

**South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority
Strategic Planning Committee**

Minutes of the June 22, 2023 Meeting

The regular meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee of the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority took place on Thursday, June 22, 2023, via remote access. Chair Borowy presided.

Present: Committee Members Present – Messrs. Borowy, Curseaden, and Mss. LaMarr and Sack
Management – Mss. Kowalski, Bochan, Calo, Hector-Dale, and Lufkin, and Messrs. Bingaman, Donovan, Hill, Lakshminarayanan, Singh, Beig, and Chainani
RPB – Ms. Campbell and Mr. Ricozzi
Staff – Mrs. Slubowski

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m.

On motion made by Ms. Sack, seconded by Ms. LaMarr, and unanimously carried, the Strategic Planning Committee voted to approve the minutes of its February 23, 2023 meeting.

Borowy	Aye
Curseaden	Aye
LaMarr	Aye
Sack	Aye

Mr. Bingaman, the RWA’s President and Chief Executive Officer, stated that management would be discussing key accomplishments and improvements of the RWA’s FY 2023 Strategic Action Plan and a review of the Global Metrics. He stated that all 24 initiatives for FY 2023 were completed throughout the year, with many metrics being achieved or exceeded.

Mr. Singh, the RWA’s Chief Information Digital Officer & Vice President of Customer Service, provided an update of the customer and constituent perspective and the three key strategies of improving customer satisfaction, utilizing technology to improve the customer experience, and increasing customer support for RWA. He also reviewed highlights and key accomplishments for the year, examples of which included:

- Deployment of two digital solutions
- Completion of four key phases of the Customer Information System project
- Four areas of improvement related to the last Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Exceeded E-billing participation KPI
- Accounts receivable strategy and results Committee members discussed collection strategies, customer survey improvements, and other accomplishments.

Ms. Calo, the RWA’s Senior Director of Employee Relations and HR Operations provided an update on the RWA’s Employee Learning & Growth perspective, which included:

- Advanced workforce safety
- Employee development
- Fostering a diverse, inclusive, and engaged workforce
- Succession planning
- Hiring a training manager
- An update of new hires and employee promotions
- Five in-office employee engagement events

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She reported that while the safety metric did not meet its goal of zero preventable injuries, RWA has implemented a number of strategies to improve the results such as the near miss app and associated training, and a safety ambassador program.

Ms. Kowalski, the RWA's Vice President & Chief Financial Officer and Mr. Donovan, the RWA's Director of Business Development, provided highlights of the financial perspective key strategies: expanding commercial revenue sources, improving financial performance and strengthening the RWA's pension and retirement fund.

Mr. Donovan stated that overall RWA commercial enterprises had a solid financial performance in FY 2023. Key activities included M&A activity, market outreach, and PipeSafe expansion. He stated that lab performance improved year-over year and highlighted a relaunch of the RWA's WellSafe program and the well service companies.

Ms. Kowalski provided a financial update, which included:

- RWA's efforts to search for alternative funding sources including DWSRF, WIFIA, and Congressional Directed Spending
- RWA's initiative to increase the financial acumen of employees for a better understanding of the RWA model, which included a 10-year model presentation and a presentation for the most recent rate application
- Pension funding of an additional \$2 million, which will help mitigate adverse market conditions
- Projected coverage of 140%.

Mr. Lakshminarayanan, the RWA's Vice President of Engineering and Environmental Services, and Mr. Hill, the RWA's Interim Director of Operations, provided an update of the FY 2023 Strategic Action Plans & Global Metrics for the RWA's internal business process and key strategies. The key strategies under this perspective are effectively managing core utility business, sustainably managing natural resources, and embracing innovation and new technology.

- The development of action plans for the eight new risks added to the Risk Register
- A renewed RPB Dashboard for monitoring the financial and operational health of the organization
- Achievement of 100% compliance with disinfectant byproducts and continued efforts to meet strict water quality standards
- Participation in the first Legionella distribution system study by the Water Research Foundation and provided key data to the Connecticut Department of Public health
- The overhaul and repair of seven distribution system pumps using predictive maintenance to ensure continuous operation
- Associated with the Lead & Copper Rule Revisions the implementation of a governance model, development of a customer communications and operational plan, phase one of the inventory update, and collaborating with various health departments and municipal officials to develop communications
- RWA's participation in the accelerator program to bring in external and internal resources to aid in communications, grants, knowledge sharing, and lessons learned

- The deployment of pilot technology for leak detection, resulting in a reduction of unaccounted for water
- An update of the RWA's FY 2023 business continuity exercises
- The completion of six business process improvements
- Four enterprise-wide phishing campaigns
- The addition of improved standardized business practices related to distribution systems and the maintenance of critical assets

Committee members discussed unaccounted for water, leak detection, and artificial intelligence.

Mr. Bingaman reported that in FY 2023 the RWA exceeded four and met two of the seven global metrics. This allows RWA to make the global metric additional contribution to the 401k.

At 12:45 p.m., Mss. Bochan, Hector-Dale, Lufkin, Messrs. Beig, and Chainani entered the meeting.

Mr. Bingaman reported that earlier in the year employee work groups were formed to propose the initiatives to pursue in FY 2024 to involve employees in the planning process and to obtain diverse points of view. As a result, approximately 20 cross-functional employees worked together in four teams to propose the fiscal 2024 initiatives to advance the achievement of the 2025 Strategic Plan. The list of initiatives is based on the four perspectives of the balanced scorecard, which includes customers, employees, financial and internal business process.

Mr. Singh and Mr. Beig, the RWA's Billing & Collections Supervisor, reviewed the Customer and Constituents Perspective, which included:

- Improving customer satisfaction by reducing the number of customer water-quality complaints
- Achieve 100% of the CIS project's three fiscal 2024 key phase gates
- Fiscal 2024 E-billing and Auto Pay participation targets

Ms. Calo and Ms. Hector Dale, the RWA's Director, Business Partner & Talent, reviewed the initiatives under the Employee Learning & Growth Perspective, which included:

- Advancing Workforce Safety
- Succession Planning
- Employee Engagement Plan

Ms. Kowalski and Mr. Chainani, the RWA's Finance Manager, Commercial & Special Projects, reviewed the Financial Perspective, which included:

- Deployment of Well Services products, PipeSafe partnerships, and integrating acquisitions

Ms. Kowalski indicated that the focus on the expansion of commercial revenue sources is to invest back into the core utility, reducing debt financing and mitigating rate increases. She also mentioned the fiscal 2024 initiatives under the financial perspective that will be handled as part of normal work streams.

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Mr. Lakshminarayanan and Ms. Lufkin, the RWA’s Senior Planning Engineer, reviewed the Internal Business Process Perspective, which included:

- Mapping the remaining vertical assets
- The development of a comprehensive preventative maintenance program for our pump stations
- Determine the number of customer-side lead service lines and develop the work plan to replace
- Initiatives related to natural resources and infrastructure management and alternative cost-effective PFAS remediation techniques for South Cheshire wellfield

Committee members thanked management for the FY 2024 presentations.

After discussion, on motion made by Mr. Curseaden, seconded by Ms. LaMarr, the Committee voted to recommend to the Authority the RWA’s FY 2024 Strategic Action Plan. The Chair called for the vote:

Borowy	Aye
Curseaden	Aye
LaMarr	Aye
Sack	Aye

Ms. Bochan, the RWA’s Director of Customer Care, and Mr. Beig, provided a Collection Strategy Update, which included:

- Collection Tools
- Accounts Receivable
- Target Collections
- Next Steps

Ms. Bochan provided an overview of the RWA’s customer service center, customer escalations, results of FY 2023 customer transaction survey, and FY 2024 planned initiatives.

At 2:55 p.m., on motion made by Ms. Sack, seconded by Ms. LaMarr, and unanimously carried, the committee meeting adjourned.

Borowy	Aye
Curseaden	Aye
LaMarr	Aye
Sack	Aye

David Borowy, Chairman