

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

DECEMBER 15, 2022

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Mario:

All right. Thank you very much. So the first, the welcome to the regular meeting of December 15th, 2022. The representative policy board of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District, I'm Mario Ricoszi, the Chair. I want to wish everyone a happy holiday, Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, and a beautiful New Year. First order of business is safety moment, and someone got very creative about 12 days of safety, and how you should not leave things plugged in and on. All paper throw away, and don't put candles on trees. And a whole bunch of other things, which you really should pay close attention to.

And, don't overshare social media while you're traveling, but also don't be drinking and driving ever. And be careful for people out there, as it is dark early. The next item of business, as you can all read what was sent to you in your agenda packet, is the public comment. Is there anyone from the public who wishes to make a comment, Jennifer?

Jennifer:

I don't see any members of the public.

Mario:

Anyone from the public? Okay. We'll move on to the approval of minutes of November 17th, 2022. Is there a motion to approve?

Greg:

I'll move.

Mike:

Second.

Mario:

Okay. Jennifer, did you get that?

Jennifer:

I got it.

Mario:

Okay. Any additions, corrections or amendments to the November 17th meeting minutes?

Jay:

Mr. Chairman, this is Jay. I don't know if you can hear me?

Mario:

Yes sir.

December 15, 2022

Jay:

Oh, okay. I'm on the meeting then. Yes. Thank you.

Mario:

No problem, Jay. Okay, hearing no amendments. All those in favor of the minutes of November 17th say aye.

Group:

Aye. [inaudible 00:02:31].

Mario:

Anyone opposed? And do we have anyone abstaining? Okay, thank you very much. This evening we have a couple of communications, the fiscal year 2024, proposed budget review meetings. We currently have one scheduled for finance and consumer affairs, beginning at 5:00 on April 17th. Anyone is welcome to join that meeting. And then, following on Wednesday, April 19th at 5:30, the Land Use Committee is having a special meeting. Actually, that's their regular meeting, but the special topic will be the budget. And anyone can join that meeting also. So please put those on your calendar and attend one or even both, because sometimes you get different information from both. All right. Any other communications, Jennifer? No?

Jennifer:

Just the conflict of interest, if you haven't sent it in, I'll need that. I'm just missing a couple.

Mario:

Okay.

Jennifer:

Thank you.

Mario:

There will be coal in your stalking if you do not submit your conflict of interest form. And that's not good for the environment, coal. That's what I was told. So please do that. And mark these down. We did remove an item from the agenda, and that'll be coming back I think next month. And so we're on to reports. Reports of the finance committee, Mr. Slocum.

Tim:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Finance Committee met on Monday, December 12th at 5:00. It was a remote meeting as they all are. And we met with the primary purpose of meeting with management to discuss the dashboard. We had had conversations within the last several months about the dashboard, not that there was major complaints, but that it could serve us perhaps differently, better with some different information. They put a lot of thought and process into it and made a presentation to us. We discussed it, tossed it around, gave it some thoughtful consideration.

And I must say the chairman, Mr. Mario, was on board, and he added some additional inputs for management to consider. We endorse those and they will be coming back to us in our January. And at

December 15, 2022

that point, presuming we're totally satisfied and happy, we'll be forwarding the whole thing to the board. And that explains Mario's reason for removing the item for consideration tonight, which would've required a motion and a vote. But it was a great, certainly, a great first effort and any tweaking is going to be relevant but somewhat minor and no shame on management.

So with that, we moved on essentially to just some updates on the RPB approved projects and there was nothing earth shattering there. What we discussed is essentially in the minutes. And our next meeting of the finance committee is Monday, January, 9th. And I'm more than happy to entertain any questions you might have.

Mario:

Questions? Thank you very much, Tim.

Tim:

Thank you.

Mario:

Land Use Committee, pinch hitting for Mr. Betkoski, is Bob Harvey if he's here. Bob?

Bob:

Yes I am. Can everyone hear me?

Mario:

Yes sir.

Bob:

Okay. We had our meeting last night and we had a discussion or a presentation by Steve Vitko, regarding Safe Yield. And I have to say it didn't take long, but it was very, very informative. And it had to deal with how we've been in the past and the new regulations that are going to be coming up. And we talked a little about the implementation and future impact and how it's going to affect our supply. But like I said, it was a very interesting discussion and it will probably be shared amongst us again.

Mario:

Very good. Any questions? Bob, thank you very much.

Bob:

You're very welcome.

Mario:

Consumer Affairs Committee, Mr. Mongillo.

Stephen:

Good evening everyone. Consumer Affairs is scheduled to meet on Monday the 19th. I would call your attention to two items on our agenda. We had to reschedule our joint meeting with finance regarding this, the special budget meeting, and as Mario mentioned, that will be on Monday, April 17th. We're

doing that at 5:00. We're devoting our meeting to an update on a number of questions that have come up regarding accounts receivable and the strategy thereof. So Prem and Dana Bochan will be there to do that. We will do it in executive session. If anyone's interested in that particular topic, they're welcome to join us. So, our meeting is the normal time is 5:30 on Monday.

Mario:

Question for Steve?

Charles:

But Steve, I heard you say we were going to meet at 5:00?

Stephen:

No, the meeting at 5:00 is the joint meeting with finance on April 17th.

Charles:

Oh, okay.

Stephen:

Yeah, that we're starting a little earlier than our regular time, for that special. That's actually a scheduled meeting for us. But normally we meet at 5:30, because it's a little longer meeting, we're going to start at 5:00 for that. But on Monday it's 5:30.

Tim:

Steve?

Stephen:

Sure. Yes.

Tim:

Tim. Yeah. Steve, I had listed that on my calendar as a joint meeting with finance, and I don't know if that's because we had discussed that it's potentially taking place and I just put it as a placeholder, but am I mistaken? I'm happy to be corrected.

Stephen:

Yeah, I know. Whatever. I mean we know we're going to do it on that date. Most important thing was to just make sure we had the date.

Tim:

No, no, I meant, Steve, the meeting of the 19th, which is Monday. This coming Monday. Yeah, I don't know why I thought that was going to be a joint meeting and I discovered it today and didn't see anything, and then I decided, "Well I'll look stupid in public." Figured I'd ask.

Stephen:

Oh yeah, we had talked about it. We talked about it.

Tim:

Yeah and that's how I had listed it-

Stephen:

That that's perfectly fine.

Tim:

And sadly, I didn't mention it to my colleagues on finance on Monday, because I'm just not that far ahead. And I discovered it today, on my calendar for Monday. So shall we make it a joint meeting invite anyone who can attend from finance or I'll just show up just because I'm in good stead?

Stephen:

Yeah, I mean anyone who's interested in that topic can join us, so that's fine.

Tim:

Okay.

Stephen:

If you'd like to open it to your... Just emphasize to your committee that especially invited to it, that's fine.

Tim:

That's fine. And since many of them are here tonight, I'll do that in this format, and then Jennifer can follow on with making sure members get the invite. I appreciate that. I know a phone call makes this sound a lot better, but this is the best way I could come up to you for answers.

Stephen:

Sorry for the confusion.

Tim:

Thank you much.

David:

Any other questions, Steve?

Greg:

Yeah. Hey, Steve?

Stephen:

Yes.

Greg:

This is Greg. Just out of curiosity, I read your minutes, and you went into executive sessions, then you came out and then you went right back into executive sessions. You have a reason for that?

Stephen:

We had two different topics.

Greg:

Okay. And you can't do the two topics in one executive session?

Stephen:

I Prem, do you remember if there was a particular reason we did that?

Prem:

I think-

Stephen:

Different attendees.

Prem:

There were couple of things also we wanted to discuss, Steve. Remember there were a couple questions from Mark, and we had one from Mark, one from Naomi, and one from Rich, I believe, as a clarification in the last consumer phase. So we are going to be doing a follow-up on that as well. So that's in the public session. That's not executive session. So that will be part of that next week's Monday discussion as well.

Stephen:

No, he was asking why we had two executive sessions at our last meeting.

Greg:

Because we had different attendees.

Tim:

I can add that finance had the same requirement on the same topics, and we too had two executive sessions.

Greg:

Maybe that's the proper way of doing it.

Jeff:

Part of it was we had different [inaudible 00:12:43].

Prem:

Okay.

Greg:

Thank you.

Mario:

Okay. Yeah, I think Greg, if you have two different topics and they're not related, it's probably best to go into two different executive sessions.

Greg:

Okay, I was just trying to figure that out.

Mario:

If they're related, oftentimes I have seen it done as one motion, but you have to be clear in your motion why you're going into executive session.

Greg:

Okay, thank.

Mario:

You. That is a non-legal opinion.

Greg:

We had different attendees.

Mario:

Okay. Thank you very much Steve. And Everyone is invited to the meeting on Monday about our accounts receivable and our processes involved with that. 5:30 on Monday. Authority and Management, Mr. Borowy, Mr. Bingaman.

David:

Good evening everybody. Mr. Chairman and members, thank you so much. We did have quite a meeting this afternoon with a lot to go over, some of which is coming your way and we started with the risk audit committee, and Catherine is chairman of that. So I'll ask if she wants to give her report.

Catherine:

Sure. Good evening everybody. We had two topics of discussion during the audit risk committee meeting. The first we did conduct, primarily in executive session. We talked about the internal controls and risk assessment update. The fiscal 2023 work plan of the audit risk committee included a new item, conducting a risk assessment of our internal controls, to help in the determination on of the focus areas for our proposed internal audits. This assessment was associated with the re-instituting of an internal audit function.

And while we conducted this discussion in executive session, I can tell you that the discussion included the process used for the assessment, the results of the assessment and recommendations and the next steps. The recommendations included the proposed internal audits for later in this fiscal year and further refinement of the internal audit plan, for inclusion in the fiscal 2024 work plan. Our second topic, address the cyber technology resiliency update.

This discussion included... At a fairly high level, it was not held in an executive session. The top three cyber security focus areas are updated, cyber roadmap. We talked about the Fountain Lake cyber functional exercise with the manual pump station. That was a really very interesting exercise for those that participated. We also talked about the success of fishing campaigns with employees, and making sure that the RWA is training employees to be careful with respect to cybersecurity issues.

And finally, we talked about the RWAs Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency quarterly dashboard. All of this information was necessary to understand the comfort level of the board with management's activities to protect the RWA against cyber risk. And that concludes my report. Any questions?

David:

Thank you, Catherine. All right. Okay, very good. We also had a significant business portion of the meeting and for that, as usual, I'll hand that over to Larry.

Larry:

Very good. Thank you, Mr. Borowy. And we covered several topics in our meeting today. First of all, not necessarily in this order, but we reviewed the proposed revisions to the rules and regulations, which will be part of the Ray Case, which Rochelle reviewed today with the authority. And the authority voted to move it on for RPB consideration. So that'll be going to the RPB in January for review by the finance committee for completeness. And while, I will not go into the details, but the good news is that the proposed Ray Case's less than what was in the last 10 year model. So that was a good, and the authority members felt that was a good direction to take.

The authority board, also elected officers for the year. And I'm not including the chairman. So, Mr. Curseaden was re-nominated for the Vice Chair role and Ms. LaMarr was nominated for the Secretary/Treasurer role. So congratulations to the authority members on that election. And the Authority also reviewed a proposal by management, to purchase about 40 acres of land in Prospect. And so, they approved the resolution to authorize Sunny to take the necessary action for that purchase. But as you know, under the enabling legislation, that will require the authority, that is management to consult with the land use committee on that particular purchase before that goes through. So that will be the next step in the process, probably at the January meeting.

We also had a commercial business review today, and that was done in executive session, because it involves strategy and we name companies during that discussion. And I'm happy to say that the commercial business is ahead of budget. So they're doing very well. And we'll have a review of that a little bit later, as is our practice. And also the committee discussed two memos that was focused on the commercial business expansion and the mergers, and the acquisition pipeline, with two potential plumbing companies, that if the authority approves those in the next couple of months when they get the application, those will be moved on to the RPB for approval there as well.

So that will be a first for management to present that to the RPB and you'll be able to consider those two plumbing companies for acquisition, because there it's over the minimum required in the enabling legislation.

And finally, the management reviewed with the committee, our metrics and targets for the fiscal 23, as well as some stretch goals that we have, that we're making good progress toward achieving. In other business, we also gave our regular COVID update. So I'm going to ask, Liz Calo, to give a high level update on the COVID situation.

Liz:

Hi everyone. So from the last report, we only had one confirmed case. And so everything else remains the same. Precautions and cleaning protocols are still in place, and we continue to fall. Any questions?

Larry:

Thank you, Liz. And then as part of my business updates, I also reported on two meetings that management held this past week. The first one was with the New Haven Police Department, in order to forge a closer collaborative relationship. And we appreciate Catherine LaMarr helping to facilitate that happening. And some of the topics we discussed was an early notification system, in the event a police officer that is assigned to a construction job for RWA, sometimes they have to cancel those at the last minute. So we talked about having some an earlier notification process, so we can continue on with the job if at all possible.

And the good news is that we talked about collaborating with the police department in their annual PAL, P-A-L, summer camp, to bring inner city kids out to the forest area. And we also talked about collaboration on re-instituting a Cops & Bobbers program, which was something that Sal Nesci had initiated when he was here and was captain of our police department. But the New Haven Police Department will be working with Paul Ruggiero, in our communications and outreach group, who put together the Cops & Bobbers program, which is a fishing program for targeted toward inner city kids.

And also to the assistant chief is going to help facilitate New Haven police officers that might be retiring from their current position. If they're interested in any vacancies at the RWA for the police officer role, We'll make sure they get pointed in our direction. The other meeting that we had, that was really great, Jim Hill...

Mark:

Excuse me. Larry. Larry.

Larry:

Yes.

Mark:

Excuse me. That's wonderful about the inner city kids going to our land. I'm really, really happy about that. Just want to let you know that I'm glad that that's happening.

Larry:

And I wanted to let you know, as a matter of fact, Sony's going to probably talk more about that at the January Land Use Committee meeting. But we are also looking at how we can expand our recreation program to include them in that as well. So lots going on in that area that we're excited about for 2023.

Mark:

Thank you very much. Something I've been advocating for a long time.

Larry:

Yep, thank you. And then we met with the fire chief and the assistant fire chief to just again, establishing better working relationships. We talked about the use of our hydrants and testing hydrants. They have a different method than we do. Sometimes their method results in dirty water complaints. So we're going to work with them to put together a training video, and that will be shown to the other police houses. We talked about maybe replacing some of their hydrants in the city that they've targeted. And we'll bring them into the RWA, and show them around including the control room as well. In both cases, we plan on meeting with these two agencies on a monthly basis, just to keep the collaboration moving along. But it was a good meeting.

And then on the business front, we are doing well. Operating revenues are over budget by about \$3.2 million. And that's due to water revenues being over budget by about 2.8, primarily due to higher than anticipated consumption. Our other revenues, primarily our jobbing, backflow testing, outside lab services, pipe safe, that's over budget by about \$321,000. And our operating expenses are under budget by about \$3.9 million. And right now we're being conservative. We're saying that probably, \$3.2 million is due to timing, \$700,000 being permanent or deferred savings. So we're being conservative on that at this point.

But when you do all the puts and takes, the good news is that we are projecting our coverage of 123%, which is two percentage points higher than last month. And that's compared to a budget of about 114%. And of course we're being very conservative about that, because of the state of the economy still being a bit fragile. So we're watching that closely. And then finally, the highlight of the evening is water storage is at 78% compared to a long-term average of 69%, for the same period last year. And that concludes my reports. Thank you. Any questions?

Stephen:

Larry, this is Steve. You mentioned possibly hiring a policeman. Do I assume that you're moving ahead with the proposed security update that Donna had presented to us?

Larry:

Yeah, I can't go in detail into an open forum, but I will tell you that we are proceeding with interviewing applicants. We have a number of applications that we're considering and we'll be interviewing them in January. And we're also looking at locations to place security cameras. And then, we're looking at the other recommendations as well, as it gets closer to the... We're planning for the recreation season next year.

Stephen:

Well, I know that some of the Consumer Affairs Committee members had some questions on that proposed plan, and then Donna left, so we never had a chance to follow up on that. I'll talk to Prem about it offline, and we'll see what we can...

Larry:

Yeah, I think we can probably, I think between Liz and Captain Ruggiero and myself, I think we can probably come and give you an update, on where we are and hopefully we'll be able to respond to your questions.

Stephen:

That would be great. Thank you.

Mario:

Other questions?

Larry:

So, if you can just coordinate with Prem on that, we can make sure that happens internally.

Stephen:

Okay.

Prem:

Thank you, Larry. Yeah, I'll follow up. Thanks.

Mario:

Other questions? David, Larry? David, other comments?

David:

No. I'm going to stop there before I say what naturally was going to come out, but you're going to say instead, so everybody, thank you very much.

Mario:

I will say I knew I was given a hint, as to the collaboration with the police department. And so I was watching Mark's camera and the minute Larry identified the inner city kids coming out into our watershed lands and getting that experience, he immediately jumped up and took his microphone off of mute, ready to jump in the middle. I was wondering how long it would take, Mark, and you were quicker than I thought. So any other business before this illustrious group, Mr. Donofrio?

Jeff:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. What I was trying to say before, but I had a bad connection. The reason there were two executive sessions at the November Consumer Affairs committee meeting was because there were two separate topics. One pertained to the Lead and Copper rule, the other pertained to the 10 year plan. And in order to have maximum transparency and to fully comply with the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, we had them as separate agenda items, necessitating separate votes. Okay, so that's the answer on that.

Stephen:

Thank you, Jeff.

Representative Policy Board
December 15, 2022

Jeff:

Sure.

Mario:

My non-legal was pretty close.

David:

Thank You.

Jeff:

Merry Christmas.

Mario:

Okay, very good. Any other business? Hearing none.

Mark:

Happy Hanukkah to all.

Mario:

Take a motion for a happy Hanukkah, a merry Christmas and a peaceful Kwanza, and a great New Year.
We stand adjourn at 7:00 PM.