

SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

JANUARY 25, 2024

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

David:

All right, 12:30. I will call the Regional Water Authority's meeting for January 25th, 2024 to order. I'll note the first item on the agenda, well, first I'll note that Suzanne is joining us remotely, and Kevin is apparently just running a few minutes late, but he will also be joining as well. Catherine and Mario and myself are all here in person. Next, the safety moment, very interesting, if you have anything to do with [inaudible 00:01:22].

Next is public comment. Jennifer, is anybody here from the public?

Jennifer:

No.

David:

Okay, we'll move on. I will accept a motion to recess as the Authority to meet as the Pension and Benefit Committee.

Mario:

So moved.

Catherine:

Second.

David:

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Thank you. The four of us present have voted to move that. So we are now in the Pension and Benefit Committee. Catherine?

[PENSION & BENEFIT COMMITTEE MEETS FROM 12:31 P.M. TO 1:52 P.M.]

David:

Okay. Very good. Thank you. All right, we'll do a couple of items here and then take a break if that's all right. Consent calendar, what's your pleasure folks?

Suzanne:

I'll make a motion to approve it as presented.

Mario:
Second.

David:
And a second. Any items for clarification? Sensing none, are you ready to vote? All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:
Aye.

David:
Thank you. Good. Finance. This should be a pretty quick one as well. The couple of amendments. There's a delay in the projects that we're getting congressional directed spending and so we have available funds to redirect the items that we want to get moving on. Okay.

Rochelle:
So it's moving some money into the lead service line replacement to get going on that to meet the target date of October to get the information that we need. And also moving money in for compliance related on a project we want to get.

David:
Just briefly, is that meaning that lead service line is costing more than we thought or we-

Rochelle:
We're accelerating.

David:
We're accelerating. Okay, very good. That's always a good thing.

Mario:
And the timeframe has been shortened on a lead service line from what we originally planned.

David:
Yes. Eight years instead of 10 or something, right?

Mario:
Well, 10 instead of 15. 10 and 20.

David:
It was open-ended before, now it's 10 years.

Mario:
But originally the plan was 15 to 20 years to try and manage about 15.

David:

I had always thought 10. So you got me nervous. Okay.

Sunny:

Just want to add on to it though. But this is more on the inventory side, not the [inaudible 00:55:08].

David:

Okay.

Sunny:

Yes, that's true because that's got to be done.

David:

That's got to be done and all that. All right, any other questions? What's your pleasure folks?

Mario:

Motion moved.

David:

Motion moved by Mario. Is there a second by Catherine? Any other comments? Anybody else? All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Passes unanimous. Very good. All right. Business updates. That's pretty straightforward, right?

Larry:

Yes, that should be. The only thing I want to do in addition to a quick one sentence on the RWA CIS project is show a five-minute video.

David:

Okay. Right. So we'll do that shortly. So let's do the other two items within business updates. Anybody have any questions on the board report? And the RWAY is pretty much the same timetable as it was last month.

Larry:

Well, they're moving along with a December date. You recall last month we said there'd been a delay in design targeting December, but we're also evaluating a new baseline based on data transfer that we've got to do and this redesign of some elements of the plan. So there may be a change, but right now we're still using December of 2024 as the target date subject to reevaluation.

David:

But the reevaluation won't put is in danger of not having support for the old software, the deadline applicant?

Larry:

Yes, that's correct. We'll be able to straddle that.

David:

Yes. Okay.

Suzanne:

Hey, David?

David:

Yes.

Suzanne:

I have a question. So I think what I remember from our last meeting was the concern was around the overlay and the sustaining of our old system, but also whether this organization could fulfill based on the amount of resources they had to make available to the project. So while I know we want to move forward, I think we were rather concerned and Prem had presented information that said he's waiting to hear back to satisfy himself that that in fact would be true, but I'd like to know that, unless Larry said that and I didn't catch it, that is in fact we're comfortable with that. That the resources, their expertise, and the work that they need to do to make up the time in fact is viable.

Larry:

Yes, that's part of what's being evaluated in a new baseline on this is the staffing because some of the contractors have not been able to bring as much resource to the project as early as we thought. So that's part of the reevaluation, Suzanne.

Suzanne:

So we're still in the mode of reevaluation and don't have out there for the board at this point. Thank you very much.

Larry:

That's correct.

Mario:

Good way to summarize it.

David:

All right, with that, why don't we see a video that Larry has that I've heard a lot about and then we'll go to a break after that. We'll take a 10-minute break.

Larry:

Yes, just a little context on this. Last week, we had our all employee meeting done remotely this time because it costs considerations, and as part of that, we provided a mid-year update to all employees on how we're doing organizationally. Well, we had Kevin Watsey, our new Director of Public Affairs, and Lisa DiFrancesco, who's our educational coordinator, but she does videos, and Phil Vici put together this script, which is based on a familiar TV show that you know, and it's very clever and I thought you would enjoy hearing it because it highlights and things that happened this year. So ready?

[RWA VIDEO PRESENTATION OF FY 2024 MID-YEAR RESULTS]

Catherine:

Really nice.

David:

Yes. That's cute.

Larry:

Yes, I thought that was a fun video that provided some very interesting information and facts and a job well done by the people that produced it.

David:

Absolutely. Good. Very proud of what they're doing and that's great. All right, so let's take a 10-minute break and when we come back, I think we will do the Lake Whitney Water Treatment Improvement Application because we should be able to get that done in time before the 3:00 call with the attorneys for the PFAS.

[BREAK FROM 2:05 P.M. TO 2:15 P.M.]

David:

All right. So let's call the meeting back to order and we will go right to the item of reports on the RPB committee meetings. So who...you had?

Mario:

I had the Finance Committee, on January 8th.

David:

Okay. So tell us what happened.

Mario:

They met, in a true Finance Committee fashion, they quickly ran through the agenda, but Larry Marcik provided a very good update on the Lake Whitney Dam Design Project. That was, I think well received, a couple of questions, nothing unusual. I think they were appreciating that. Rochelle ran through the quarterly financials. Her true fashion of a lot of detail. Got to be quick in knowing what column she's looking at. She's going through it. And then the Dashboard Report was presented and discussed.

Nothing really critical and they assigned people to meet to keep an eye on the Futhority. That was the gist of the Finance Committee.

David:

All right, Land Use. Suzanne, were you able to attend Land Use? It was a hybrid meeting. All right, well let's go on to Consumer Affairs.

Catherine:

I did attend the Consumer Affairs meeting just this past Monday following the usual public safety moment or the safety moment and the approval of the minutes. The committee voted to go into executive session for an accounts receivable update. Can't tell you a lot about that, but Dana and Prem did receive some nice compliments as we came out of the meeting on their detailed and informative report, there were a number of questions asked about the efficacy of the strategies and how well personnel were working remotely, but those issues were addressed and the committee seemed fairly happy about them. Next, the OCA reported that although there were no escalations, he did have communication on two matters. There was a lawyer's letter, challenging consumption numbers and contesting a bill and they were looking into why this family got a \$1,500 bill.

There was also a communication regarding damages arising from a contractor hitting the pipe and the owner seeking compensation for repairs, which appear to have been more extensive than necessary to essentially, instead of having to plug a hole, they rebuilt the wall, exaggerated. But that's what it sounded like to me. The OCA's bill was approved and in other business, Steve Mongillo expressed his desire to provide comment on the commercial business presentation and there were recommendations made on how he might do that or make that request to the RPB tonight. And Rochelle was there. So she informed the rest of management of that desire. And that concludes my report.

David:

Okay, very good. Suzanne, were you able to attend the Land Use meeting?

Suzanne:

I was. Thank you for a special accommodation of them going hybrid. So several of us were remote, but it was a pretty benign meeting. They reviewed and had a discussion about protecting the water supply and showed a video that I think was done in the 1950s about water supply and protecting it and what it takes. And I think the discussion that ensued was that it was pretty surprising how similar it is today as it was and the needs and the priority of protecting our water was in the fifties. In addition to that, they went over the land in RWA properties, including the invasive species update. Other than that, it was a pretty quiet meeting.

Suzanne:

Thank you. Very well. All right then we know what we have for next month. Kevin's got Finance. We can slide that down just a little bit. Catherine has Land Use and Suzanne has Consumer Affairs and we'll look forward to those reports next month. Thank you.

All right, with that I'm going to take item H and just move it to after item I with no objection. Then we will go to item I right now, which is the application for Lake Whitney Water Treatment Plant Chemical System's Improvement Project. And what I asked all the Authority members was rather than have this as a presentation, knowing we have a heavy agenda, if we could read this at a time and then just have this

as a time for Sunny and Orville to answer questions if need be on the Application before we consider whether to forward it to the RPB or not. So with that, I guess I'll open it up. Do you want to make an opening comment about the project?

Sunny:

No, I think it's a pretty simple straightforward project. Thanks David. Right, so it's replacement of the potassium but magnet system and the caustic system. They're almost at the end of their lifespan, almost 20 years old. They're pretty much, I would say, showing signs of needing emergency repairs. So it was 3.1 million and it includes some, I would say building operations and things of that sort. But in terms of timelines, we'll finish. I would say the design by the middle of this year, maybe I would say construction by fall of 2025. So I think the rest of the information is pretty, I would say kind of summarized in the application. So any questions from the board members?

David:

Any? Suzanne, Mario, Catherine, any questions?

Catherine:

As I said earlier, it's consistent with everything-

David:

Is that a motion to approve this?

Catherine:

It is for me.

David:

Seconded by Mario? All right. Oh, great. Okay.

Mario:

I don't mind seconding.

David:

All right. Then ask your question.

Mario:

So we spent quite a large sum of money on the plan. We're spending quite a large sum of money on the dam and our consumption keeps going down. Are we spending money where we shouldn't be spending money? And this is a philosophical question, how much use does it get? Well, I know it's not pushed to its max other than when we're taking Gaillard off service, offline perhaps. So I just want to make sure you've thought of... Yes, it does make sense. I have no problem with the project, but are we just...

Larry:

Yeah, that's a question that we actually debate periodically. Should the tank be replaced at 2 million gallons or should it be a million gallon and we make those... For instance, Derby was supposed to be 2

million gallons and that was a million. I think in this case, the fact that these components are at or near the end of their useful life I think really dictates that we replace them and use as much capital efficiency as we can in putting the project together to do it cost effectively. So it's something that needs to be done simply because we need Whitney as part of our overall supply and we throttle back Gaillard during the winter so we can let Lake Gaillard fill up, and we then step up Whitney to make up for that demand. So it's important that we keep it in very good working order. Thank you. That was a good question.

Mario:

I figured I had to ask. And then a little bit of a follow-up, that's related to Lake Whitney. This is not specific on the application, so I don't know if it's related. In some of the readings talked about out improvements and some dredging activities. Is any of that planned for when Lake Whitney Dam is being done to try and clean up the soils immediately upstream of the dam?

Sunny:

That could be very well planned at that time because there are some works which will happen, I would say upstream of the rehab and the rehab happens. So certainly I think that'll be part of it. But we are accelerating a few other smaller initiatives in terms of the planning activities on the water quality side. So they were originally planned for 26, 27. We are advancing them because of safety and security issues. We want to put some monitors in 24/7, 365.

So yes, some of them are planned, then actually the dam rehab happens. But some of the other activities we are moving forward. But just to add on to the other questions that you had, which Larry kind of answered, we also have that planning, I would say entire tool that we use where we circulate to the project managers and different teams put the priority items. So in terms of prioritizing the projects itself, it takes a more holistic look of which plans where we need to deploy the funds. So that kind of, I would say every year when we develop the budgets, that's given as a precursor activity to even, I would say funding and prioritizing the projects. So that priority matrix was put maybe at least five, six years ago or so, even-

Sunny:

Even longer than that.

Larry:

Several years in the making.

Sunny:

So I think that kind of plays a significant role because it prioritizes not only, I would say the capital projects on the treatment side, the distribution side, as well as the technology side.

Mario:

And I'm not questioning the Matrix. My question was more and maybe the next time the water supply plan is updated, is what are our water needs for today and for tomorrow? And obviously you're looking at potentially serving other communities that are not within the district. So all that is a balance and I just want to make sure you think about it as you-

Sunny:

No, absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. It's a fair point.

David:

No other questions or comments? All right, sensing you're ready to vote. All those in favor of the Application and forwarding it to the RPB signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Thank you. And Kevin, I don't think he's back yet, right?

Suzanne:

No.

David:

Okay. All right, so it passes. Four zero, all present. All right. Well we've got three other items left. I don't think we could get either, well one we really can't do without Kevin. I don't think we could get the other one completed by three o'clock, although we could do the discussion of the potential acquisition.

Larry:

Yes, we could do...

David:

Because you're looking for guidance, you're not looking for both.

Larry:

Yes. We're really looking for guidance and an agreement that this is something we want to continue to aggressively pursue.

David:

All right, well that's actually next on the agenda, so let's just do that then. We are on item J, consider possible acquisition. And since this is an acquisition, I will ask for a motion to go into executive session. Okay. Made by Mario. Seconded by Catherine. And, okay. All those in favor of going into executive session for the purposes listed, inviting management and the Authority members signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Passage unanimous. Thank you.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 2:29 P.M. TO 3:05 P.M. – CONSIDER POSSIBLE ACQUISITION - DISCUSSION RECESSED UNTIL AFTER DISCUSSION REGARDING PENDING LITIGATION]

David:

On possible consideration action regarding PFAS 3M class action suit. And with that we... Because it's pending litigation, we should-

Catherine:

Make a motion to go into executive session.

David:

Okay.

Mario:

I second that motion.

David:

Second. All those in favor signify by saying "aye."

Authority members:

Aye

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 3:03 P.M. TO 3:42 P.M. – PFAS 3M CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENT]

David:

At this time we will continue our discussion about the addition of a possible acquisition, so I would ask for a motion to go into executive session for matters related the confidential commercial and financial information.

Suzanne:

So moved.

David:

Is there a second?

Catherine:

Second.

David:

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

We will move on to the discussion now. Thank you, folks.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 3:44 P.M. TO 3:57 P.M. – CONSIDER POSSIBLE ACQUISITION]

David:

[inaudible 00:00:02] I didn't skip anything? Am I jumping around?

Larry:

Nope, that was all. That's fine.

David:

All right. Is there a motion to recess the Authority meeting and meet as the Compensation Committee?

Mario:

So moved.

Catherine:

Second.

David:

All those in favor signify by saying "aye."

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

That seems unanimous. Thank you. Kevin, it's all yours.

[COMPENSATION COMMITTEE MEETS FROM 3:57 P.M. TO 4:13 P.M.]

David:

Thank you. Now we're on the last item, act on matters arising from committee meetings. There was nothing that we need to act on as the full board. So with that, I would ask for a motion to adjourn.

Catherine:

So moved.

Kevin:

Second.

David:

Second by Kevin. All those in favor signify by saying aye. [crosstalk 00:00:40] Thank you.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Thank you folks.