

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JANUARY 18, 2023

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Mario:

Anyway, welcome. We're all here. Our safety moment is something we won't need this winter, so don't pay attention to this. There's no snow, no shoveling. Sorry for all you people who like to remove snow and maybe even make some money removing snow. I apologize. But yeah, don't go out when you're smoking and drinking and just ate a whole lot. Make sure you read this, memorize it. Next item on our agenda is approval of the minutes.

Peter:

So moved.

Mario:

Is there a second, Bob?

Bob:

Yes. I'll second it.

Mario:

And do we have any corrections, amendments, additions to the minutes? Hearing none. All in favor?
Aye.

Committee:

Aye.

Mario:

Opposed? And abstaining. All right, thank you. The real crux of the matter for this meeting was the update on virtual and hybrid meetings and some upcoming public hearings. I did touch base on Friday with both David and with Larry. Larry basically indicated that the organization is ready if we want to go back and use a conference room. They're still cleaning the conference rooms and we can continue that. They will continue that. We can use the spaces. David is anticipating to bring the five member authority back in February in a hybrid manner. Keeping it open if you feel more comfortable staying home as opposed to coming into the building or wherever you are. If you're vacationing in Tahiti, that's fine as long as you have good internet connection. I wanted to get your sense. I know that last week's numbers finally dipped in the hospitalizations. They were rising from a crazy rate from Thanksgiving through New Year, and last week was the first dip from, they went from 300 hospitalizations in Thanksgiving to about 700 plus, and now I think they're just below 700 as of last Thursday. Any thoughts, ideas?

Stephen:

Mario, that's hospitalizations, but I thought I saw on the news that the transmission rates in every county, except there was one down southeast.

Tim:

But... Well, go ahead.

Stephen:

Yeah, it doesn't matter. I mean, we're living with it. There's a lot of people that may get it, but they don't need hospitalization or whatever.

Bob:

I think the positive percentage was up to over 15 then it dipped down to 13.

Mario:

Yes.

Tim:

I would imagine too, that reporting has got to be pretty sketchy.

Bob:

Yes.

Tim:

At this stage, people are self-testing. It's not like you call somebody up to tell them how you failed or passed. I mean, I got COVID for the first time last month and survived it without a big deal. I mean, you felt it, but I got a sister who's really in terrible shape. And it seems as though I almost know more people that have gotten it, but I also heard that there's far fewer deaths occurring. I don't know what that's all about. If the first two years cleaning out the most healthy people, that sounds cynical and awful, but for whatever reason.

Stephen:

Well, it's vaccinations.

Tim:

Well, I don't know. It seems as though it takes on different forms. I'm vaccinated too, so I just don't know.

Stephen:

Yes, the idea of the vaccinations is not absolute prevention, it's to lessen the impact too.

Tim:

Right, right. Most everyone I know that's gotten it personally is vaccinated. With one booster, not the fourth, I can't say I know anyone who's had the fourth. Right or wrong, I just don't know anyone who's bothered. But that doesn't really answer your question, Mario, does it? I think from my perspective, I think we should certainly welcome the opportunity to go back, even though this is very convenient. I would have to admit this. I mean, if I had an alert a half hour ago, I would've been a half hour late,

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because I had forgotten about this meeting. It's very convenient to be home and get on a Zoom meeting. I guess from that perspective, we could all love to do the Zoom thing. I think the in-person stuff is great. Certainly for the full meetings, I think we should definitely as soon as possible try and get back into that. When I mean everybody, the RPB meetings.

Charles:

What is the Authority doing?

Jay:

Jay, I look at it, and putting myself in a situation that I'd like to go back. And I've never had a problem or reactions, but I continue to wear my mask. And I think that's the answer. If anyone desires to go back and they feel comfortable wearing their mask, I think that's more than sufficient to go back.

Charles:

What is the Authority doing?

Mario:

Charles, they're probably going to meet in person in February, except they're going to do it as a hybrid meeting. The thought is there may be one or two members of the Authority that attend virtually, and they will probably only be Larry and maybe Rochelle or someone's presenting, and unfortunately Jennifer, that might include you, in the room. They would keep it in the small room because I understand they had problems with using the larger room.

Charles:

That kind of answers the question for us then, doesn't it? I mean, if-

Bob:

We won't all fit in the small room,

Charles:

I know, but the large room was problematic. It sounds to me that at least the first meeting that we decided to go back should be hybrid so that people can either show up in person or Zoom, or teams.

Mario:

I would suggest if we're going to go back is that we do it hybrid for a while until we're all comfortable with being back. That could be some time.

Charles:

Well, even beyond the comfort level of the COVID issue, the hybrid serves a purpose with convenience, and I think the hybrid might even be a long term, but we got to get the technology up to speed because I've experienced both good and bad technology and that can make all the difference in the world.

Mario:

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Yes.

Tim:

I had... Oh, go ahead.

Stephen:

As you know, the WPCA is doing hybrid and we haven't had a problem with, technically we have a pretty large room too. Maybe we could draw on that experience to do it.

Charles:

But do you have the large screen and everything?

Stephen:

Yes.

Mario:

Yes.

Charles:

So that the speakers pop up and all of that kind of stuff.

Stephen:

The speakers are there. They're there in three by three feet pictures.

Charles:

Well, that's what I mean. We didn't have that in the big room last time, did we?

Mario:

We had the microphones set. I think we need to change the room a little bit, Charles. I think we need to not plan on everyone being there, number one. Number two, move the side wings, if you will, closer so that everyone is closer to a microphone. It's narrower.

Charles:

Yeah, the microphone seemed problematic last time, I thought.

Mario:

Yes, they were somewhat problematic. I don't know whether they've done anything to upgrade that, Jennifer's saying yes.

Jennifer:

Yes, we have a new microphone system.

Mario:

I'm sorry, Jennifer. What was that?

Jennifer:

They have a new microphone system. I think they're individual microphones, but they're supposed to be better than what they had before.

Charles:

For the large room?

Jennifer:

Yes. For the Welcoh room.

Tim:

I realize we all live in different towns. What are our respective towns doing as far as public meetings? Cheshire's been doing public meetings non-hybrid well over a year. I mean, I don't think we're crazy out in Cheshire. And I just was curious. Well, it's fair. That's a fair observation from a foreigner, but I guess my question becomes how are your communities handling it? Because I know we had, one of our council members the other day just didn't feel well, and obviously the virtual was available, so he was part of the meeting, he's a voting member of the council. And he was there to vote and participate and everything else and that was fine. All the accommodations worked out perfectly. He had a bigger presence in the room than the rest of us because his head was bigger. And so I guess the bottom line is at what point is this really more a matter of convenience and not a matter of public health, because I'm not sure why we're all not in public meetings with masks or whatever. What are most businesses doing? They're accommodating, I believe, to people's desire to work from home. They're probably no longer sanitizing in the Hartford and in the Aetnas and all these other places. I'm not suggesting the hospitals have changed much or any medical facilities, but I think we do have to go back and be prepared to meet in person and then just be honest and decide we want to do the finance committee virtually because it's just easier for people to meet virtually.

Charles:

I agree with Tim. In Gilford, we've been hybrid for over a year and probably not because of health reasons anymore, but the convenience certainly has driven it. But I must say that our first selectman came from that tech industry communications and everything, and we almost immediately were very, very much up to speed with the technology side, the screens and the speakers and all of that. And it has worked very effectively. I had concerns in the beginning, but now we just assume it's hybrid and the public is on board. We even did away with evening meetings and that type of thing because we were getting some pushback while people wanting the convenience of different times for the meetings, and we don't need any of that now with the hybrid. People can come on and leave throughout the meetings. We do almost all of our hearings unless they have to be, and it's especially good for the department head. Doing their reports and that type of thing, they do from their desk, and frankly, they're almost more effective.

Mario:

You've switched to daytime meetings, Charles?

Charles:

Yes, we're 8:30 in the morning.

Mario:

Wow, interesting.

Charles:

Yes.

Tim:

We haven't done that because most people work.

Charles:

We were doing alternating mornings and evenings and yeah. Matter of fact, I might bring it up tomorrow. We have a budget meeting tomorrow. I might bring it up tomorrow. We haven't had any discussion about it. I think we're just going to remain hybrid. I got to say, most of the time, most of the selectmen are live, but it just works. I mean, I don't know why, but I was pleasantly surprised. I knew back with the bank, we struggled for a while until we got the technology up to speed, but that was a couple years ago and we made the investment and we did it. I think if the authority does that for the Welsh room and the other room, because I think we might find committees can just use the smaller room, but I'm pleasantly surprised of hybrid myself.

Stephen:

Hey, Charles, there's plenty of reasons for the hybrid. It allows someone to travel or if you have meetings that are close together, you can't make them if you have to travel, you could do it with Zoom. If the weather's really bad and you live in a remote town. I mean there's just different reasons that would be nice to have that option.

Charles:

Yeah. I do think we lose a little bit without the traditional interaction. To Tim's point, live meetings have values over and above the hybrid.

Stephen:

No question.

Charles:

But I would say minimum of the main, the RPB meetings, we ought to try to start bringing people back in my book.

Peter:

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Mario, I agree with Charles there. We should try to bring them back and possibly, are you saying Larry said we can have hybrid too?

Charles:

Yes.

Mario:

Well there would be a hybrid meeting, Peter.

Peter:

Yeah, yeah. But we could be present, right. Yes.

Mario:

Yes.

Peter:

I say we start. Absolutely.

Charles:

For committees could remain with Teams. It seems to work.

Peter:

Jeff?

Mario:

Want to finish, Peter?

Peter:

Well, no, I mean he's saying with committees, Teams works. I mean it does. But I think at first you get a better feel for people.

Mario:

Yes.

Peter:

I think this is a convenience and it works for me too, but I think we're all getting a little lazy and not your town, Charles. If it works, it works, but we've had public hearings in our town with 100 people or better in the fire [inaudible 00:18:20]. It's just time. I think COVID's here forever. It's going to be here. I say we give it a try. Jay said it well, if you want to wear a mask, you wear a mask. You don't feel comfortable, don't come.

Mario:

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Jeff, you work with a number of towns.

Jeff:

Yeah, I'm in a lot.

Mario:

Just curious your experience.

Jeff:

I'm in a lot of towns. I would say in my experience, probably somewhere between 60 and 70% are hybrid and the overwhelming remainder of them are just in person. Other than Trumbul, which is still online only, everybody else is either hybrid or in person.

Stephen:

And Bob, thoughts?

Bob:

Yes, I think we should go back and have the meetings, offer it hybrid, but I think we have to start drawing the people back so that we can have interaction a little better one-on-one if we have to have some sidebars or something.

Mario:

Mm-hmm. Okay. To the committee chairs-

Jay:

Mario?

Mario:

Yes, Jay.

Jay:

I'm looking at it on the, as well as to the responsibility on our executive person here, Jennifer, as to trying to have two meetings and then have a board meeting. But my thought process is that why don't we continue with the committee meetings hybrid and then go to the full board meeting once... I think that would make more sense because I think it's really in our best interest that we see each other and get together and have one presentation for the board meeting.

Stephen:

Jay, we just talked about having the option just as a convenience for a lot of other reasons. The majority of people would be there, but it'd still be nice to have the option to do it virtually if it could be done.

Tim:

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Which technically makes it hybrid. I guess that's really the definition of hybrid versus virtual for what we're doing now is virtual, obviously.

Jay:

Yes.

Tim:

That's really what you mean to say, right, Jay?

Jay:

Yes.

Tim:

That you thought it would be hybrid more or less for the full meeting for sure.

Charles:

I read RPB meeting and virtual committee meetings, or the option of the committee too. I mean like Peter and Jay, I mean they go off to different locations so that's...

Mario:

Well, and that's what I wanted to ask.

Jay:

Board meeting for our executive, she would be happy to handle the hybrid meeting as well as the present.

Charles:

No, it's still one recording, Jay, and everything. Yes. In the live meeting she may or may not be required to attend that type of thing, but in a hybrid situation, the recording and all of that is as if it was virtual. Some people are live. In a hybrid meeting, there's a camera that views the room and as somebody speaks, that individual is enlarged on the screen.

Mario:

Yes, they're not quite there yet, Charles, unfortunately.

Charles:

Well, okay. I mean, however it is done technology wise, the point of it all is Jennifer, I assume, would be doing it anyway, whether it was hybrid or virtual.

Mario:

Yes. Tim. Finance committee

Charles:

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Office or you're running it from home.

Mario:

Tim, do you think finance, you would meet virtually only or hybrid?

Tim:

I would take the voice of the group because I don't mind being there. I just have to plan my time differently. And we generally are talking about stuff that can show up on a screen or you go back and forth and it's a smaller group, so this format is fine and it's convenient.

Mario:

Okay.

Tim:

I would almost ask if you thought it was just reasonable just to poll the group.

Mario:

Well, that's what I'm doing. Steve.

Tim:

No, no. What I meant by that was the members of the finance committee, for example.

Mario:

Okay.

Tim:

That's what I meant. I realize we're going through this as the leaders.

Mario:

Steve, how do you think you would do consumer affairs?

Stephen:

Again, hybrid. It depends how much effort it is for Jennifer. If it's okay to do hybrid with probably most of us wanting to be there physically, just the option of somebody being able to attend virtually would be nice. I think even for a lot of our meetings, having a physical presence is good. And occasionally we do visit other parts of the organization too, like the meter shop or things like that. If Jennifer can do it, I'd like to hear from her too.

Mario:

Okay. Peter, what are your thoughts? So you're virtual only. All right. Okay.

Peter:

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In a couple months, we'll be meeting outside anyway, but I would say Bob's with me here too. I'd say our group would be willing to meet in person with hybrid too. We would do it right now. Bob, what's your feeling?

Bob:

Yeah, I don't know of any members that would probably have a problem. You have to understand that some of the people are worried, but I'm not sure if there's any people on the land use that are there. I really think land use, it shouldn't be a problem. I think they'd all be willing to attend any of the meetings in person.

Peter:

Yes.

Mario:

Okay. And Jen, the concern, I guess, that Jay raised about having people live and on screen at the same time, and we tried that, I think for one meeting or two, what does that do to you, obviously you have to run two computers.

Jennifer:

Yeah, well, we've done it before. It's not a problem. Once it's noticed as a hybrid meeting, I'll have to be there, I'll make sure I have an IT person at the start of the meeting in case there's any issues technologically. And then we have to make sure that the building will be open to members of the public if they want to come in. If it's an in-person meeting, if we offer it hybrid, we have to offer it to members of the public. I will be at the office to run both the virtual and the in-person.

Mario:

Okay. And Jeff, I want to number one, thank you for your FOI assistance and thoughts and comments that you provided to Jennifer in resolving some questions. Do you see that it would pose us any problems?

Jeff:

No. The legislature in 2022 took the temporary hybrid option from the 2021 session and made it a permanent option. And the only requirement is of course, that the notice that's published online in the case of the water authority provide the access information, and as Jennifer indicated, a live room in which members of the public would have access to if they wanted to attend in person. But as long as that's maintained and at least one person is in the room, that's fine.

Mario:

All right.

Tim:

Mario, I think I could also clarify that finance could definitely do hybrid. We have one member who has a class the night of our meetings, and certainly we benefit from the hybrid situation, and I don't think there's any number of us that couldn't do it virtually and or in person, certainly.

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Mario:
Okay.

Tim:
This'll keep it uniform and simple.

Mario:
It sounds like hybrid becomes kind of our standard, and we'll have to look, Jennifer, at the layout of the room and the tables. Do you want to do the RPB meeting first in February, or do you want to start with Finance, I think is the first meeting in February.

Jennifer:
Land Use is first.

Mario:
Land Use is early.

Jennifer:
Yes.

Mario:
Is Peter late or is he just coming in early?

Peter:
No, we're early. We're early. I'm always on time. They told me I can't be chairman if I'm late.

Tim:
I would feel very fortunate if we could delay the finance meeting to being hybrid in March. And that's because selfishly I'm not around comfortably. It'd be easier to do it virtually.

Mario:
Sure, that's not a problem.

Jay:
Again, Mario, we could start with meetings we're having now, committee meetings virtual and then once a month have the board meeting in person.

Mario:
Yes, Jay. No, I understand. But if we say that it's hybrid, then people can still attend virtually. Unless the whole committee, maybe let's do this, if this is okay with everyone. Your committee meetings in February, do them virtually.

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Tim:

And talk about it, have it on the agenda.

Mario:

Talk about it, see how people feel, and then you can make your decision, let Jennifer know how you all want to do it as a committee, and then we'll just take it from there. It's either all virtual or hybrid.

Peter:

Right.

Tim:

Okay.

Peter:

We'll do all virtual for the committee meetings this month, right, correct?

Tim:

Yeah.

Mario:

For the month of February.

Tim:

It's our forum. It's our forum to discuss it too, so that's good about it.

Mario:

And so at our RPB meeting in January, right, we still have that next week.

Peter:

Yes.

Mario:

We'll just announce that the RPB will meet hybrid in February.

Peter:

There you go. Okay.

Tim:

Good.

Mario:

Everyone okay with that?

Peter:

Yes.

Jay:

Yes.

Mario:

Okay.

Jennifer:

And that includes the public hearing as well in February if the application is approved?

Mario:

Yes. That would include the public hearing. All right. Anything else on the meetings? That was the most important thing that we decided to talk about this month. We're in good shape. Next item of business was the org chart. And I will be honest, when I got the org chart, I called Jennifer and I asked her some questions, and so that's why I met with Larry. I was a little bit confused as to how it was laid out, and I found out it was because of the trying to fit it on an eight and a half by 11 vertical piece of paper instead of turning it landscape. The intent, if you look at the first column, is not that Rochelle reports to Dennis Donovan, but Rochelle reports to Larry, Dennis reports to Larry, Elizabeth reports to Larry, Sonny reports directly to Larry. Jim Hill does, Phil Vece does, Prem does, and Tara does. I want to clarify that because that threw me for a big loop when I saw it. I was very confused.

Obviously this is always a work in progress, but it also gives you some indication of who else are in those particular groups at a high level.

Stephen:

Mario, this is Steve. I have a question.

Mario:

Yes.

Stephen:

I don't remember a chief of staff position. What is the responsibilities of that position?

Mario:

I did not get into that specific. I don't know whether it's to oversee all the vice presidents or work with them. That depends on how you craft it. I'm not sure how that was crafted.

Stephen:

Okay.

Mario:

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I think the concern was trying to understand who to ask questions of, right, and just to make sure that, okay, there are people out there leading each of the groups and there're also people behind them. One of the things that I'd encourage you to do, and David and I do it, is we tend to bother Jennifer with our questions and then ask her to follow up. I think it works a little bit better instead of us reaching out directly because we may go for the wrong person, or someone may be on vacation and we don't get an answer. Jennifer, also as nice as she is to all of us, can be a bit of a bulldog as she tries to get answers for us all, in a nice way.

Stephen:

No, no, no.

Mario:

Okay. She can be nasty too.

Stephen:

I don't believe that.

Mario:

But she is persistent in trying to get those answers, so I would encourage you to use Jennifer as a resource. And her backup is Tara Auger. You probably will be seeing more information, especially about, is it the January meeting, Jen, that Tara's going to be the lead on, or I believe.

Jennifer:

Yes. The 26th.

Mario:

The January RPB meeting, Tara's the lead. You'll see information coming from her for the January meeting.

Stephen:

You have a phone number for Tara, Jennifer?

Jennifer:

Yes. Do you want it now? You want me to email it out to everyone?

Bob:

Yeah, why don't you do that?

Stephen:

Email.

Mario:

That might be good.

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Peter:

[Inaudible 00:35:02] ready, Mario. Jennifer's not going to be there?

Mario:

Oh, she'll be there, but.

Peter:

Oh, okay.

Mario:

And one of the issues that Jennifer and I talked about a while ago, and she's very nice to ask about what she should have on her list of things to do each year, her priorities and her targets and goals. And one of them was, okay, let's make sure there's backup.

Peter:

Okay.

Mario:

And so Tara's been tapped, and I think she's been training Tara, and it's gone pretty well so far.

Peter:

All right, thank you.

Mario:

No problem. Although I think Jennifer is still playing the lottery, so you never know. Hopefully she wasn't in Maine a couple weeks ago. All right. Anything else on the org chart? Moving on to committee agendas and issues, are there anything going on? Any biggies that you've had?

Peter:

Land use everyone, just security. And then Sonny brought her up at our meeting, how they are getting the interviews going, and by the summer we should have a full staff. Am I correct there, Bob? Is that what Sonny was saying?

Bob:

Yeah. I don't know if they've got enough cars for if they do hire people on as security, but I think they're trying to get them interviewed. I think it was mentioned that there's only certain entity that looks into, I don't know if it's backgrounds or does the actual interview before they're...

Peter:

Right. But the interviews are coming, right? We're pushing to have it done for the summer. I mean, it's very important that [inaudible 00:37:18].

Stephen:

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That may be ambitious, but since you're competing with all the towns.

Mario:

Yes.

Bob:

Yeah.

Mario:

Finding-

Peter:

Quite a few applications, but Bob's correct. You still have to do a special background check and everything through the state, but that say what you just said, Steven.

Mario:

Yeah. It is a lengthy process.

Peter:

It was security and then there was one other, Lisa came to our last meeting. Help me out, Jen, her last name.

Jennifer:

Lisa DiFrancesco.

Peter:

She's in touch with all the schools and most of our committee agreed that she needs help. Those are the two issues at land use. If this makes sense to you guys. If you have any questions, I'll explain a little more elaborate, but it was, sorry. It was two things, but that's it on my [inaudible 00:38:26]. Those are my two priorities and I hate to pick on a few people on my committee, but I have my hands full sometimes, so I have to do my due diligence there.

Mario:

Yeah, no.

Peter:

My concern too that the security and having Lisa get some help, because we have a beautiful program and she needs some help to bring inner city [inaudible 00:38:55]. It's great. I mean, the regional water's a phenomenal organization from our committees to the main office. I don't know. I'm very impressed. But those are the two issues I have.

Stephen:

Mario, this is Steve.

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Mario:

Yes, Steve.

Stephen:

On the same topic, my committee members had some questions and wanted a little more information. This month, Sonny's coming to our committee on the security issue and we appreciate that, but PREMs been doing a good job as far as topics, and I think there's enough things happening for him to report on, so we're okay for the immediate future in terms of agenda items.

Mario:

Okay. And you and Tim were able to do that crossover event?

Tim:

We did.

Stephen:

Yeah.

Mario:

Worked out. Thank you-

Tim:

Yeah, that worked out well.

Mario:

For doing that.

Tim:

Yeah. Thank you for that too.

Stephen:

And the other thing I would just want to report on quickly is I did have a meeting with the mayor of Hamden and Larry, which was what we used to do once a year, and that went really well. I think it's a good thing to do, and it establishes a little better rapport with the town officials and questions they had about how to deal with it, their concerns and who to go to, and makes it easier for all parties to pick up the phone and communicate with each other.

Mario:

If you aren't aware, David and Larry are trying to meet with a number of the first selectmen mayors, mostly around the lead and copper rule. Because that will be invasive, disruptive, I don't know what word is the softest to use, but it could be a pain in the neck.

Tim:

Absolutely.

Stephen:

That was a topic that came up. And towns can be helpful, and they do have to know what's happening when that does go through.

Mario:

Right.

Peter:

Correct. Very good, Steve. You got to be transparent on both sides, and that helps all the people.

Tim:

Well, in Finance, I would have to say we have our silos, so to speak and they come in a very organized sort of programmatic way, and we're sticking to it. There's nothing really unbelievable on the horizon that we'll not all be touching. Obviously we've got the rate case coming up and things of those natures, but normal budgetary conversations at this phase.

Mario:

Okay.

Tim:

Nothing more to report.

Stephen:

Mario, this is Steve again. Sonny's going to be there at our next meeting, and I do want to ask him, because I've just been curious about the lining program was suspended, and I don't know when they plan to restart that again. Larry was saying at our meeting that the number of breaks is still well above the average that most companies experience, but seems like I've gotten more notices recently. I don't know if it's because they're just reporting them more about breaks in Hamden anyway.

Mario:

Well, the lining doesn't help with the brakes. It really is more of a hydraulic improvement to the pipes and taste, odor and visual on the water.

Stephen:

Yeah, but aren't you creating a stronger pipe too at the same time?

Mario:

No, it is different, Steve, than what we do on the WPCA side. And Steve brings this up because on the sewer side, as I put on my daytime hat, we do cured in place pipe lining, which actually installs a sock, if you will, pull the sock through the pipe, inflate it, it has resins in it, and when that all cures from the heat, it actually creates a brand-new plastic pipe inside the pipe that is structural, the cleaning and lining

of the cast iron mains is done to remove the tuberculation that occurs on the inside so that you can get better flow characteristics, and then it's just a cement coating. What it does is by replacing the cement coating on the inside of the cast iron pipe or the ductile iron pipe, it keeps the hydraulic capacity up to where it should be. And by not having all that tuberculation, you don't have little bits of iron that flake off occasionally, and then you get a dirty water complaint. It doesn't structurally improve the pipe the way the sewer remains do.

It's possible to do it with water mains. It's a very expensive process and it probably isn't worth it economically.

Stephen:

The difference is significant financially then between those two processes?

Mario:

Well, difference. Oh.

Stephen:

You're saying it costs a lot more to do a resin lining as opposed to the cement lining.

Mario:

Yes. And because the resin lining, because it's potable water, you have all the National Science Foundation requirements for pipes that you don't have on the sewer side.

Stephen:

Yes, I didn't know that. Thank you.

Mario:

No problem.

Stephen:

Also, some of this replacement, do they also do pipe replacement though, if there's so many breaks per?

Mario:

Yes.

Tim:

Yeah, they do. Yeah.

Mario:

Yeah. They schedule a [inaudible 00:45:08].

Stephen:

Okay. That's a new pipe.

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Mario:

That's a brand-new pipe.

Tim:

And we've had a fair amount of that, Steve, done in Cheshire because they discovered there was a line laid in 1978 or whatever it might have been, and it was a bad batch of pipe, and the only fix is just to pull up a lot of pipe and replace it. This has to be costly.

Stephen:

Is that considered part of the same program, pipe maintenance, both the lining and the replacement?

Mario:

It's part of that capital program. And when you look at the budget, you'll see that, and when when they have money at the end of the year and they put into capital pipe, that's the program it goes into.

Stephen:

Okay. I was thinking of it as all one suspension. Are both kind of programs suspended?

Mario:

No. No, it's just the cleaning and cement lining, which has, well, depending on who you talk to, it could be questionable.

Stephen:

Okay.

Tim:

It also has a different impact on the community. When it was done in Cheshire, in fairly tight compact neighborhoods, there was a lot of pavement issues that occurred. They basically make up maybe an eight by eight cut in the road, do what they got to do, patch it, and then it seems like there's follow up on re-patching the patches because they sag out and it seemed to me a monstrous project and just in terms of public irritation, and there was some because we had just recently repaved all of those roads, which that'll probably never happen again. There's better coordination, but that's within the last decade, so it's not like it was decades ago.

Stephen:

Yeah, no, roads tend to get broken up pretty quickly after they're paved for one reason or another.

Tim:

Yes. At any rate.

Mario:

Yes. And it's...

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Jay:

Mario, could I ask?

Mario:

Yes. Jay.

Jay:

You referred to the money at the end of the year, and it would go into what? Because wouldn't it go into the construction account?

Mario:

Yes.

Jay:

Okay. All right.

Mario:

It goes into the capital pipe construction account.

Jay:

Okay.

Mario:

I mean, some of it gets targeted in other accounts as you hear it in finance, but the bulk of it tends to go into the pipe and then we don't have to borrow that money as part of a bonding package.

Jay:

Yes. Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Mario:

Okay, good. I had a couple things, executive sessions, public hearings and hybrids. Just if we have to go into executive session, which may happen, if you are on the hybrid, we'll have to find a way to make sure that you can stay and we send the public off. Jennifer will have to come up with a mechanism that works for the system, and that could either be a separate login that doesn't get published, which I've done in some capacities, or you just have to make sure you put people into a waiting room or you tell them, okay, you have to leave now because it's executive session. Okay. That can be a little bit tricky.

Stephen:

Can you put individual people on hold with the systems?

Mario:

That depends on the system.

Stephen:

But the other thing we could do, Mario, is have people we need to be there, call in on a line that only they have the code to.

Mario:

Well, that's what I mean. We can have a separate meeting invite that they can have, we can send to them, they can then log into a separate meeting. Okay. There's a number of ways, just be prepared.

Tim:

And we've done it. We've had to do it throughout the Zoom history of our meetings, and I think we were re-logging in, I think that's what was happening. I'm not sure, but I know we've done it.

Mario:

I mean, we don't get a lot of public, but it'll be the time that we're fumbling trying to figure out how to do it that we'll have the public there, right. A question for everyone. In the works is another acquisition that would come to the RPB. It's actually a couple of similar companies, so they do the same thing. My thought was it would make sense to have them as one application because they're similar and in and of themselves so that we can have the meeting, the hearing on it. It would have to be in executive session, but have the data for each one, but do it as one meeting as opposed to two separate applications and two separate meetings. I didn't know if anyone had any thoughts on that.

Charles:

I'd like to know more about what the company, I mean, are there two because of location similarities and what they do or will there-

Mario:

Two plumbing companies that are in different locations.

Charles:

Oh, okay. Yeah. Well, that makes some sense then. Okay.

Mario:

Yes. That's why I say they're similar in what they do.

Charles:

And they're similar to our previous acquisition.

Mario:

Yes. But I guess, and I haven't seen the application, but it'll be large enough that it would have to come to us.

Charles:

Yes.

Mario:

Because our limit, I think, is a million dollars.

Charles:

All right.

Mario:

My thought behind that is that if Jeff then needed to hire someone to look at that, do it at one time instead of hire someone, go through it, and then you get the other one two months later and you have to rehire.

Jay:

Do you need a motion on that, Mr. Chairman?

Mario:

No, I just wanted to get a sense of the...

Charles:

I'm assuming it's not going to be an either or situation.

Bob:

It's probably all or nothing.

Mario:

I don't know how it'll be put together.

Charles:

If it's an either or, then they got to be separate, right.

Tim:

They got to be separate.

Mario:

Well, why do you say that you can't take A or B?

Charles:

Because all of the due diligence is going to be comparative.

Tim:

Well, you saying they're not going to be in the room. I mean, the companies are not in the room, we're just talking about what the due diligence, so to speak.

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Charles:

But it sounds like they could potentially be competitors.

Tim:

Right.

Mario:

Well, no. As I've been told, their territories are different parts of the state. They'd all be under the same umbrella.

Charles:

Well, I guess the only thing, I would be amendable to doing them together with a few questions first to Larry and who [inaudible 00:53:04]. I'm assuming our consultant is bringing these up, not something that management has developed.

Jay:

Would our attorney have an opinion on that?

Jeff:

Yeah, I mean, once I see the application, I mean, I can decide whether or not I think they should be separate applications. I don't have an objection to having two potential acquisitions of similar companies in the sense that they're both plumbing contractors in one application, but to Charles' question, it shouldn't be an either or. If the combination is for efficiency purposes, I mean, I can tell you right now, I don't need to hire a consultant to evaluate it because I, believe it or not, much against my better judgment, have represented mechanical contractors in asset and stock purchase and sale transactions. I say against my better judgment because I'm not a transactional lawyer, but I have clients that I've represented for 25 plus years who want to make an acquisition, and they come to me and I get involved in due diligence and whatnot. I don't have a problem looking at the application. And if I think that, hey, you know what? This really should be separate for some reason, then I would flag that immediately to the authority.

But I think we really need to see the application before we start to worry about any of this stuff.

Mario:

Okay.

Charles:

I'm satisfied with something like that. I mean, to me, Jeff, would be that...

Jay:

Yes. Yeah. Jeff, you would be seeing the applications before?

Jeff:

Yeah. I mean, I know what questions to ask.

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Jay:

Yes, yes.

Jeff:

I had hired Mike Timmons, Dr. Timmons, who's an aquaponics expert with regard to the trifecta application on the science issue for a plumbing contractor. You're looking at certain KPIs and depending on whether it's a stock or an asset deal, there's certain valuation information that you want to be able to look at that'll be confidential and proprietary and subject to a protective order as part of the application. I'll look at all that. I'll issue interrogatories, I'll vet it and all the usual stuff that we need to do

Jay:

We can wait till we get an application, Jeff, to having it as one or two.

Jeff:

Yeah, I think so.

Mario:

Well, what I suggest then is, Jeff, perhaps we can have you and Larry speak and this way you can get more information and we'll rely on kind of your thought.

Jeff:

Sure.

Mario:

Does that work for everybody?

Jay:

Yes.

Peter:

Yeah.

Jay:

Yeah.

Mario:

Okay, good. I'm glad I brought it up.

Jay:

That's proper, right? Yes, yes.

Mario:

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Yes. Because the application's not ready and before they put it together, they either have to put one booklet together or two booklets.

Jay:

Yeah. Okay. Thank you.

Mario:

Any other committee agenda and issues? All right. Jeff, everybody being nice to you?

Jeff:

Yeah, we've got a couple little consumer issues that are dollar wise, very minor. One of them is under \$100, and the other one I just got notice about yesterday from Louise Damico is one that Murtha's been involved in with a customer that doesn't believe that they have water service. It's kind of a strange one. It's not escalated to me. But other than that, there's really nothing going on at the OCA level right now.

Mario:

Okay.

Charles:

Can I-

Jeff:

Other than the rate application?

Mario:

Yes.

Charles:

Can I ask the question? I don't know. Maybe Steve might have. Do we look at the cost benefit of a situation? I mean, you're talking under \$100, I'm sure, Jeff's expense. Do we look at that?

Jeff:

It's really a tough situation because I really can't think of a single escalation that the time and money expended by the OCA is proportional to the amount in dispute. The problem is that, I won't say the problem. The challenge is that the enabling legislation that creates the Office of Consumer Affairs says that the Office of Consumer Affairs shall be an advocate for consumers and advocate on behalf of consumers and all matters of interest to consumers, it doesn't say anything about a budget, doesn't say anything about a cost benefit analysis. Really the way that we have tried to be efficient in evaluating these things other than by our rate, which is about \$175 an hour lower than my commercial rate, is we get as much information from the authority as we can before we have any communication with the consumer. Then we say to the consumer, send us anything you want us to consider. We say to the authority, send us anything you want to consider. We review everything, and then we say, okay, here's how we think it should resolve. It's not like we're having meetings or lots of long calls.

Charles:

I guess I'm trying to ask then, that's why I thought maybe Consumer Affairs might, or I'm assuming even management. I mean, if they had a dispute for \$100, settle it.

Jeff:

Well, they ultimately do resolve matters, but a lot of these matters aren't open and shut. You know what I'm saying? I mean, if somebody comes and says, I haven't paid my water bill because my meter doesn't register correctly. And the authority goes out and tests the meter and there's nothing wrong with the meter, it's not just a question of saying to the customer, okay, you owe \$85. Yeah, they owe \$85 at that point in time, but if they're going to continue to not pay the bill because they're not satisfied, that's really where we do our work is we say, listen, here's what we've done. Here's what our recommendation's going to be. Do you accept it? If you don't accept it, we'll issue our report to the Consumer Affairs Committee. You can then request a hearing. And we've had half a dozen hearings over the years that Steve's committee has presided over, but most of these cases, we get them to just accept the outcome. They'll say, okay, we'll pay the bill and we'll leave you alone.

Charles:

All right. I understand what you're saying.

Jeff:

It's not like a leaky faucet where they're drip, drip every month they're calling, complaining.

Charles:

It sounds like you're aware.

Mario:

But it's a good question, Charles.

Stephen:

Jeff, this is Steve. I do remember a case in Hamden where someone claimed they did not have water service and were billed and went on for a long time. And in fact, it was shut off, but I don't remember if it was a records issue or what it was. It is important to get to the bottom of that.

Jeff:

Absolutely.

Mario:

Okay. New business item. And because I have this as a regularly scheduled meeting, we can do new business. I have one. Any thoughts on a presiding member for the rate case in February? Any ideas, any volunteers?

Charles:

I thought there was a rotation of members.

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Mario:

It's not a direct rotation.

Charles:

Is there anybody that has not done?

Mario:

Well I'll go over that with Jennifer. I figured we were meeting, I could ask.

Charles:

When does it actually take place?

Mario:

February 19th, I want to say, is our regular meeting.

Jennifer:

23rd.

Mario:

23rd?

Jennifer:

Yes.

Mario:

Okay. I have something else the 19th, then.

Charles:

I would rotate somebody in if...

Mario:

Yeah, the 23rd.

Tim:

Have I ever done one of those? I think I was a presiding member at something. I don't know if it was one of those.

Mario:

You have recently.

Tim:

Okay.

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Mario:

Jennifer has kind of a list going back as to who's presided over meeting. Okay. I just didn't know if you had any thoughts. Also, just quickly, Nominating Committee in May. Get your thoughts together as far as a new board, and or at least a chair.

Stephen:

This is for the RPB, you're talking about?

Mario:

RPB, yes.

Tim:

Okay.

Mario:

And then the FOIA with Jennifer, she had gotten some correspondence from East Haven, their town clerk, trying to establish for the committees within the town of East Haven, kind of laying out the information so that it's consistent across commissions. Jennifer ran that past both Jeff and also Murtha and got some good feedback, I think. And basically we are doing everything okay. And we're not a committee within the town of East Haven or any other town. She got some clarifications and some reinforcement on her business practices, which was good to get that from. And that's why, again, thank you, Jeff for your input. Any other new business?

Stephen:

Mario, I'd just like to mention, especially to members of the land use committee in February on the 14th, I believe it is, Valentine's Day, there's a public meeting on the Whitney Water Plan. And each year the water company gives a presentation for the public on what's transpired. It is a live meeting if anyone's interested in attending that.

Peter:

Thanks.

Mario:

Okay. Anything else? The next meeting is April 20th, where the nominating committee information will come up again. If you have thoughts, you get another shot at that. Anything else? Going once, going twice. We ran over, I apologize. Motion to adjourn.

Tim:

So moved.

Mario:

Thank so much, Tim. Second?

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Stephen:

Second.

Mario:

All in favor?

Committee:

Aye.

Mario:

Thank you.