flows there, and we'll be able to measure from the smallest flow that we'll have to make in the summer to the largest flow that we'll have to make in the early spring. The other three sites, which were Lakes Watrous, Bethany, and that's it. Lakes Dawson and Bethany, they just required the addition of the of weirs, basically just a way to measure the flow below the dam, so that was a really straightforward improvement. I'll show you that right here. This was basically a very easy infrastructure improvement. It's just a plate that will be able to measure the flow when we release it below. This is Lake Watrous [inaudible].

Will: So just to sum things up, we're moving forward to full implementation of these new stream flow regulations in September 2026. 99% of the capital improvements have been completed in this year. We're really ahead of the game here. I've talked to a lot of water companies that have not even started to work on this, or even have an idea how they're going to do it, so we're way ahead of the ball game there. And we've done significant modeling to look at what impact this is going to have on our water supply. And basically the modeling is shown that with the current demands, and with the current system that we have, there's plenty of supply to meet future demands. All right. Does anyone have any questions?

Kevin: Thank you, Will.

Will: Of course.

Kevin: Suzanne?

Suzanne: Yeah, thank you. I want to make sure I understand the presentation. The release is so that downstream rivers have enough water for the ecosystem and the natural biological life of plant and animal can survive and we don't starve it from its water supply, correct?

Will: Correct. That's the primary goal. There is also, obviously, in some situations that are different than ours, there are other water supplies below other water

supplies, if you know what I'm saying. So that's another factor, for example, Wallingford's water supply is above the farmer or East Haven, so it's in our best interest that they release water down to us. So that's another case, and additionally, there was also a group of stakeholders that were interested in just recreational needs in terms of you can't fish in a river if it's dry and you can't-

Suzanne: Right. So does fire... Do communities rely at all on any of these rivers that are not hydrant, if there's not hydrants available, for fire? And is that a factor at all in our release?

Will: I do not think that is a factor in our specific releases. I do not know if anywhere else in the state that is a factor. I do know that generally communities that do not have water supply for fighting fires generally have ponds that they go to, and it's not generally rivers because of the unreliability of that source. Because even in a natural environment, if you hit a drought, there's not going to be any water in the river, regardless of whether there's a reservoir above it. You know what I'm saying? So generally I think they use fire ponds for that.

Suzanne: Okay. And then lastly, you mentioned that Hammonasset, which you said needed to have a release based on your latest...

Will: Yes.

Suzanne: And what will that release into?

Will: So Lake Hammonasset we currently... As I mentioned, there's four lakes where we currently make a release already, under the 1979 regulations. It's a consistent release year round, it's the same amount of water. Lake Hammonasset releases down into the Hammonasset River, which flows through Madison into the ocean.

Suzanne: Right. Okay.

Will: So all that's going to change is essentially the net total of the year, there will be more water released. Basically it will be we're releasing more water in the spring and less water in the summer, but the net total is slightly [inaudible].

Suzanne: And should that prevent the downstream rivers from drought causing degradation to the biological life and such?

Will: That's correct. Yeah.

Suzanne: Okay. Thank you.

Will: The idea behind the whole process is to match what's coming into the lake. Obviously you can only ask for so much, we can't be out there every day

matching exactly what's coming into the lake. And also there's the public water supply element, so we're not releasing exactly what's coming into the lake, but we're trying to match the shape of that curve of what's coming into the lake, so that way in the spring, when there's a lot of water, we release a lot of water. In the summer when it's very dry, we release very little water, but sufficient enough to maintain those downstream ecosystems.

Suzanne: Okay. Thank you.

Will: Of course.

Kevin: Perfect. Thanks Suzanne. David?

David: Yeah, thank you. Just so that I correctly understand that this is not going to hurt us in terms of our water supply, because we're flushed with water, if you will, and is that correct?

Will: Correct. Our system is extremely robust. One of the elements that really helps us is the operation of... I will get a little bit into the results of this, the modeling, which is that it showed that if we utilize Lake Whitney water treatment plant with consistency, that mitigates most of the impacts of this, but yes.

David: A redundancy in the system to provide, to move the water around as needed, without a significant additional expense?

Will: Correct, yes. So yes, our system is sufficiently robust that this has very little impact on us. It does obviously bring us during these drought periods, it's going to bring the reservoirs a little bit lower. You could see in that model where they... Let me see if I can bring that slide back up, actually. You could see here where they modeled one of the biggest droughts on record, which was the 1960s drought, and I don't know if you could see this right now, but...

David: The red? Yeah.

Will: You can see that in the modeled drought where we're making these downstream releases, we get down to 55% instead of 60% storage. But again, this is a model and that was one of the biggest droughts on record and demand was much higher during that time period as well. But yeah, these stream flow regulations have had minimal impact on our system.

David: All right. And the overall reason for this is because it's to try to replicate the out, try to take out the human effect on nature, if you will, from this aspect of it anyway?

Will: Correct, yeah. The original 1979 regulations were just very basic, release water below your dams. There was a bunch of controversy over that, as the sciences

kind of developed, but that's not really the correct way to do it. And these new regulations are a better balance of human, environmental needs and more matching what the natural of what would be below these dams.

David: All right, thank you Will. And then lastly, just going beyond this now for the next phase, which is aquifer protection regulations and whatnot, because this was surface water, and now I know the state is actively talking about aquifer, which was separated out because this was so hard to get service water for over the last 10 years or so. What's the status of that and how are they going? Because that will have some effect on us when they do more regulations for aquifer protection.

Will: I'm not sure exactly what regulations you're talking about. Are you talking about...

David: Well, this was all related to the stream flow regulations, and at one time it was tied together with aquifer protection and stream flow, above ground and below ground, they were tied together, and then it was sort of separated out in order to move this along. So that they're... And I don't know, Larry, maybe you can help me remember what we've been talking about over the years and related.

Larry: Will, these regulations that David are referring to, which I think they're still in the formulation stage, but they would require a similar sort of release from wells.

Will: Oh, really? I didn't know anything about that.

Larry: And I think they are still in negotiations, David, but I've got to check up on that because there's not been much said or done about those in quite some time, because, as Will mentioned, the industry was able to separate stream flow from wells versus reservoirs.

David: Right. Well, and it's strategically important to us because there are some other water systems near us that would not be as flush with water if the amount of the take from the aquifer was more limited. And...

Larry: That's correct. That's correct, there's some that are heavily reliant on wells for their water supply, which would have a severe impact the way the regulations were being drafted the last time I heard about them.

David: Yeah, okay. I like so much better how you reword what I say so that makes sense. Thank you. All right, I'll hand it back to you, Kevin. Thank you.

Kevin: Thanks David. And Will, one last question, do we think that this there's no pending or talk about stream flow, additional stream flow regulations going in the future as far as we know?

Will: This took about three decades, so I wouldn't expect. This is really, looking at the science of it, this is really optimal. The way that they've really set this up, classifying all streams and looking at which streams really need it, and which streams don't, and making a release that's really a multi-level release. I don't see these changing any time in the future. And as I mentioned before, from discussion with the Water Protection and Land Use Bureau and with other water companies, we are pretty far ahead of the curve on this. So it's going to give us a little bit of flexibility to implement these before, maybe a year or two before we're actually required, to get an idea for what works and what doesn't. Do we need additional manpower to execute this and get all of it ironed out? So that way it's pretty smooth and seamless for us here at region.

Kevin: Great. All right. Thank you very much.

Will: No problem.

Kevin: Anyone else have any questions for Will? All right. Thank you.

Will: Thank you.

David: Thanks Will. Thanks Kevin.

Will: Thank you so much for meeting.

Kevin: Thank you. We're going to move on to our next topic, which will be the health and safety update with Donna Verdisco and Amanda Schenkel, who you heard from earlier during the audit risk committee.

Donna: Thanks Kevin.

Kevin: It's a busy day for them.

Donna: All at once. Amanda, you want to pull up the slide? Perfect. All right, good afternoon, everybody. So we'll just jump to the next slide. So Amanda and I are going to provide a high level overview of our fiscal year, 2022 goals and objectives, as it relates to health and safety. We'll also provide an overview of our Safety Starts With Me program. You probably have heard that quite a bit. We'll walk you through some of the details of our zero injury goals and share some statistics and what that means to us every time that we have an injury, so you can appreciate that and the impact to the business. And, and then we're going to provide an overview on COVID, and then we're going to wrap up with the summary and next steps. So with that, I'll walk you through the next slide and then I'll pass it to Amanda.

Donna: On this slide, we're going to discuss a strategy of advancing our workplace strategies. As you recall, our 2025 strategic plan is to really help advance the

workplace safety, and there are really two key strategic goals for fiscal year 2022. First, we had a goal to achieve zero preventable injuries. To date, we have had six preventable injuries and two unpreventable. So in a few minutes, we're going to do a little bit of a deep dive into those injuries so that you can understand where we are. So as you can see, we were trying to strive for zero and we're at six currently. Our second goal was to develop and execute a Safety Starts With Me program. I'm pleased to share that this year we've been able to successfully develop the curriculum and deploy it. And currently right now we're underway to successfully achieve this goal and conducting this training, and Amanda herself is actually doing the facilitation and doing the training, so we're going to actually walk you through both of those in more detail. So with that, let me pass it off to Amanda so we can spend some time on the details.

Amanda: Thanks, Donna. So Safety Starts With Me, you guys have received some previous information and other presentations from my team, but it is a practical training that we are rolling out to all of the RWA employees. It really looks at what the human factors are that contribute to incidents and injuries. And we're using this training as a springboard to help us continue our work towards a vital goal of zero preventable injuries. You can see here on the slide, we've provided some details about what the employees are learning. So they're learning to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses, they're improving our compliance with OSHA, we're increasing awareness about our safety culture and really driving into what the RWA safety culture is, and then we're addressing the workplace safety concerns of our employee pool.

Amanda: So part of this training is asking them to sit in teams and to talk about the safety concerns that they have so we can put those into implementation as part of our program. What can we fix? What can we roadmap that maybe needs some capital investment? Key progress and deliverables, so that we piloted the program to the Corporate Services Division. They were great guinea pigs for us, but they really helped us make sure that the training met all of the notes needed for the RWA staff and that it was timely, and that it provided a great cadence to get this done to the employees. We've rolled out to all RWA employees starting in April, with a goal of a hundred percent participation. Currently we've achieved 125 participation representing about 48% completion. And actually we held a class this morning, so that number is actually 209 as of this morning. So we have a couple more classes coming up prior to the wrapping of May and we should have everybody through.

Amanda: All right. So diving directly into our zero injury goal. As Donna had mentioned, we have had eight preventable injuries out of eight total injuries in fiscal '22. You can see here, we've put in some information about what kind of injuries we were seeing. On the left hand side here, we're showing the sprain/strain as the top injury that was part of our preventables. Slips and falls, and then a hand tool injury were related to the preventables. Our non-preventables related to two motor vehicle accidents where our employees were unfortunately rear-ended at

a red light. We have deemed those as completely not preventable because there was not anything that they could do. Their vehicles were maintained properly, marked properly, and had all of working taillights and everything in play. There was nothing the employee could have done to avoid.

Amanda: Part of our injury prevention is that we start looking at what corrective actions can be put into place to help avoid these injuries from occurring. As you can see here, we've started our safety and compliance training, making sure our curriculum is on place to be meet compliance as well as what the trending injuries are. We've conducted winter walking safety training with facilities and water treatment. This is related to the slips and falls that we had seen occur. We've also rolled out toolbox talks to the departments at risk, specifically around sprain/strains and understanding their bodily needs, conducted our PPE checks to make sure that everyone has what they need to stay safe and then developed SOPs, one in particular related to heated front walkways at our water treatment plants to make sure that we don't get into a situation where we're not using all of the tools that we have at hand.

Kevin: Excuse me a minute, Amanda. Tony, did you have a question? Tony? Okay. I thought Tony has his hand raised, so I thought maybe he had a question, but...

Amanda: He's muted.

Kevin: He's muted, yeah.

Tony: I'm sorry. The question was whether we have people involved in the investigation of the automobile accidents?

Amanda: We do, yes. So our RWA police officers are a part of that as well as our safety team, so my team and myself get involved. We also have a fleet safety committee, which is myself, our captain of our police department, our safety administrator and our fleet team lead, as well as four members of the bargaining unit. and each and every one of our accidents are investigated. We also require all of our automobile accidents to receive a police report. So, we did have an active police report that was from each one of the towns related to these injuries. So that way we made sure that we were capturing everything in multiple layers.

Tony: What assurance do you have that this is not getting doctored?

Amanda: From the police report that we have, and also, from our police talking to the other municipal officers, we know that based off of a conversation with both the driver of the third party and the RWA vehicles, that these were stopped and in place, and there was no conversation from the third party drivers that there was a quick stop, or a situation where they felt our driver contributed to the loss.

Tony: And were the other drivers ticketed?

Amanda: They were.

Tony: Thank you.

Amanda: No problem.

Kevin: I have one question-

Amanda: Yes.

Kevin: ... before you move on, and maybe it's on this slide too, but I'm just wondering, statistically speaking, is zero preventable injuries something that can be achieved?

Amanda: Absolutely.

Kevin: Okay.

Amanda: It will take some dedication. It will take some changes in our culture in getting us there. Truthfully, when you look at the preventable injuries we have, they are easily fixed, so it's just a matter of staying on top of it. It's a matter of working with the teams that are experiencing losses, and really, drilling into what they're seeing out in the field, so, that way, we can address them. And I'll share some more information as we get further in. We have some additional plans in play for next fiscal year, how we think we may be able to address this even stricter.

Larry: Kevin, too, I'd like to add, that when we set this goal in 2009, RWA had annually, the mid-teens in terms of injuries on the job, so we've driven down the number of injuries, although it's not where we want it to be, but you do have industries, like for instance, DuPont, that is able to achieve zero preventable injuries. And they're working environment is certainly every bit as, I'll say, hazardous or dangerous as our environment can be out in the field, so, it is an achievable goal. It just takes an extreme focus that Amanda's been talking about and will continue to work on.

Kevin: Right. Yeah. I remember when this was set. David, did you have something?

David: If I could, yeah. I do seem to recall that one of our larger areas of injuries was for the meter readers, you know, twisted ankles, dog bites, that type of thing. Is that helping, the fact that we really don't have much in the way of meter reading now with the systems we have, and electronic, automatic reading. Is that helping keep injuries down as well?

Amanda: Absolutely. Yes. Just the inherent nature of what a meter reader did for work, stopping, walking. I mean, some of them would walk 12 miles a day. When you start looking at the injuries have come down, and we've also seen some of the automobile accidents come down as well, because they were stop, go, stop, go, and driving and making multiple stops, with that reduction, we've also seen a reduction in auto accidents. Which, you can see here the two non-preventable injuries were related to auto so, when we continue to drop those down, we're seeing less.

Kevin: Great. Thank you.

Amanda: No problem. So, firstly, I'll go back to this slide that I'm showing you. You'll see that field service, at this point, is actually has the largest piece of the pie related to number of injuries. And that's because they're the new department that's making the multiple stops and driving the vehicle so, we've actually seen a small shift. Now that meter reading has gone away, that field service has actually kind of up-ticked a little bit.

Amanda: As you can see here, this just shows a breakout of what the injuries look like related to the fiscal years. You can see in fiscal '19 and '20, we had a very small year related to injuries. Again, most of the '20 and '21 reduction, I think, you're going to see related to how many people we had working from home, and just some of the remote processes we had put in play related to COVID.

Amanda: In '22, we saw some unfortunate accidents that I think were very much preventable that we will be addressing as we move forward, specifically, related to a lot of the winter weather items. That seemed like it was an issue for us this year. So, we'll continue that work as we move into fiscal '23. You can see here in the pie chart, this relates to which of our injuries are being driven by which departments. Obviously, you'll note here that the bulk of our injuries do occur in our operations division. This is mainly related to the type of work that they're doing. The higher risk of the work, the more of an opportunity for injury.

Amanda: And, occasionally, we do see an injury that will occur from an ergonomics perspective here internally in our office-side of the house, but those are very few and far between.

Kevin: Thanks. Catherine, did you have a comment?

Catherine: Yeah, no. I just had a question as to whether or not you had any injuries that were related to people working from home?

Amanda: Zero injuries related to working from home. So, that, I was very happy as part of COVID. The other side of that too is we did provide people with information about how to set their desk space up at home, how to be ergonomically-safe, and just reminding people that when you're in your home, if you have cords

across your walkway, RWA can't address that for, so you have to really keep your workspace safe and comfortable for you.

Catherine: Thank you.

Amanda: You're welcome.

Kevin: Great question. Thanks.

Amanda: So, on this slide here, you're just going to see a breakout based off of the number of injuries that we see, by type. You can see here, that sprains, strain is actually one of our number one. A lot of this is, I believe, related to as we see an aging workforce, our ability for our muscles to work and those musculoskeletal injuries are much more prominent. And then, if you look across the way too, you'll also see that the strain, and also, we had a tear that was related to a strain, are also our most costly type of injuries. Basically, is that it takes a lot of rest, whether it be from a restriction or time out of work.

Amanda: And then, a lot of those can also require a lot of PT and ongoing medical treatment as a way of rehabbing someone back to physical fitness. So, while they're... It sometimes is interesting to see these numbers. I thought it was kind of an indicator that our most frequent is also our most severe. So, those are areas that we'll be drilling into as we continue on our goals.

Amanda: I just want to provide you guys with a quick COVID update. So, here, you can see kind of our COVID case outlines. We were very fortunate in the early beginnings of the COVID pandemic, that we experienced very little and minor positive cases. We have seen a steady uptick, especially as the variants have become, I guess, much more contagious, as we will, with just the waves that have come through.

Amanda: So, in our most recent variant wave, we have seen an uptick in positive cases in our workforce. We are fortunate enough that we've only had one case that impacted our customer basis, and all of our other cases have had no impact to any customers. Our work from home has aided in isolating our exposure so we've been able to get exposed employees to stay working from home where possible. We have many employees who, while they've been exposed or maybe have tested positive, are still working from home so it's helped us cut down on our sick time.

Amanda: We continue to make sanitizing a priority in our facilities both at 90 Sergeant Drive and all four of our surface treatment plants. We are also sanitizing equipment, whether it be backhoes, excavators, forklifts. If there was a positive employee in any of those devices, those are being supervised as well, as well as our vehicles. We currently hold a vaccination rate of about 85% in our employee pool. And as of February 7th, we were on a hybrid model of three in and two

days out of office and as of March 7th, our masks were removed based off of the City of New Haven's changes in their requirements.

Donna: And I just wanted to add that we just had, this week, we did implement reducing the number of employees working at Sergeant Drive because we have had an uptick. We have had, last week, one department that had a number of people that were, sick and the week before, we also had a second group so two functions that were impacted. So, we did go ahead and asked employees to begin working remotely for the next month or so.

Donna: And we do think that that's as a result of, obviously, spring break. A lot of people on vacation and so forth.

Amanda: Yes, and for any of you on the call who may have college students that are returning, please, make sure we're monitoring them as well, because that is another exposure point we're seeing as the students are returning from school.

Catherine: Can you provide-

Kevin: Catherine, you have something?

Catherine: Yes. Can you provide just a little bit more detail on the customer impact case?

Amanda: Yes. So, we had a cross connections inspector who had been out in the field, and he was completely asymptomatic at the time. But as he, it was a Friday afternoon, he moved into the weekend, and had developed symptoms. He isolated the fact that he had been at seven locations, those seven locations, he was wearing a mask in most of them. I believe there was one where they didn't require it and he hadn't been wearing it. We did notify each one of the businesses so on the cross connection side, those are business-related, not residential home.

Amanda: And we made sure that they were aware that there had been an employee who had tested positive and he may have been in their facilities and we wanted to make sure that we were being open and honest with them, that they may have had an exposure. And it was just a really well-received item. When I personally made the calls to the individual businesses, they thanked me for the call, and they were very appreciative of us taking that stance to protect them.

Catherine: Thank you.

Amanda: Absolutely.

Kevin: Thanks. Any other questions? Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry. Go ahead, Amanda.

Amanda: No. No worries. I just wanted to just pause for questions if there were any.

Kevin: I don't see any.

Amanda: Perfect. So, as a summary to this health and safety update for you, we are on track to meet our objective goal this 2022 related to safety starts with Me Training. We'll continue our prevention measures. As we work towards the zero preventable injury goal. We are very excited to see what we can do. We are in the process of filling one of our safety roles so we're hopeful that this person will bring in some new and innovative ideas to get us to that level. And then as just a next steps, we are looking at our planning for the following year. And as I mentioned, a new goal that we are setting for ourselves is to improve upon our near miss reporting program. For those who may not be familiar with near misses, this is an incident that occurred, but did not lead to injury, but an injury was possible.

Amanda: So one of the things that we see, especially as Larry mentioned, we've reduced down our number of injuries, is it becomes hard to be proactive about safety because there aren't any trends for us to follow. So when we look at near miss reporting, this is a place where we can implement corrective actions that can help us to avoid injuries from ever occurring. We'll work on developing the program out to the staff in a much more robust fashion, increasing our ability to communicate these near miss reports and making sure the communication around the corrective actions are also implemented.

Kevin: Great. Thank you.

Amanda: And then I'll just open it up for any questions that anyone may have.

Kevin: Any other questions? Okay. Thank you very much. Catherine, no? I thought you had something.

Catherine: Just saying thank you.

Kevin: Oh, okay. All right. We can move on to the environmental compliance at this time.

Amanda: And that remains with me. So you guys will get one more presentation from me. I hope you're not bored of me yet.

Kevin: There you go.

Amanda: All right. Well, this will be an environmental compliance update. As you may all be aware, environmental compliance rolls up to me with Amy Velasquez as our environmental compliance lead for RWA. Just quick agenda, we'll go through the environmental compliance overview. I'll give you an update about our Significant Industrial User Permit, our Benefit Official Use Determination Permit

as well as ozone monitoring and air quality monitoring we are completing at our Whitney Water Treatment Plant, and then just a summary of our next steps.

Amanda: As you'll see here, we have a very robust environmental compliance program. A few items that we work on as part of our risk and compliance controls, revolve around chemical storage reporting. This is done to the state on a monthly basis. We also do site remediation plans related to spills and contaminations. We ensure we have correct permitting for our wastewater discharges, especially through DEEP. We do our ozone notification from DEEP, which is a season that runs from May 1st through to October 30th. So you, this is kicked off already as part of our generator run. We do ongoing planning and testing related to hazardous building materials to make sure that our contractors and our employees remain safe anytime we are doing work related to replacement of building materials. We comply with RCRA, so Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, and this is related to hazardous waste management and the transportation of hazardous waste.

Amanda: We also will follow up with compliance related to new regulations. And I've noted one here on the slide for you, we are currently working on is our Salt Applicator Training and Commercial Applicator Registration Program. The environmental planning team, under Sunny, has started work on training the RWA staff related to this training, and my team will work on making sure that all registration requirements are up. And then we also review all RWA projects for environmental compliance concerns. So we have a heavy hand in our capital projects to make sure that everything that has an impact is correct.

Amanda: Here we'll give you an update on Significant Industrial User Permit. So we previously were under a Miscellaneous Industrial User Permit at our Lake Gaillard Water Treatment Plant. Connecticut DEEP has made some changes to their permitting process as of 2020, and there was an effect to the Gaillard plant. As part of this change. We went through site visits with outside engineering firms to complete an application in April of 2021. This application has been submitted as of May, 2021, and continues to be pending with DEEP for approval. One of the key items I'd like you to note here is that the application process for this type of permit is highly extensive. We do believe that the delay is because of the extensive part of the permitting, as well as the number of people who are required to switch from Miscellaneous to Significant Industrial User.

Amanda: You can see here, we've also as part of the Gaillard Treatment Plant, we've been working on some of their discharge updates. We had some issues with sewer flows related to the Gaillard area. We are improving upon those conditions based on the current clarifier project that is underway. However, we did go to North Branford WPCA to update our limit discharge, just so that way we can remain in compliance.

Amanda: All right. So we're moving into the Beneficial Use Determination Permit. Beneficial use is related to our solid waste from our water treatment process. We use our residuals and we move them out to individual landscapers in order to recycle them back into the environment. We have had a Beneficial Use Determination, or BUD Permit from DEEP since 2012. They are good for 10 years so our permit was expiring this year and we have applied for a new permit. As of right now, we have tentative approval from DEEP, and we are working on the comment period, with no comments expected. And you can see here in the last bullet, the BUD Permit currently saves RWA approximately a hundred thousand dollars per year in what it would cost for us to dispose of the residual material versus having it reused into the landscaping process.

Amanda: Okay. And then lastly, as part of our environmental compliance update, we wanted to provide you with an update about ozone monitoring at our Whitney Water Treatment Plant. In March of 2021, there was an ozone leak that was detected in this plant. The leak was detected early on, preventing any exposures or injuries to employees or suppliers. As we were able to implement corrective actions ongoing, and our plan, and the system was returned to service in April of '22. Corrective actions that we put in play as part of the safety team operations, as well as environmental compliance were to add ambient monitors and portable monitors for ozone detection. We sealed hatches related to the dissolved air flotation room deck, and we increased vacuum pressure within the ozone contactors as approved by Tighe and Bond.

Amanda: We also went through a process of rebalancing our HVAC system in order to create less pull on the ozone contactors. As part of putting the service back into place, my team was responsible for going out to detect the air quality monitoring. We did have one small leak that was detected in one of the valves and immediate repairs were made by the treatment staff. They have been using portable monitors throughout the plant in case of any additional leaks. And they, we were happy to report that as of May 5th, there are no air quality concerns related to ozone or any other monitoring items at the Whitney Water Treatment Plant. The safety audit, as well as the air quality testing were all completed, as I mentioned, on May 5th.

Amanda: Are there any questions related to the environmental compliance update?

Kevin: Any questions? No? Okay. Well, thank you very much.

Amanda: Thank you everyone.

Catherine: Thank you.

Kevin: And I will, is there a motion to reconvene as the Authority?

David: Yeah, I'll move the Environmental Health and Safety Committee adjourn, and we reconvene as the Authority.

Tony: Second.

Kevin: All in favor.

Group: Aye.

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE ADJOURNS AT 2:10 P.M.]