

**REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD**  
March 28, 2024  
MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Bob:

I'd like to start the March meeting of the Representative Policy Board of South Central Connecticut Regional Water Guard. First, we have the safety moment. Talk about walking safety. It's really went outside and we still walk. Pay attention to traffic, walk on sidewalks, single file, reflective coating at night. And if you're able to walk with someone else, don't walk with your back to oncoming traffic. Don't forget to watch for pedestrians or cyclists or people who might be on the phone not paying attention. Don't wear dark, don't talk to strangers and don't listen to music or look at your phone. Okay. I don't know if there's any public here for public comment. Hearing none, I guess. Ask them.

Bob:

So seeing how we don't have any public right now, I guess I'm not going to have to tell them that they're limited to three minutes approval of the minutes of the February meeting.

Jamie:

Second.

Bob

Greg and Naomi. Any discussion regarding those minutes? Hearing none. We'll accept them as they've been presented. Or should we vote? What the heck, let's vote all those in favor, please say aye.

All:

Aye. Aye. Aye.

Bob:

And opposed? Any abstentions? Great. Okay. Onto the next is communications. That is that the finance committee, there's going to be a budget meeting and it's open to all members. That's going to be on Monday, April 8th at 5:30. And also the land Use Committee and Consumer Affairs are having a joint meeting for the budget. That will be on Monday, April 15th at 5:30. Get your taxes now. We'll move on to reports. Finance committee.

Vincent:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. We had a very efficient meeting of the finance committee where the RWs external auditor reviewed the CLA communication letter concerning the authorities' audit and objectives for the fiscal year ending in May 31st, 2024. He also discussed the firm's scope of engagement and current and new accounting standards. Got a report from Rochelle on the quarterly report on the RPB-approved projects and related financing. Then got motion to adjourn from Mr. Clifford gratefully, and that was seconded. And we ended our meeting after about 12 minutes with our next meeting being scheduled for April 8th.

March 28, 2024

Bob:

Is there any questions of them in the finance committee? Hearing none. We'll move on to land use. Filling in is Greg.

Greg:

Yeah, I'm filling in for Peter. The land use met March 13th and we had Ms. Smith, the RWS Natural Resources Analyst, and she provided an update of the 2023 deer hunt, which included historical property and harvesting information since 2009. Reasons for reducing gear density, season overview and survey information permits and harvesting amounts, impact status, DEH reporting promise. She said that there were 164 participants this year. North Brantford had 114, Bethany 23, Prospect 19, San Antonio/Seymour eight. There were 10 days of spouting between October 7th to October 16th, and 30 days of hunting during October 27th through November 30th. And there was no Sunday hunting. The deer had to go to church. There were 54 deer harvested, 33 bucks, 21 does, and the expected surveys back from the hunters. And I just want to give you a breakdown of [inaudible 00:06:22].

Bob:

How many deer did they miss?

Greg:

What's that?

Bob:

How many deer did they miss?

Greg:

A lot on Sunday. Okay. This year there were 21 does harvested and there were 33 bucks. In North Brantford with a total of 39 harvested. Prospect had seven, Bethany had eight, and Seymour and [inaudible 00:06:55] had none.

Jamie:

Something that was interesting that she mentioned, but at least I found interesting was that the first time we did the hunting, there was more deer. They got more deer. So we were asked why there was a reduction in deer taken and they said there are going to be deer, but they actually know when hunting season started and they said, [inaudible 00:07:17] up and they know not to go in those areas. So I thought that was interesting. And then there's been studies done that here, but in other locations where they've actually, I guess, trapped deer and found that they start to avoid areas where they know they're going to be shooting or hunting and they go elsewhere. And then as soon as the hunting ends, they come back. So we could do a study. We don't need to, but I guess [inaudible 00:07:42].

Bob:

Doesn't work that way in highways.

Representative Policy Board

March 28, 2024

Jamie:

We have what?

Bob:

It doesn't work that way in highways.

Greg:

The deer might be scouting the hunters. There you go.

Greg:

Any other questions?

Bob:

Thank you, Greg.

Bob:

We move on to Consumer Affairs Committee. Is that you Mark?

Mark:

Yes. I'm just going to go with our last meeting we had. It didn't get approved for a couple of months. We had a lack of attendance. But now our March 18th meeting was held and we had a very interesting discussion from the education people that are up in, I thought [inaudible 00:08:24]. Here it is. That are at Eli Whitney and the outreach programs they do, it's really amazing how much they give back to the school systems. They go into the school systems, they present a program, they have programs that the teacher picks up and it tells them exactly what to do and how to run the program. And a lot of those are being done. Then they have kids that come into the Eli Whitney Center itself and have programs there. And the best thing did was give her an assistant that we worked hard for her to get. And the assistant is just a wonderful thing that RWA is doing. I really would recommend that her presentation be done at the full board meeting because it was very interesting. Very interesting. And that was about the regular stuff of no bad complaints or anything from CA. And that's about it, unless anybody has any questions.

Bob:

And Mark, do all school districts in our footprint take advantage of it?

Mark:

Most of them do. And private schools too. And private schools. I forgot, she gave me in the-

Naomi:

I think West Haven was one of the leaders. I think they had more kids coming in, I think, the other times.

Mark:

Didn't give me any of the breakdown of the town. Did she give us a breakdown of the town center?

March 28, 2024

Naomi:

Yes, they did.

Mark:

I can't remember half the record. No, it was an excellent discussion on how much they're doing. And this new person has developed a program too, and they're online. The online programs are really great too. So that came through to COVID, and it's a wonderful thing that we're doing for the schools.

Bob:

Thank you. Any other questions? Hearing none. We'll move on to the authority of managements.

David:

Good evening everybody. We had a almost seven-hour meeting today. Grueling. We had about three hours of review of the budgets, which we voted to send to you. So you folks will have an opportunity to review them and we'd love to hear your comments. We know you have the meetings, as Bob said earlier at the start of your meeting. We also met as the Environmental Health and Safety Committee, and Mario was going to give a report on that.

Mario:

Thank you very much. We had three different topics that we covered today. The first was raw water quality program, what RWA is doing on the raw water quality, the sample, the raw water quality and all the different reservoirs, but working on different algaecide treatments to get the quality of the water coming into the plant better, which helps with treatment. And also looking at how to improve the water quality in different systems, including aeration as one of the methods. And looking at installing instruments in the reservoirs so that you don't have to, if we are having a storm event, let's say, you can read how the water quality in the water is changing. You don't have to send someone out there to open and close the valve. Majority get that information for the operator doing the treatment. So you can adjust where you're drawing water from and the different water levels. So it'll provide quicker feedback on how to operate. So that should be an improvement. The second was an invasive species update. Anyone has any interest in that? About 4,800 acres of invasive species and they've treated about 550 acres. But there is a grant that was obtained about just under \$40,000, which include purchase of a piece of equipment. If you recall, they've been burning the different invasive species of plants. Well, this is a super concentrated steam, so it'll boil, essentially, and that'll kill the plant in place. It's a different way of approaching it. And so, that is part of it. The other part is to get a couple of interns that will be working as part of the grant to help eradicate the invasive species. So that's going to go on. We also covered health and safety initiatives and there's a number of new programs that have been put in place. We have a injuries in the last year trying to target even zero. So a number of new programs, including training, looking after different ways of doing things since our workforce is easy. Installation of stairs around tanks as opposed to the ladders. And we've also brought in Connecticut OSHA to do inspections of some of the facilities to look at it and say, "You really should consider A, B, or C. So that's ongoing. And we also discussed our commercial business enterprises and how are they doing safety wise? We just acquired them and they actually are doing very well. So that was something that we covered and that was the report. Any questions?

March 28, 2024

Mark:

You said there was 4,800 acres identified as invasive species. Is that all our-

Mario:

It's been that.

Mark:

And we've only destroyed 500 acres.

Mario:

550.

Brian:

This is Brian. I got a quick question.

Mario:

New terms are coming. Yes.

Brian:

Quick question about that machine. With the steam machine, will that allow them to expand the time that they treat plants? I know sometimes with the burning, they're very restricted on when they can do burning. Will steaming allow them a wider time period?

Mario:

So that's one of the advantages of the equipment is basically is a tank of cold water and a engine that heats the water at the spray tube so that you don't have the fire restriction. Of course, you don't do it in the winter then, but-

Brian:

It certainly allows them a greater breadth of time to do work. So I like the idea. Oh, go ahead. I'm sorry.

Stephen:

Do you know how the amount of water that we've had affects water quality testing?

Mario:

So the testing is still the same, but it does because you get the runoff, the excess runoff, especially in the heavy storms, it does deteriorate the raw water quality. So being able to draw from a different level in the reservoir, pick the best quality water. [inaudible 00:15:34]. Yeah, I think you're carrying in more than you're diluting there. Talking about instruments, actually, in the reservoir itself.

Mark:

So they're going to be working under our Invasive Species person. His name is-

Representative Policy Board

March 28, 2024

Mike:

Josh.

Mark:

Josh, thank you. Yes. And he's going to be setting up a program.

Mark:

Thank you.

Mario:

Great, thank you very much.

Dave:

All right. And we also voted to buy 10 acres of land in Hamden that was in the watershed and something that they've been looking for. It was on the list. And then we also met as a commercial business committee. And Kevin, I understand is here. Kevin, if you're ready for your report.

Kevin:

Yeah, thanks Dave. Members of the chairman and members of the RPB, we met as the commercial business committee. As Dave said, we discussed and approved the FY 25 work plan for the committee. We also heard that the third quarter results on our commercial business target to exceed the budget or working towards exceeding the budgeted goal. And then this is a quick update because the balance of our meeting was in executive session on a variety of different topics, including pipe-safe, well Safe Protection plans and other commercial business updates and activities.

Dave:

Great, thank you. Any questions for Kevin? And with that I'll hand it over to Larry for the business portion.

Larry:

All right, thank you very much. So after nine months of actual results through February 29th, operating revenues are under budget by \$20.9 million. And this is due to total water revenues being under budget by about \$2.8 million, primarily due to lower metered water sales. However, other revenues are over budget by about \$893,000. And that's primarily due to jogging and meter reading and collection related charges. And operating and maintenance expenses are about \$2.5 million under budget. And that's split almost 50/50 permanent or deferred savings is about \$1.1 million of that. And timing is about \$1.5. So when you do all the puts and takes, we are projecting coverage of 120% compared to a budget and required of the general bond resolution of 114%. And that's with no shortfall. So we're still projecting that water revenues will probably be under budget for the rest of the year because of the wet cool summer that we had. However, interest income is above budget because of the interest rate environment and pilot has turned out to be lower than what we thought it might be in some cases. So that's been beneficial. Economic situation is still causing a little uneasiness. So we're watching the state of the economy and how that may impact customer's ability to pay. And as of March 18, raw water storage was at 100%.

Representative Policy Board

March 28, 2024

So that's got to be first in our history. Right. I bet you. We've never had it. That's compared to a long-term marriage of 87%. So we're doing quite well. So get your friends to flush twice. And a couple of other things, we approved the authority approved a type B three amendment, which should be transferred about \$1.5 million that was allocated to the Lake [inaudible 00:19:30] water treatment plant project. We put it into Project Reserve so we can draw on that in the new fiscal year. And that was due to supply chain delay that we've experienced. Therefore, we felt that it was prudent to put that in the reserve for the remainder of the fiscal year. So with that, management team and I would be glad to answer any questions you might have. Mark.

Mark:

How's our legislative thing going? Does anybody know?

Larry:

Oh, thank you. I meant to mention that.

Mark:

I read your mind.

Larry:

Thank you. Last week the Planning and Development Committee voted unanimously to move it out of committee and send it to the house floor. We had strong support from committee leadership and so it is now waiting for action in the house after which it'll be sent from the Senate, and after that it'll go to the governor's office. We're watching it closely, but we're not hearing anybody oppose the changes, nor are they looking to amend it as well. So we're doing well.

Mark:

Do you want any of us to speak to legislators that we know or should we just stay out of it?

Larry:

Well, it never hurts to talk to your legislators and let them know that you are in favor of that. We did last month. I testified in front of the committee through Zoom and then we submitted joint testimony signed by David and Bob and Justin Atrio submitted independent testimony all in support of the bill, but it never hurts to call your legislator and tell them that you're in favor of the bill, bill number is House Bill 52-77 and it's an act amending the regional water authority enabling legislation.

Mark:

52-77. Thank you. I'm glad I asked that question.

Larry:

I'm glad you did too. Thank you.

Jamie:

Employee [inaudible 00:21:24] relocation situation with employees or with COVID and attending and remote work all going well?

March 28, 2024

Larry:

Yeah, it is. we haven't had any new cases of COVID isolated here and there sometimes, but nothing on a large scale. We are still technically working from home. About 70% of the workforce is in the building. That includes everybody in operation, which is about half of the workforce. They've got to come to work every day. And, of course, the water treatment operators are the treatment plants. But you have other employees that are here. For instance, the leadership team is here just about four to five days a week and other individuals come in periodically. Customer care department has been asked to come in at least once a month. And then we're still holding employee events in which we require everybody to come in for that employee event. It's a chance to get to collaborate with employees. So we're examining that on how long we might continue that. This is actually drafting up a policy that may have some sort of regular hybrid approach, but we're still looking at that.

Jamie:

Well, it sounds like it hasn't impacted anything, it's improved.

Larry:

And it's not impacted, certainly, our metrics and we continue to meet those and that's something that we watch very closely. The employees love the flexibility of being able to work at home if they need to or come in when they have to as well.

Bob:

Any other questions? [inaudible 00:23:21] affairs, Jeff?

Jeff:

Nothing. Thank you.

Bob:

I guess I can have a motion to adjourn.

Greg:

So, move.

Jamie:

Second.

Bob:

And we will come back and have our hearing at seven o'clock. Mr. Slocum. Sorry.

Greg:

We have to do so.

Bob:

Thank you very much. All those favor of adjourning, please say aye.

Representative Policy Board  
March 28, 2024

All:

Aye. Aye. Aye.

Bob:

Okay. We got six minutes.