

SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 21, 2024

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING BEGINS AT 2:05 P.M.]

Suzanne:

Thanks. So first thing, I'll accept motion to approve the minutes.

David:

Seconded and thirded.

Suzanne:

Thank you, fellas. Any discussion, comments, changes? All those in favor approval, say you obviously-

Committee members:

Aye.

Suzanne:

Thank you. Okay, passes unanimously. All right, so we're going to move into a brief presentation of fiscal year 26, strategic planning discussion guide. I think it's fair to say, correct me if I'm wrong that we're... Because we've got a number of things going on, we're not stepping back at this point and we're doing a deep dive into a five next five year plan, but rather how do we create a bridge for the interim?

Rochelle had a thought about presenting a discussion guide related to that, so let's look at that. We're not going to make any major decisions today about anything, but just to continue the conversation going on and more to come. So I don't know if I'm turning this over to Sunny or Rochelle. Just Rochelle.

Rochelle:

So first, I do want to say Phil Vesey and I had worked on this approach very closely. So there's definitely Valerie's mark on it, so I did want to mention that. So an overview here, similar to prior years, we'll be doing... What the strategic priorities are. We will have KPIs. This does align with our purpose, mission, vision, and the STARS values.

What we're envisioning for fiscal 26 is really a continuation of the 2025 strategic plan, which will be the third since 2010. It will use the balance scorecard, we'll factor in the results of the 2024 staffing analysis, as well as the efficiency work at Sunny is leading this fiscal year. It does contemplate what happens with Blue Drop. It reflects also trends and legislation, and customer expectations.

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Well, we'll use this as we have in the past as the basis for future decision-making and budget process, and also represents a disciplined process for fundamental decisions. We will build into this process, even though it's one year. If you're in agreement with that, employee feedback as well as board stakeholders. And it will be a living document that will update as needed.

So, the second page. So this is just recapping, which is fundamental to the strategic plan. Our purpose, our mission, our vision and the STARS values. Go to the next page.

Suzanne:

Rochelle, I have a hard time understanding make life better for people. That's great, but what do you mean by that?

Rochelle:

For me, what it means, the providing of water and all the other key things that we do is making life better for people.

Suzanne:

Oh, yes. Water's necessary to work.

Rochelle:

That's my interpretation.

Suzanne:

And I think there's an opportunity when we do step back and do a more in-depth plan. If something doesn't resonate today the way it might have resonated five years ago, we have a different way we want to say it, [inaudible 00:08:40] the opportunity to do that. No offense, actually.

David:

It would be good to hear what the staff has to say when it goes out to them, and to change that to something that they... They'd be more creative than we are.

Rochelle:

Because I think actually, the vision was reworked a few years ago. It was based on employee input. This is our timeline. So there has been some discussion among the leadership team that needs to continue to just make sure we are fully aligned on priorities. There'll be a draft of the actual fiscal 26 strategic plan shared at the February meeting, which I believe is the next meeting of the committee.

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There will be employee engagement, so there'll be a plan for March of 2025. Then at the May of 2025 meeting, we'll be back for a final review and board acceptance. And then we do want to be ready to actually have a final plan when the new fiscal year starts in June of 2025. This is our high level plan.

Mario:

Here's all the funding. It's okay.

Suzanne:

Yeah, go right ahead.

Mario:

And you're involving us, and that's good. I now realize it's a one-year look ahead. I would plug in the RPB in here as far... Even if it's just the Executive Committee, we try and keep them apprised of what's going on, and this way they may have input if they want to.

Rochelle:

So Mario, if you would want to do that, then somewhere March and May.

Mario:

February, March timeframe.

Rochelle:

So after your initial-

Mario:

I know.

David:

After we get the update.

Mario:

Right, after we get the update, all the employees are looking at it. That would probably be a good time.

Suzanne:

The only thing I would ask us to contemplate just for a second, including Rochelle and Sunny, do we really have to? That's not the right way to ask it. Given this is really more of a bridge and a continuation of something, and with all the other priorities that we have that we have to take care of, do we want to

spend time going through what feels like the full rotation of what you do for a strategic plan when it's so abbreviated? Or do you want to make some assumptions that you can count on it sustaining itself for one more year?

Rochelle:

I think we'd want to... And Phillip's actually already done significant work on this. So I think it won't quite be like what we've done over months. My personal opinion is I think we need it, because we're going to have to give KPIs for her employee base. But I think we'll be able to do it much more efficient on average.

Suzanne:

Okay.

David:

Great.

Suzanne:

Okay, I feel better about that rather than doing all this heavy lifting for a process that will almost be over by the time you're done doing the heavy lifting.

Rochelle:

So the focus areas at this point are quality of service, workforce planning development, financial resilience, resource optimization and resource optimization is more from an infrastructure perspective, and then technology and innovation. The key thing we wanted to get out of the discussion is their acceptance of doing one year, as opposed to doing three years given the circumstance.

Suzanne:

Is everything be okay with the one-year bridge?

Rochelle:

Yes.

Suzanne:

Then yeah, I don't-

Mario:

Thank you, absolutely.

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Suzanne:

And the only thing that I would ask is that... And maybe there's a umbrella for this is the whole risk management side. We've been doing so much more risk management in terms of A, our matrix. Our big matrix, and also cybersecurity. Where does that fall? Is workforce planning and development? Is that technology innovation?

Rochelle:

Cyber is actually under technology innovation, and there is actually a whole platform just under that.

Suzanne:

Okay, okay.

Rochelle:

Yes. Other influence.

Suzanne:

I think for right now, we really trust that we've been living and making this plan coming to life for the last five years. That you're more than capable of creating the bridge that we need going forward, and we really appreciate you doing that at this point. So I think it's the smart thing to do.

Joe:

Thank you.

Suzanne:

Yeah. So unless there's any other questions, did you guys have anything else you wanted to talk about with Strategic Planning?

Joe:

Not at this time.

Suzanne:

So I want to proudly turn in the shortest meeting.

David:

Hey, I'm open to adjourn.

Suzanne:

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All those in favor?

Committee members:

Aye.

Suzanne:

Thank you.

[STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNS AT 2:13 P.M.]