

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

DECEMBER 19, 2024

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Bob:

I'd like to begin our meeting of the Representative Policy Board for the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority. I will start with a safety moment and that is tips for safe snow shoveling to be heart conscious. Dress for the weather. Drink plenty of water. Of course, we should be encouraging everyone to drink it.

David:

Tap water, not-

Bob:

Correct, not bottled, tap water. Watch out for ice and to take it slow. Everybody has this in their packet. I would encourage you all to heed what it says.

David:

You missed the best tip though.

Bob:

What would that be?

David:

Hire someone.

Bob:

Hire someone. Okay, public comment tonight. I don't know if we have anyone from the public. I don't see anyone, but I suppose that could change. If so, they'll be limited to three minutes. Next is the approval of the minutes from last month.

Greg:

So moved.

Tom:

Second.

Bob:

Any discussion regarding last month's minutes? Hearing none, all those in favor of accepting them say aye.

RPB Members:

Aye.

Bob:

Any opposed? Any abstentions? Thank you. Onto communications, our next meeting in January on the 23rd, it's going to be both our meeting and a public hearing and it is going to be held at the Seymour Town Hall, 1 1st Street in Seymour. So everybody-

Tim:

Is it the [inaudible 00:03:54] same time as usual?

Bob:

Excuse me?

Tim:

Is it same time as usual? You don't have a time there.

Bob:

Yes. Yes, it will be the same time.

Jamie:

Is there ample parking?

Bob:

I would assume so [inaudible 00:04:10].

Mark:

Bob, there's plenty of parking there.

Bob:

Okay, thank you. Next is that RPB committees are going to be meeting for the fiscal year 2026. Proposed budget review meetings with the Finance Committee on Monday, April 7th at 5:00, which is the normal regular meeting of the Finance Committee. And the second meeting is going to be a joint of Consumer Affairs and Land Use. And that is going to be on Thursday, April 17th at 5:30 and that is a special night for the meeting. So more information will be coming, but to get it on your calendars, we're sharing it now.

Mark:

And if you can't make it, you can go to either meeting. Right, Bob?

Bob:

Yes, or either or both. Okay. Now for reports, Finance Committee.

Vin:

This is Chairman. On Monday, December 9th at 5:00 PM the Finance Committee met. We convened into executive session and we discussed the compensation for the Authority members. That was a robust

discussion that lasted the better part of, let's say, 15 minutes or so. We came out of executive session 5:57 and there was a motion made and seconded on that topic to recommend to [inaudible 00:06:10] an increase of \$1,500 for members of the Authority. Let's see, there was an update given by Rochelle regarding the quarterly report on RPB approved projects and there was no other business reported. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 13th at 5:00 PM. They told me a hybrid meeting.

Bob:

Thank you, Vin. Are there any questions?

Stephen:

This is Steve. I was just wondering, Vin, what was the increase based on?

Vin:

Well, there was a robust discussion in executive session and what was discussed in the executive session is privileged to the committee in executive session but-

Stephen:

Okay.

Vin:

... so I will say that there was no deliberation on the motion in the public session, so I would not feel comfortable stating anything publicly since it related to anything that was stated in executive session.

Tim:

What I might add and is a matter of, we could note this, is we certainly it was the consensus of the committee to make certain that members of the five member Authority were at least up to or ahead of whatever the consumer price index was.

Vin:

Yes.

Tim:

So we thought that was critical.

Stephen:

Okay.

Tim:

The other things we talked about that in terms of ways that we could perceive and which might even include, I think I could say, the stipends because there was a history of doing that in 2008 with the acquisition of Birmingham.

Stephen:

Okay, [inaudible 00:08:06].

Tim:

And it's a matter of record.

Vin:

Yes, and as a matter of record, we looked at the historical data of increases of the membership. I think this ties to the historical increases.

Stephen:

When was the last increase?

Tim:

Can't we just discuss this in executive session when we get to the item on number six?

Vin:

Yes, yes, yes. We could do that and then we could be more robust in our discussion. But to answer your question, it was 2022.

Stephen:

That's all that can be said now. That's public information. Just wanted to know, thank you.

Vin:

You're welcome and I think I completed my report, Mr. Chairman.

Bob:

Are there any other questions of Finance?

Stephen:

Hey, Bob, I just have one more question [inaudible 00:09:01] so maybe we can avoid executive session if it's okay. I was just curious because we're sort of in acquisition transition here, which would change compensation. Was any thought given to that?

Vin:

Well, there was no [inaudible 00:09:22] public discussion on the motion.

Tom:

Shouldn't that just all wait for [inaudible 00:09:28]?

Bob:

Some of these questions, maybe we want to wait [inaudible 00:09:31] until item six.

Vin:

Right, this is only questions on the record.

Bob:

Yes, yes.

Stephen:

Okay.

David:

[inaudible 00:09:36], last time I show up.

Bob:

Okay, thank you, Vin. We'll move on to the Land Use Committee, Mark.

Mark:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We discussed the vault. I've been on this committee a long time and I never heard a discussion on the vault. It was wonderful. John Triana, the Real Estate Manager, made a presentation on the vault, which included the contents, the filing system and the historic documents. Years ago when people used to pay their bills at the water company, they had a vault to keep the cash in. No longer necessary. So the thing is the vault is mainly used for historical records, which has a fire suppression system and all kinds of things to protect it. It didn't have a [inaudible 00:10:38] and no lock, which I thought was interesting, but we have copies of everything, so that was not necessary. We also talked about the deer hunt, which was just completed and we're going to get a full report on that at our next meeting. But just to break it down, there was at Gaillard, there was 135 hunters. At Bethany, there was 25 hunters and Prospect, 20 hunters, and Ansonia Seymour had eight hunters. They killed it and Brantford was the biggest hunt.

They got 15 does and 14 bucks, a total of 29 deer. The total amount of deer, the whole killed by us on our land or by people on our land was 40. Very interesting. Any questions?

Stephen:

I have a question.

Mark:

What? I can't hear you.

Stephen:

Were any hunters shot?

Mark:

No. They used bow and arrows. No, no, nobody got shot. Thank God. Yeah. I remember when Larry, [inaudible 00:11:45]. I remember when Larry was alive and we first did this, he got so much hate mail. They called us the killing fields.

So anyways, it just thins out the population a little bit, which is good for us and our lands. Any other questions? Steve, you had a question?

Stephen:

Yeah, so that's still overpopulation is still an issue.

Mark:

Well, I'm not exactly sure how much it is. I'll find that out for you. They're still knocking them off, but I don't think it's as much as bad as it was. There was a year that we had a lot of snow and the killing fields there was in Route 80 [inaudible 00:12:26]. They were knocking off there every day because they couldn't [inaudible 00:12:30] food so I'm not exactly sure. I'll get a report for you next month, Steve.

Stephen:

Okay, thanks. And where is the vault, is it at Sargent Drive?

Mark:

Yes, [inaudible 00:12:40]. I haven't seen it.

Tim:

Mr. Chair?

Mark:

We didn't see it.

Tim:

Yes. Can I just have a question for the chair? Mr. Chair, when you say you're knocking off deer every day, I'm assuming you're referring to the hunters lawfully shooting deer with permits?

Bob:

Yes.

Mark:

Yeah. Oh, with our... Yes, they had to have our permits plus permits. They had to have permits to be on our land, plus permits and they can only use bow and arrow and they have to make a [inaudible 00:13:07]. I'm not this familiar.

Tim:

Not counting.

Mark:

[inaudible 00:13:10]. Yeah, so I mean-

Tom:

Okay.

Mark:

But what I meant when the year of that snowstorm, they were getting killed on Route 80 looking for food because it was so much snow that year and that's why that's what started this deer hunt.

Tim:

Thank you.

Mark:

No problem. Anything else? Thank you.

Bob:

Okay, we're hearing none. We'll move on to Consumer Affairs. Naomi?

Naomi:

No members of the public were present. We had discussed the upcoming budget review with Rochelle and they had already decided, well, the days we decided that the Finance Committee would do theirs, and we would do ours joint with the Land Committee on Thursday, April 17th at 5:30. From our Consumer Affairs, Jeff, we reported that we have no pending on consumer matters currently, which is great for us. Let's see, we also have the motion made to approve Jeff's bill for November. We also, at the end, I'm trying to inform them that we will get an update on the CIS project early next year. We adjourned at 5:39 PM. I don't have the date for our next meeting.

Bob:

It will be sent out.

Naomi:

Okay.

Bob:

Any questions of Naomi for Consumer Affairs? Okay, hearing none, we'll move on to the Authority and Management. David, do you want to start?

David:

Thank you, Chairman and members. I just have to ask Naomi and Vin, did I hear correctly that you had a 90-minute meeting and you had a one-hour meeting?

Naomi:

Correct.

David:

[inaudible 00:15:17] in the twilight zone?

Vin:

I apologize. I apologize to our visiting members.

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David:

When I got the text from Jennifer an hour later and then you were on an executive session [inaudible 00:15:34] something so thank you.

Vin:

Thank you.

David:

With that, I thank you for your committee's work and you folks will leave voluntarily and you folks will have your item on the agenda so thank you. But we did meet this afternoon. First item of business was to meet as the Audit Risk Committee and Catherine is with us remotely, so we'll give her our intent listening here.

Catherine:

Good evening, members of the board. We did meet, actually we had a very brief meeting today. Our work plan suggested that we would be looking at the internal audit status or update and also a cyber security update. We did decide in a prior meeting to move the internal audit review until next year and the members had an opportunity to review and discuss a confidential memo concerning the cyber security update. The only thing that I can really tell you about that because it is confidential, is that there was confirmation of our continued participation with Homeland Security and we briefly discussed a proposal to consider a policy for use of artificial intelligence. That's it. Any questions?

David:

Thank you, Catherine. We also met as a Commercial Business Committee to get an update and if you could your rapt attention to Kevin, he will now report that.

Kevin:

Good evening, Mr. Chairman, members of the board. We met today, most of it or all of it was an executive session, but we talked about key initiatives in progress, year to date financial results, a potential acquisition, and then we had a strategic, a discussion about strategy, put it that way. So there is an acquisition that we're pursuing right now. Wealth services have exceeded the target valuation for each year and on track to surpass the valuation going forward. Protection plan, there's been a substantial increase in commercial revenue, largely due to the home safety valve. And then we had a strategy discussion about potential future acquisitions and the size of those acquisitions. And we discussed our fiscal year 2025 goals to achieve the \$9.2 million goal per the 2020 dash '25 strategic plan and that was our meeting today.

David:

Questions? All right, and we also elected officers. The chair is a two-year term and I'm in the middle of my second term, so I wasn't elected or I'm elected. But we did re-elect Catherine and Kevin as secretary treasurer and as vice chair respectively so we thank them for their service and their continued service. And so that was unanimous and oh, now we can go into the business updates or do you want to do the RA update [inaudible 00:19:11]?

Bob:

Sure, yeah.

David:

[inaudible 00:19:12].

Sunny:

The financial updates, [inaudible 00:19:14] can do it. The RWA continues to move in a very positive direction. Still I think we are going to have the next 12 weeks is going to be busy for resources, certainly the risk schedules to meet. Each week it's going to have milestones which the team has to move towards and hopefully, I think we're still targeting the 2nd of April and we are going to monitor closely until we get to that. Any questions?

David:

And then the business?

Rochelle:

Okay, business update so operating revenues through November, were over budget by about \$1.3 million. That's about 2%. That's really being driven by the other revenues and it's primarily we're about \$2.8 million over budget and that's largely due to the dropping gross revenue as well as intensity. That was not part of our official plan. From an O&M perspective, we are currently under by about \$2.2 million. Most of that is at this point we're considering time related, that's about a 6% under run. However, I will mention that there's a few things that we are closely monitoring. We do have some permanent overruns, especially related to electric service as an example, due to additional statutory required charges that have [inaudible 00:20:42] bills and some other areas that we're just watching closely. Having said all this, we are currently projecting coverage of 119. That does now incorporate, [inaudible 00:20:54], the approval of the lead application so we built that into our estimates so our coverage is 119.

And some key drivers there are the refinancing that we did in May of 2024, [inaudible 00:21:07] included higher than [inaudible 00:21:07] interest rates that are helping us with our future income. Some smaller variances on pilot, HSB as we mentioned. And so now with the incorporation of the rate application we are forecasting just a little bit under our board of revenue budget. And then from a storage and rainfall, so through December 16th, our storage was at 71%, compared to a long-term average of 69%. And as of fiscal 2025 through November 17th, rainfall total of 22.7 inches [inaudible 00:21:52] is lower than the long term average of [inaudible 00:21:58]. Any questions?

Tim:

I have a question about, you mentioned with statutory change [inaudible 00:22:06].

Rochelle:

That's the public [inaudible 00:22:08] charges.

Tim:

So we could in too.

Rochelle:

Yes, [inaudible 00:22:11].

Tim:

So we can [inaudible 00:22:14] about from this level.

Bob:

Yeah.

David:

That line item's over. It is supposed to \$1.7 million. It's projected to be over \$2.2 million, about 25% over because of that.

Tim:

Yeah, some of that includes [inaudible 00:22:30]. No, seriously there's all kinds of reasons they sort of impose this.

David:

Yes.

Tim:

We don't produce any energy in the state. We're the manager.

David:

Yeah, keep it safe.

Tim:

Yeah, it's a really [inaudible 00:22:52] person.

David:

Any other questions? Thank you very much.

Bob:

Rochelle, if where we have some solar generation, there probably may not be that portion of the bill for those specific leaders or properties.

David:

Yeah, I think that's what two facilities?

Rochelle:

Yeah, I think it's probably [inaudible 00:23:24] a solar array we have in [inaudible 00:23:24].

Bob:

Yes. I think that is [inaudible 00:23:27]. I think that is one of the things I remember hearing about, but some of the people who have solar on their properties did not have to pay that.

David:

That's right.

Rochelle:

We should double check.

David:

Yes.

Rochelle:

We'll double check.

Bob:

Yes.

David:

But that probably also contributes to those other fees, that's what they say.

Bob:

Right, right.

David:

Those different teams are paying for that [inaudible 00:23:47], so they're going to look great. That's really the truth.

Bob:

Call your supplier, you tell them you want it shut off.

David:

I really do care but I mean I get it.

Bob:

Some people's decisions, not ours.

Tom:

No.

David:

Thank you, and that's our report. I won't say what I would like to say because I leave that for you.

Bob:

Oh, I was thinking you would want to share it. It doesn't matter to me.

David:

No, that'll be later. What I was going to say was happy holidays to all and Happy New Year, but I did that one time it took Bob's thunder so I leave it for him.

Bob:

Oh, okay.

David:

Our reports are so close together, but once you start clearing the room, which I think is going to... That's the practical matter, there'll be nobody. Once you clear the room, we have Rochelle will have an explanation of something for you.

Bob:

Okay.

David:

And then Mario and I will head out.

Bob:

Okay, thank you. Are there any questions from the Authority of Management? Okay, I guess it's time now for item number six. Vin, did you want to-

Vin:

Mr. Chair, I can make a motion for discussion and then again, second it. We can then decide whether or not we need to go to an executive session.

Bob:

Correct.

Vin:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The proposed resolution is as follows, "Resolved, that based on the recommendations of the RPB Finance Committee, the compensation of the RWA Chair be increased to \$37,000 per year and the compensation of members of the RWA who do not serve as Chair, be increased to \$27,500 per year."

Bob:

Did I hear you wrong on the first dollar amount you read?

Vin:

I don't know, I read it verbatim.

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Bob:

Okay, I thought I heard something different. That's okay.

Vin:

I read verbatim what everyone has in front of them. Like I said, \$37,000.

Bob:

Yes.

Vin:

Is that correct?

Bob:

I thought I heard something different, but it might be me.

Vin:

It might have been-

Bob:

Okay. Well, I just want to be sure.

Vin:

Whatever everyone has in front is what I intended to read.

Bob:

Okay.

Vin:

Okay. I would like to open it up for discussion, but if there's certain items to be discussed, we may have to go into executive session.

Vin:

Mr. Chair, I would move, I know it requires 2/3, that we go into executive session, so if anyone has any questions of the Finance Committee that were discussed during the executive session, we could do that and then we can come out of executive session and have any discussion in public that would be appropriate for the public.

Bob:

Thank you.

Jamie:

I'll second that [inaudible 00:26:37].

Speaker 2:

I make that motion.

Bob:

Okay, so now it's time for a vote for us to go into executive session. There will be certain people that will not be staying. I believe those would be the people that are on the five member Authority so I guess it's now time to vote on going into executive session. All those in favor, please say aye.

RPB Members:

Aye.

Bob:

Any opposed? It looks like we're going into executive session.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 6:56 P.M. TO 7:13 P.M.]

bOB:

At the present time we are going to come out of executive session so that we can vote on the motion. So Jennifer, we're out for executive session.

Jennifer:

Yes.

Chair:

Okay. You've heard the motion that's before us at this time. I don't believe anyone needs to have it read back to them. All those in favor please say aye.

RPB Members:

Aye.

Chair:

Any opposed? Now I know there might be a little caveat to this, Rochelle, and the fact that there really hasn't been a determination date as when this will start. It's usually January 1, I think.

Rochelle:

It's usually the new year. By doing that, we're waiting for the new year.

Chair:

Okay.

Rochelle:

It's now up to you if you want to make it effective 1st Jan.

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Vin:

Yeah. Mr. Chair, I would say I think it falls under the agenda item, so I think it'd be appropriate. I would make just a second motion to make the effective date of the increase as of January 1, 2025.

Jamie:

I second that.

Bob:

I just wanted to reach clarification...That's a good point.

Tim:

We didn't really discuss it. We didn't discuss the effect. We just assumed it would happen. Okay.

Chair:

Jamie, did you have something?

Jamie:

I seconded.

Chair:

Okay. I guess we'll follow down. I don't know if we'll have to. But yes well that's a motion to have it become effective, January 1, 2025.

Vin:

As an amendment to the motion.

Bob:

As an amendment to the motion.

Jamie:

Second that.

Bob:

Okay. All those in favor please say aye.

RPB Members:

Aye.

Chair:

Any opposed? Thank you very much [inaudible 00:02:09] Now I guess I would like to wish everyone happy holidays and I think we'll see you all next year. Well folks, hold on. I have one more thing. Jim DiCarlo, I think is going to be helping you on Finance.

Vin:

Yes, that's great.

Chair:

Yeah. Do you have anything you'd like to share?

Jeff:

Yes. One thing I would like to say is how much the OCA appreciates the efforts of the management team, the RPB, Jennifer Slubowski. and the Five Member Authority this year.

There's been a lot of challenges this year. The volume of the work, the obvious reasons, the loss of Larry and the professionalism that's been exhibited is just absolutely amazing to me, the exemplary effort. I know how hard the management team has been working and I just want to take a moment to recognize how everybody worked very, very hard, how well the boards worked together this year and all the additional meetings and a lot of heavy lifting that went on under very trying circumstances. So I want to just take a moment to express the OCA's appreciation on behalf of the authority's consumers because it is really the mission that we all strive to achieve is to provide the highest quality products and services at the lowest cost and the effort this year really never missed a beat.

So thank you. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah.

RPB Members:

Thank you.

Bob:

So just to go over a little, have some housekeeping here. That is the budget binders, will be going out early in April. If you would like it to be as a hard copy and not electronic, please let Jennifer know. Our next meeting is going to be on January 23rd. That's not, it is, yes, January 3rd, 23rd, which is a Thursday. We'll be in Seymour, which will be for our regular meeting and also a public hearing on the disposition of 56 Quantic Road in Seymour. I don't know if this organization had any discussion regarding any donation in memory of Larry, I know there's been some others that have gone, and I didn't know anyone's thoughts.

Rochelle:

Yes, there have been discussions and Phil Vece is developing some kind of idea that he's putting together that most likely will come to fruition in the next few weeks that he's going to present it to both the authority as well as to the R.P.B.

Bob:

Okay.

Sunny:

To get the news and thoughts and then we can plan.

RPB members:

Okay, thank you.

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Mark:

I have to hang in on that. I agree with you. Yeah we've done it for RPB members, a [inaudible 00:05:40] . This should be more than that. Larry gave his whole heart and soul to this company, and I think we should either have a room or some kind of thing. I'm sure somebody's working on something and I'd be all for it.

Rochelle:

I would also add that at the wake, the head of the program at the Central Connecticut State University talks about the impact there and I think they would be probably interested in participating in something. So, whoever's at the head of this maybe include them as well.

Bob:

Okay. Thank you very much again, have good holidays, whether it be Hanukkah, Christmas, or any others.