

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

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AGENDA

Special Meeting of July 22, 2024 at 5:30 pm

1. Safety Moment
2. Public Comment: Residents and customers may address the CAC Committee regarding agenda items or other issues. Discussion is limited to the presentation of information for consideration and comment on agenda items.
3. FY 2024 Customer Satisfaction Index & Brand Image Survey Results: P. Singh and D. Bochan
4. Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2024 regular meeting
5. Report of OCA – J. Donofrio
6. Approval of OCA invoice for June 2024 for \$3,138.00
7. Volunteers to attend Authority meetings:
 - July 25 – Ms. Campbell
 - August 22 – Mr. Levine
 - September 26 – Ms. Campbell
8. Elect Committee Chair for 2024-2025
9. New Business
10. Next meeting on Monday, August 19, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
11. Adjourn

Members of the public may attend the meeting via teams using the link at the top of the agenda. To view meeting documents, please visit <http://tinyurl.com/449v27xt>. For questions, contact the board office at jslubowski@rwater.com or by calling 203-401-2515.

SAFETY MOMENT

AVOID POISON IVY

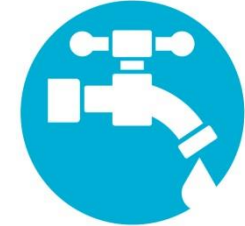
The stuff grows everywhere – in the yard, beside the highway and in city parks. And if botany's not your thing, follow the old adage: "Leaves of three, let it be." Most of us will develop some sort of rash from exposure to the oils in poison ivy and poison oak. The oil comes from the plant leaf and stem and can stay on your skin, clothes, shoes, work gloves – even your dog.

AVOID EXPOSURE TO POISON IVY BY:

- Wearing protective clothing while gardening or hiking in the woods
- Washing skin and clothes well with regular soap or laundry detergent
- Use cortisone cream to treat rashes or use oral antihistamines
- If experiencing more severe symptoms see a doctor



Tap Into
Safety



Regional Water Authority

Service – Teamwork – Accountability – Respect – Safety

Safety is a core company value at the Regional Water Authority .
It is our goal to reduce workplace injuries to zero.

 Regional Water Authority

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

June 17, 2024

Minutes

The regular meeting of the Consumer Affairs Committee (“CAC”) of the Representative Policy Board (“RPB”) of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water District (“RWA”) took place on Monday, June 17, 2024, via remote access. Chair Levine presided.

Members present: M. Levine, N. Campbell, S. Mongillo, A. Rescigno, and R. Smith

Members absent: F. Pepe

RPB: R. Harvey and C. Havrda

Authority: K. Curseaden

RWA: P. Singh, D. Bochan, and J. Hill

Office of Consumer Affairs: Attorney Donofrio (“OCA”)

Public Members: Messrs. Krayske and Delot-Vilain

RPB Staff: J. Slubowski

Chair Levine called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. He reviewed the Safety Moment distributed to members.

Chair Levine offered the opportunity for members of the public to comment. There were two members of the public present at the meeting. Mr. Krayske, President of Winter Runs Condominium Association (“Association”) in New Haven, provided comments on the Association’s past due water bill dispute unpaid by the prior management company.

Mr. Krayske provided an update and his frustration regarding the bill dispute between Winter’s Run Condominium Association in New Haven and the Regional Water Authority. He has been in touch with Ms. Campbell, RPB New Haven Representative, and Atty. Donofrio to resolve the situation.

Atty. Donofrio stated that a bankruptcy is in process, currently outside of his jurisdiction, but he plans to discuss a resolution with the RWA once he has an opportunity to review the latest information.

Mr. Delot-Vilain had no additional comments.

At 5:43 p.m., Messrs. Krayski and Delot-Vilain withdrew from the meeting and on motion made by Mr. Rescigno, and seconded by Ms. Campbell, the Committee voted to go into executive session pursuant to C.G.S. Section 1-200(6)(E) to discuss matters covered by Section 1-210(b)(5)(B), pertaining to commercial and financial information. Present in executive session were Committee members, Messrs. Harvey, Havrda, Hill, Singh, Atty. Donofrio, and Mss. Bochan and Slubowski.

At 6:24 p.m., the Committee came out of executive session.

On motion made by Mr. Rescigno, and seconded by Ms. Campbell, the Committee voted to approve the minutes of its May 20, 2024 regular meeting, as presented.

Attorney Donofrio reported on the status of the bill dispute with Winters Run in New Haven. He stated that the Association filed bankruptcy on October 31, 2023, but he was not made aware of the dispute until May 2024. He that he has met with Mr. Singh and Ms. Bochan to discuss considerations. However, since the Association has filed for bankruptcy, the court has jurisdiction and bankruptcy counsel is now involved, as well as the Authority's counsel.

Atty. Donofrio also reported on a bill dispute for a property in West Haven, which may be related to a leak. The Authority is trying to collaborate with the customer to identify the reason, but communications are unsuccessful at this point.

On motion made by Mr. Rescigno, and seconded by Mr. Smith, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the OCA's May invoice for \$1,443.00.

Chair Levine confirmed upcoming Authority meeting assignments for June, July, August, and September 2024.

He reported that the Committee chair election will take place next month.

There was no new business to report.

The Committee's next meeting is a special meeting on Monday, July 22, 2024, at 5:30 p.m., via teams.

At 6:45 p.m., on motion made by Mr. Rescigno, and seconded by Ms. Campbell, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.



Mark Levine, Chair

Project Overview

During May 6 - 22, 2024, the Regional Water Authority commissioned GreatBlue Research, Inc. to conduct a **Customer Satisfaction and Brand Image Survey** among 600 residential customers via phone and 340 residential customers via online through an outbound email. This was the first Customer Satisfaction and Brand Image Survey the company conducted since prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are the high-level highlights from this study.

Overview of CSI Performance

The RWA's overall 2024 Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) is measured to be **88.1%**. While this reflects a notable decrease in the CSI from 2019 (91.8%), this aligns with broader industry trends observed following the COVID-19 pandemic and the expected impact from planned RWA Accounts Receivables initiatives. Across industries, customer satisfaction ratings have trended downward since prior to the pandemic by approximately 5 percentage points. This is supported by a 5-percentage point decline in GreatBlue's national customer satisfaction tracker that began in 2019. Despite not conducting surveys from 2020-2023, the RWA's decline in its CSI of 3.7 percentage points is in line with industry averages. Despite the downturn, the RWA continues to perform well against industry peers, outpacing the GreatBlue benchmark for water utilities (77.1%) by some 11 percentage points.

Drivers of CSI Decline

The decline in CSI is primarily perception-driven, with an overall 10-percentage point decrease noted in key areas of **Organizational Characteristics** such as:

- Work Environment: RWA being a good place to work
- Transparency: Openness and honesty regarding operations and policies
- Community Responsibility: Socially responsible community member
- Modernity: Maintaining modern and reliable infrastructure

Notably, there was no significant change in customer service quality measured by **Office and Field Personnel Characteristics** from the 2019 study, indicating the overall decline in CSI is largely due to perceptions rather than actual service interactions.

Office personnel, which includes customer service characteristics, maintained high satisfaction levels with approximately 89% of customers reporting positive interactions.

Field personnel also maintained high satisfaction levels, with approximately 90% of customers reporting positive interactions. However, perceptions of overall appearance and punctuality saw declines.

The general perceptions of RWA as a brand increased its Brand Image Index in 2024 (74.1%) compared to 2019 (70.9%). These brand image attributes consider perceptions on innovation, reliability, affordability, and modernity to name a few.

Gains in Environmental Stewardship

The RWA made substantial gains in environmental stewardship, with increased customer satisfaction in areas such as:

- Water Quality Preservation: +14.1 percentage points
- Hazardous Waste Disposal: +15.1 percentage points
- Protection of Open Spaces: +17.8 percentage points

Water Quality Aspects

In addition to the overall decline in the CSI, ratings for water quality aspects such as pressure, smell, taste, and perceived safety all experienced reductions by approximately 6 percentage points from 2019.

Digital Transition and Methodological Insights

RWA piloted a digital survey methodology in 2024, revealing a CSI of 78.3% online compared to 88.1% telephonically. This gap is attributed to lower social desirability bias and higher self-selection bias in the digital approach. However, the RWA's brand image ratings remained consistent across both methodologies and nearly half of the digital survey participants rated the RWA more favorably than other utilities they interact with like UI, SCG and Eversource. Furthermore, the RWA is in the top 5 percentile with a CSI of 78.3% online, compared to other utilities nationwide.

Conclusion

While RWA's CSI in 2024 shows a decline from 2019, this trend mirrors industry-wide patterns post-pandemic. The RWA's proactive environmental initiatives and consistent performance in several key customer service areas demonstrate resilience. The transition to a digital survey methodology also offers valuable insights and a path forward for enhanced customer engagement and data accuracy.