

SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

MAY 23, 2024

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

David:

Okay, it is 12:30. All right then I will call the May 23rd 2024 Regional Water Authority meeting to order. It is 12:30. Welcome everybody. First item of business is a safety moment and as Jennifer has it up there heat is coming. We've had some warm weather this week a little bit, so be prepared please. With that we'll move on. Is there anybody from the public with us? No? Okay. In person or online? All right then they've had their chance and they're not here. So I will ask that, we recess our meeting and meet as the Audit-Risk Committee. Who would like to motion?

Kevin:

So moved.

David:

Is there a second?

Suzanne:

Second.

David:

All right, all those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Passes unanimous. Catherine, it's all yours.

[AUDIT-RISK COMMITTEE MEETS FROM 12:31 P.M. TO 1:40 P.M.]

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETS FROM 1:40 P.M. TO 2:16 P.M.]

David:

Next is Item E, are there any items to be acted on that came from the committees? I don't think there's anything that we had to act on. Item F, the consent calendar. I'll let it be known ahead of time that there's going to be one with some questions. Questions or points of clarification, I'm fine, but if it becomes a whole topic then we'll see. But let's play it by ear and see what your pleasure is. I'm making a motion of this.

Catherine:

I move approval of the consent agenda.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

David:

Okay. Is there a second?

Suzanne:

Sure. I'll second.

David:

All right. Now are there any points of clarification or questions of information? Yes, Mario?

Mario:

I do, if that's okay.

David:

Sure.

Mario:

Just got to find my highlight. In your materials...

David:

You're on item six, right? The exemptions.

Mario:

The exemptions. I apologize.

David:

It's all right. I knew because you told me ahead of time.

Mario:

I presume that this summary list that you provide is not necessarily a complete list, example, and that you seek out the vendors as you go along. Because there are local vendors that I don't see on here that provide materials.

Rochelle:

Yes, it looks like this is a schedule from 2023 prices, but the concept is to allow us to do what you're [inaudible 00:39:11].

Mario:

So you'll seek current pricing, but just not as formal bidding, and require you to go to one vendor in particular.

Rochelle:

Right, because you want to make sure it's in approximate proximity to where you are.

Mario:

Understood. Thank you. The item on printing and media services, if GHP has been doing this for a number of years, do you know when the last request for proposals was? Or are you considering do request for proposals? Page 11 at that.

Rochelle:

This one is actually, GHP Media has worked under a big exemption in the past, but we actually want to be able to negotiate with others because it might not be the preferred for everything that we're doing in space.

Mario:

It wasn't clear to me, it sounded like you just wanted to exclusively go to GHP Media, unless I read it wrong.

Rochelle:

We want to actually be able to work with others, as well, to negotiate. Additional media coverage may be used for commercial marketing, just as an example.

Mario:

So you want an exemption so that you can negotiate with various vendors to provide?

Rochelle:

Do you feel like the minutes satisfactorily cover that?

Mario:

If the minutes can reflect that, I'm okay with it.

David:

The minute taker heard that. You got that?

Mario:

In other words, if we can reflect that.

David:

What were some of the limitations of the minutes?

Mario:

That the printing and media service-

Speaker 13:

Allow us to negotiate with other vendors. Not just the one.

David:

That's true. We could change the wording on this and just say, this is the wording that we meant, as part of the motion. Is that all right? The maker of the motion is that and trust Jennifer to have change the wording.

Catherine:

I understand we're in the consent agenda, but I don't have a problem with the minutes reflecting a comment during that comes out of the consent agenda, because we're specifically talking about any discussion. Might be a simpler way of dealing with it.

David:

I'm fine with it. Okay. And we've heard from management that that's what their intent is going to be.

Catherine:

I am. Because I don't think it's a big deal, but I don't know that approving that agenda is a debatable item. But anyway, that's okay. Go ahead.

Mario:

Normally you would remove it.

David:

Right? Yes.

Mario:

Do it as in an independent item.

David:

We can do that. Why don't we do that? Why don't we, if the maker of the motion would accept that items one through five were in your motion.

Catherine:

Yes sir.

David:

And then we'll move to immediate vote on that. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Now we're at item six, which has become a standalone item. And we have the motion in there regarding this item. But our discussion for the minutes to clarify that management has said their intent is not to

conclusively use that one vendor, but rather to be able to go and talk to other vendors for the purpose of the media services. Is that correct?

Mario:

Yes. So not publicly bidding, but to negotiate with.

David:

Right. Correct. Okay.

Mario:

Just again, just clarifying. And also, Ductile Iron Pipe is on page 19. I assume that is the same. You'll be seeking quotes as you make large purchases, as opposed to just saying, we're going to use one person without bidding at all.

Rochelle:

This is also to directly negotiate. So, because public bidding has also something to say.

Mario:

No, I recognize that, but I want to make sure that there isn't an individual who is deciding on their own that, I'd like company ABC and therefore we are going to buy all of our Ductile Iron Pipe for the next year, company ABC.

Rochelle:

Peter is very good about checking market prices and then negotiating with the vendor in relation to those market prices.

Mario:

I'd like to make sure that he's checking with more than one vendor.

Rochelle:

Yes, he does. Because he actually, pipe is-

Mario:

Is that our rules and procedure too?

Rochelle:

To negotiate and have flexibility to, say, get their price down, or we'll go out to public bidding.

Mario:

He's getting quotes from more than one supplier.

Rochelle:

Yes does. Yes he does.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

Mario:

As long as they're an extra [inaudible 00:44:55].

David:

Okay. Do our rules of procedure for purchasing mandate that they try to attempt to get pricing from multiple sources?

Rochelle:

I think our official rules talk about public bidding.

David:

So the rules don't have a process?

Rochelle:

Below, our internal procurement rules do talk about even if you're below the \$50,000, you should get more than one quote.

David:

Okay. That's my point. Okay. All right. I'm comfortable then. Minutes will reflect that. Are we all comfortable?

Mario:

Yes.

David:

Okay. Good. All right. Was that the last one?

Mario:

That was it. Thank you.

David:

Okay. We now have a motion on the, well nobody moved it yet. To consider and act on exceptions from public bidding, with the provisos of clarification.

Mario:

I'll make the motion with the commentary, additional information provided by management.

David:

Good. Which next year will be reflected in these when it comes back to us.

Kevin:

Second.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

David:

A second. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

All right, very good. Do we want to take a break before we do finance? All right.

[BREAK FROM 2:25 P.M. TO 2:40 P.M.]

David:

All right. We're on item G, Finance. Consider an act on resolutions to approve bond anticipation notes. Rochelle do we hand it to you for explanation?

Rochelle:

Yes, so this just a detailed resolution for the debt component of Target Three.

David:

Okay.

Rochelle:

So it's not [inaudible 00:05:26].

David:

All right.

Who would like to move this? Mario? And the we can discuss it. And there are two resolutions in here that are-

Rochelle:

The next one is separate.

David:

Okay, so you want to do just this one first, all right.

Mario:

So moved.

David:

All right. Is there a second?

Catherine:

Second.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

David:

Second by Catherine. Are there questions or discussion? Sensing you are ready to vote, all those in favor signify by saying "Aye."

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

All right, the second resolution for the bond anticipation notes.
It's your pleasure.

Rochelle:

That's just the document that goes along with that.

David:

Oh, that's not... I saw all the [inaudible 00:06:10].

Rochelle:

[inaudible 00:06:11] the-

David:

Because the recitals had some whereas's on it.

Rochelle:

Yes, this the detailed resolution that's [inaudible 00:06:17]-

David:

Okay, all right. When I saw the whereas's, that's why I thought... all right, so item two is consider an act on the resolution to approve tender refunding, but we need to go into executive session to discuss this.

Rochelle:

Yes to talk about the details [inaudible 00:06:32].

Kevin:

I move we go into executive session pursuant to general statute section 1-200(6)(E) to discuss matters [inaudible 00:06:41] covered by section 1-210(E) [inaudible 00:06:45] B, pertaining to commercial and financial information.

Suzanne:

Second.

David:

And we're inviting the senior executive team and members present?

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

Rochelle:

Yes.

David:

And Vin Marino?

Rochelle:

Yes.

David:

All right. There was a second, all those in favor, signify by saying, "Aye."

Authority members:

Aye.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 2:42 P.M. TO 2:46 P.M.]

David:

Do I hear a second?

Mario:

Yes, second.

David:

Second by Mario. Discussion? For the record, we talked in the executive session about the accountability that we have. We could save over a million dollars, potentially, in some refunding of some bonds, and, therefore, that's what the motion on the floor is and I will support that. Any further discussion? Seeing none, sensing you're ready to vote. All those in favor say "Aye."

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

Passes unanimous. We are now to the fun show and tell. Reports of RPB Committees. I see, Mario's grabbing his notes. Are you first? Actually, you are. You're ready, okay.

Mario:

Land Use Committee was on May 9th.

Suzanne:

Yes. Thank you for being changed and thank you for covering.

Mario:

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

Oh, no. I had secretly told Jennifer I would go if I had to, and you very nicely took over. It's my pleasure. I wouldn't have minded, but, okay.

Suzanne:

Can I just ask, Mario, why did we change that meeting date, Jennifer, again?

Jennifer:

Which one? The Land Use?

David:

Yes, to a Thursday from a Wednesday. Peter could have-

Jennifer:

Yes, Peter had a conflict and he really wanted to be there.

Suzanne:

I see, okay.

Jennifer:

Thank you.

Suzanne:

Thank you.

Mario:

So Land Use Committee. Well attended by the RPB members. Big topic was oaks. Oak trees. And I learned a lot about [inaudible 00:01:35] about the different types of oaks and they must have acorn in order to be an oak. This is important. Don't laugh, Rochelle.

Mario:

This is very important. We spent quite a lot of time talking about the rounded lobes-

Catherine:

[inaudible 00:01:54] if they have chestnuts.

Mario:

... versus pointed lobes. But the various types of oak bark and how you distinguish between them. That was really a question that had come up previously in this meeting. It was very interesting to see them, the different types, near each other. John Triad did a real nice job of educating us all and how the RWA girdles them in order to keep the tree from growing stuff. Very interesting process. John also gave a very lengthy presentation on what is happening in land use and invasive species and the grant to the buyer, someone for the summer, to assist. So that's in the works. Several dispositions that he's been working on and acquisitions of property. [inaudible 00:03:18] had 36 kits. See the highlights, we'll continue to have some people working [inaudible 00:03:36]. So, there will be meeting.

Suzanne:

Is there a grant for this? Or are they looking for a highly skilled person or a regular [inaudible 00:04:02]?

Sunny:

Yes, it's pretty simple. There isn't any specific skills. I think they'll put them to use because the people are going to supervise, it's going to be Casey and Josh who are going to be foresters. So they have the knowledge and skills. So typically, like recreation workers whose interest sort of applied to them.

Suzanne:

And is it a summer job?

Sunny:

Yes. It could continue even to the next few summers because the grant does support for a few seasons, actually.

Suzanne:

Would you entertain a high school student?

Sunny:

I think so.

Suzanne:

They're too young.

Sunny:

Yes. I think the job is posted on the website. I'll check.

Suzanne:

Thank you.

David:

Anything else? Any other? All right, then we'll move on to Kevin, Finance.

Kevin:

Yes. The Finance Committee met, and they discussed the budget very briefly. There was not a lot of comments or questions, and they discussed how that the procedure for the recommendation to the RPB of the budget. And it seemed like it was going to be a favorable recommendation, but there wasn't any motion made. And at 5:07, the meeting concluded.

David:

Yes. And it started late, right?

Kevin:

Yes, I think it started at... No offense.

David:

They're very efficient.

Kevin:

Very efficient. Exactly.

David:

The motion in their packet for tonight is favorable.

Kevin:

Yes. They discussed a procedure about how they were going to recommend it to the RPB.

David:

Good. Correct.

Kevin:

Yes.

David:

Thank you. Any questions? All right, then we'll move on to Consumer Affairs. Catherine.

Catherine:

I did attend the Consumer Affairs meeting from my car. So I had a very late meeting that ran over in Hartford and-

David:

It was Teams.

Catherine:

Yes. Managed to entertain myself on my drive back. [inaudible 00:06:03]. The highlight of the meeting was a really good presentation. I didn't see the visuals. I had to wait till I got home to see those. But by Prem on the delivering service excellence program. And I think the thing I found most interesting about it is that the six-point service plan is tied to the CEO's vision and strategic plan building on a service culture. So that was very well received by the committee. Tony complimented the management on this focus. Naomi asked some questions about bilingual services, which she's happy with the response from management. Steve asked questions about how much of the training came out of the employees and years of a 100% of it was developed from the employees, which also was well received committee.

The Consumer Affairs, I mean, the OCA, Jeff Donofrio, talked about a challenging issue that he's dealing with concerning small multi-unit condo association that had a significant leak resulting in a very large bill. The association, because of that bill, declared bankruptcy and now they're pursuing an action against their management company. And he's trying to work with Murtha, the RWA, and the condo

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

association to address this substantial bill, which would be a financial burden on the individual homeowners. Significant [inaudible 00:08:09].

David:

A hundred grand.

Catherine:

It's almost 140 grand.

David:

Yes. A lot of money.

Catherine:

Very large bill.

David:

All due to a leak.

Catherine:

A leak over a very long period of time that was not addressed. And apparently, there's one unit owner that has a lot of damage, so I'm not sure why that was not quite recognized about it.

David:

What town is this in?

Catherine:

It's in New Haven.

David:

New Haven. Okay.

Catherine:

The OCA's bill was approved, and the next meetings were scheduled. And there are... So Mr. Havrda will be attending our June meeting and Ms. Campbell will be attending our July meeting, and tentatively, Mr. Levine will be attending our August meeting. Okay.

That's all.

David:

And they're moving their July meeting because of the golf tournament.

Catherine:

Yes, golf tournament [inaudible 00:09:24]. Because of moving the golf tournament. I'm just on vacation. I really should be there on the fundraising committee.

David:

All right. Any questions? Thank you, Catherine. Any questions? All right, then we'll move on to updates. And, Larry, you want to start with our way? I guess because first on there, or if there's nothing-

Larry:

I'll have Prem touch some of the highlights. But good news, it's essentially status quo from the last month. But I don't have to touch on a few of the highlights of that. So...

David:

Okay, not to be rude, but very few because we still have a few topics.

Prem:

Okay. So very few. I would say that we are starting our testing effectively 6-3. A lot of work heads down by the team. And I would definitely say that we are still targeting December with a potential. March go live, as we discussed before, to make sure that we're doing it right. Which is good news, and I think we'll keep closely monitoring the testing and that's about it. It's really, like Larry said, just heads down, focus, and focus on testing.

David:

Any questions? All right, then we'll move on to monthly business highlights. Is the whole thing in executive session or do you want to do your board report?

Larry:

Well, the board report is self-explanatory.

David:

Right. Okay.

Larry:

So the two topics outside of that board report, I would like to use them at the executive session.

David:

Okay. All right. So do we have a motion?

Suzanne:

Can I just ask one question [inaudible 00:10:56]?

David:

Sure. Yes.

Suzanne:

In the next Commercial Business Committee, one of the things that Larry mentions is the efforts continue on organic growth and we've been devoting a lot of time in your committee to inorganic

growth. So I'm wondering if we can revisit our existing type states, except that we have to come back and do some robust understanding of how we're progressing. All right. Thank you.

Catherine:

Okay. All right. So then what's your pleasure for executive session? For stated reasons, which are two, I'll make motion for the... Go into executive session for commercial financial information, real estate matters for some of the preference channels [inaudible 00:11:47]-

David:

Okay. Is there a second? And we're inviting senior executive team and...

Jennifer:

Is Vin Marino staying on?

David:

Not normally, because this may be an application. So Vin, I hate to say goodbye, but thank you for joining us. I think he's on mute.

Jennifer:

Vin withdrew from the meeting.

David:

So we're all set to vote an executive section. All those in favor, "Aye."

Authority members:

Aye.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 2:58 P.M. TO 3:53 P.M.]

Larry:

But in the past we've said that about 70% of our employees are on site officially, we are allowing employees to work at home a hundred percent of the time if their job permits that. However, we among the management team have been talking about this for quite some time. When was the right time to change that policy? We've decided that effective, I think it's June 3rd, the first Monday in June, we're going to have the employees that are currently working remotely come back to work in the office, probably roughly three days a week. Subject to their division and manager's desires and taking into account people's personal situation that they have to, for some reason work at home, remotely. But we're going to make that official come the first Monday in June, and we'll open up the lobby as well. So we'll start having customers be able to visit the lobby and make payments and do whatever they need to do, do there.

I wanted to mention that to the RPB tonight as well. But we've been debating this for quite some time. There's a lot of research out there about team working at home is not as great as it was thought to be. Other articles are saying, well, it's still the same to do. A lot of employees are still asking for that option when they're considering coming to work here, when it makes sense. It's something that we'll have to

be somewhat flexible on, and it'll be subject to the division VPs, or department or division heads discretion on exactly what the schedule is. But it's roughly at least three days a week.

Suzanne:

And do we have the space for it?

Larry:

We do. It's tight. Yes, we can accommodate or just have some of those people work at home too. I mean, we can rotate that.

Suzanne:

Are you opening up yourself to a lot of favoritism? Difficulty getting along because it's going to be very subjective.

Liz:

I could answer that.

Larry:

Go ahead, Liz.

Liz:

Yes, so we did revise the policy and we are doing it consistently. It is department, division, and role. And the performance basis will be on, we're going to manage their performance, their communication levels and all that. We're not really, I don't think we're going to get in any trouble with any kind of favoritism because it is based upon the job and the need, customer facing versus not. We looked at all that criteria and made sure that we have outlined that to avoid any of that.

Suzanne:

You got 13 call people, you want to have seven at home and six that are going to have to come in.

Liz:

Nope. Because we have a strict schedule. What they're planning to do is a Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Dana and Prem came up with that schedule, just to avoid picking and choosing days. And a strict online... If your day's in office and you can't come in, you can't swap, you need to use your PTO time. That way it would avoid anybody coming in and making those schedules as is, which we're trying to change.

Larry:

I got to hand it to Liz. She's worked through all the difficult, working with each one of the division heads, to come up with this policy that we've rolled out. She's done a great job with that.

David:

Thank you Liz. I believe in getting people back in. I believe that the collaborates see each other, and chance meetings and chance discussions matter a lot. And I think we missed a lot.

Liz:

We're missing some stuff, so, yes. Thank you.

Suzanne:

The thing I would ask about is timing. In terms of popularity and implementation, the beginning of the summer sounds like a riskier time to put this into play versus announcing it now for September or graduation through September. For whatever that's worth. It's an operation decision, not a board decision, but I just would...

Larry:

Yes, we thought about that. And actually we're going to begin testing and training for the new CIS system in June. So all of the customer service reps will have to come in to start learning the system. There's not too many more. That'll be the whole building, given the number of employees that are here on a regular basis as it is.

Liz:

And Suzanne, they did announce it in April, so we gave them plenty of time to plan. And if somebody is having some type of issue or we're hearing a couple of things we're reviewing, so we'll make those accommodations as needed on one-offs. But we had given them ample time. And we did get some pushback and some things that the union wanted to discuss, and we're open to them discussing that with us. We've been having Prem, Dana, and myself have been having conversations with them in regards to what they're looking for, so we can try to meet somewhere in the middle.

Suzanne:

So we have announced it, already?

Liz:

Yes.

Larry:

Yes.

Suzanne:

I was under the impression it was to be announced.

Larry:

Yes. Okay, thank you Liz.

Liz:

Go ahead. Sorry.

David:

Thank you. Thank you. Any other board items?

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

Larry:

That's all that I had to update. All right.

David:

Who wants to make the favorite motion of the meeting?

Mario:

You want to, you're just recessing, aren't you?

David:

That's right. We're recessing, not adjourning. Yes, if you could, Jennifer said to use the same meeting link.

Suzanne:

As the meeting?

David:

As this meeting.

Suzanne:

Okay.

David:

If you have trouble, call me. I'll have my cell phone on.

Catherine

I don't think it's going to be a long meeting.

David:

Whenever they're done. They don't have much tonight, so 7:15, Bob said it would be real quick. So probably 7:15ish.

Suzanne:

So very unlikely that 7:15 I'll be available.

David:

You'll be done with the other thing? Okay. You have objections to the budget?

Suzanne:

No.

David:

And they don't either according to their vote.

South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
May 23, 2024

Catherine:

If you're okay to recess.

David:

Okay. It's a motion to recess. I don't know if that's not the date of the likely adjournment, but we'll pretend it's not. All those in favor? Aye.

Authority members:

Aye.

David:

All right. We are in recess for about three hours.