

SOUTH CENTRAL CONNECTICUT REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY

ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE

MARCH 27, 2025

MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING BEGINS AT 12:40 PM]

Mario:

So first item is to approve the minutes from November 21. There's a motion.

Catherine:

So moved.

David:

Second.

Mario:

Any additions, corrections or amendments? All those in favor say aye.

Committee members:

Aye.

Mario:

Aye Okay. I believe it passes. Again, I want to apologize for not being there today, but I do have a-

David:

I'm glad you're doing what you're doing. Thank you.

Mario:

So, I sent out a note that the Environmental Health and Safety Committee's memos basically covered several topics this month and I'd like to open it to any questions. I'll go memo by memo. There was an environmental hazards memo which dealt with some properties that we have, and an update on aquatic invasive species. If there's any questions on that.

Suzanne:

I have a question, and I'll ask it in a way that will not require us to go into executive session. And this is for Sunny. Do we have a process for disposing of the hazardous materials?

Sunny:

We do.

Suzanne:

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That's all I needed to know.

Mario:

Okay. Any other questions?

David:

And he's still expanding his answer.

Sunny:

Right. I mean, when it comes to disposal of any of these materials, when we contract out, we make sure that the right contract respect. And we put that part of the specifications that they meet those criteria for them to qualify for those specific buildings.

Suzanne:

Okay. Thank you very much.

Mario:

Thank you. Any other questions on the environmental hazards memo?

David:

Looks like you can move on.

Mario:

American Water Infrastructure Act update on risk and resiliency. Are there any questions on that?

David:

Ties in with what we get with the Homeland Security. This is all in the same. We get good reports from them every year when they come and do [inaudible 00:14:57].

Mario:

And we're keeping up with the latest information and reviewing it periodically as required by the act. So, if there are no question, we'll move on to the cybersecurity memo. And again, I appreciate your indulgence. I know that we are keeping on top of potential threats. If there are any question on the cybersecurity update?

David:

Looks like you can move on.

Mario:

Okay. I appreciate the latest email attempt to try and trick us into clicking on links.

Moving on, is the staffing requirements as they deal with knowledge management. We've talked about this quite a bit and there's some details on how they look to transfer knowledge from people who are

nearing retirement. And I was interested in the statistics of the number of people who are at retirement age, or the percentages. So there's about a quarter of our workforce, and that split [inaudible 00:16:14] between union [inaudible 00:16:16] non-union. Are there any questions on that topic?

David:

I do have one question if I could, and maybe it's for Liz or maybe Sunny because it's an overview. We have always heard 50, 40, 60% of our people could retire. Now it seems like it's a lower number. Is that because we've had some retirements and we have already had that, and if we did, how did that transfer of knowledge go in the special areas?

Sunny:

Hey Liz, if you want to kind of clarify that.

Liz:

Sure. So yes, there have been individuals retiring, so the number has decreased a little. I think we've been filling the position. It's been a learning experience for us too, so help driving the strategic plan that we have in place today. Just kind of more awareness of what we should have been planning for years ago. And so those things are being embedded, and the managers, and the directors cross-training and using this technology that Mario has mentioned. So, it's putting us on the right course and setting us up for success as we move along with this large number that can retire still.

Mario:

Okay, so you've improved [inaudible 00:17:31].

Liz:

Yes. We continue to change and update it and make sure all the areas that are needed so that we will have a successful transition when these people leave.

Mario:

And Suzanne.

Suzanne:

At one point we had this whole process of identifying a person likely to retire, and then identifying a junior person, not inevitably to replace, but to pass the knowledge on. And is that working well?

Sunny:

Hey Liz, you can take the question. I'll just add a little bit more what David asked. I would say in terms of the percentage, you look at the percentage that Liz split up, it's over 65, 65. But if you look at the employees, it's 85 employees over say 300. So you're still looking at almost close to 80, 90 over 300, almost 35%. Right. So that's that small. I would say our average age is about say 57, 58 plus.

Liz:

Correct.

Sunny:

So if you kind of consider 60 as a retirement number, you might actually see the percentage go up a little bit. So, in this graph you're seeing 65, orange is 60, blue to be under 65. But Liz, if you want to elaborate more on that particular question that Suzanne asked, I can add more color if need be.

Liz:

Sure. To Suzanne's question, yes, we talked about the nine box. We still are doing the succession planning. So we've identified the roles and as we talked, they're all critical roles, but the ones that are specific that the company would be at a loss if these people were to leave. So those people have all been identified and have somebody that's a successor in there. With that, we're creating development plans using our LMS, you know, different projects and stuff to make sure that they have the tools that they need, that we're providing them to grow in that role and take over. Now it's not a guarantee because people come and go and leave. So we need the backup. So we are identifying one or two people and continue to grow them to ensure that we have somebody that can fulfill these roles. So yes.

Sunny:

Also just another, I would say information is just going back to what you said, even though it's not new people coming in, it is folks who have been here. Even in the recent past we had in the construction group, and all the people retired, been here for 35 years. But some of the folks who have been here for 25, 30 years, they have actually taken those roles because it gives them a career path to move on. So they're very familiar in terms of filling those positions. So it's been an advantage in the fashion then people from inside the treatment operations and construction come in and say take those positions. It's been helpful.

Committee members:

Thank you.

Liz:

If I could highlight one thing too, if you don't mind. So one of the big wins for us, with the contract, was the ability to create and edit these job descriptions that have been placed for, I don't know, since 1996 I think was the last time they were updated, the union ones. So as we take on this project, we're looking at these roles that are so outdated, we're going to have the ability to add things on, which is going to create that cross-training where we are very limited in the union environment, and that's going to be a big deal for us. So we're working diligently now, collecting the job descriptions, and then we're going to evaluate the roles and see where they need to be updated to make sure that everyone is aware of what's going on in their surrounding departments and can take on different duties. So it should be a big plus for us.

Mario:

Thank you Liz. Very good. Any other questions on the staffing succession? Hearing none. We'll move on to the recreation update memo, which is fairly short. A couple of items that are planned for this year continuing our recreation. Are there any questions on that?

David:

Just one because I know some RPB members have been interested. So I would like to break this out. We have increased the number of activities that we do with regards to students and young people.

Sunny:

Right. That's an ongoing exercise and I think our recreation staff along with Sean has been interacting. And Paul has been interacting with the New Haven police, athletic [inaudible 00:21:49] and all that. So last year was a successful year for us in terms of going to the inner cities and bringing those kids in. So similarly, I think we are planning to do the same for this year as well.

David:

Good. Which is a big increase over what was done two or three years ago. Great.

Suzanne:

And who's the contact person if it's an organization that wants to take advantage of some of these, up to activities or availability?

Sunny:

John Triana would be.

Sunny:

I mean if it is related to police, typically Paul Ruggiero.

Mario:

Okay. Any other questions on recreation? Not. We'll move on to the remote monitoring buoys. Some good information that we've been obtaining, and it's helped us to produce our water and plan a little bit better as we monitor the water that's out in the reservoirs. Any questions on the memo?

David:

Suzanne has her hand up.

Suzanne:

So it sounds like the buoys do one thing and the manual testing is another thing. Are they redundant or are they kind of a Venn diagram where some of this stuff is redundant?

Sunny:

Venn Diagram.

Suzanne:

Okay.

Sunny:

Originally, I think we wanted to see whether there would be actually apples to apples replacement, but in terms of a couple of these parameters, the buoys are still not able to help us.

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Suzanne:
Right.

Sunny:
So what we are doing is, if you look at the budgets coming up, you'll see a few other monitors we are adding to collect some more magnitude and all that. It is kind of a Venn diagram.

Suzanne:
Okay. And still worth the investment in the buoys.

Sunny:
Yes, it is still working.

Suzanne:
Even though they didn't do as much as we thought.

Sunny:
Yes, because it's still working, because we are still able to monitor the level at which we can actually take the water from. It does help in the thermoclines as such, where there is a difference in temperatures between the top surface of the lake and the bottom surface of the lake. During summer it's very critical that turbidity happens. So as it heats up, the internal, I would say, cycles kind of churn and bring the turbid all the way to the top. So it is helping us. I mean I kept this memo even though it was a two and a half page memo, which kind of details all the questions you asked. So in a smaller, I would say, crisper way to explain it, yes it is [inaudible 00:24:27], but we are trying to increase the intersectionality to be much more by bringing in some more probes to it. So eventually the folks who work on this, doing some data management [inaudible 00:24:38] which will help us to be at least planning one year, two years ahead of time.

Suzanne:
Rather than collecting data, analyzing data.

Sunny:
Rather than, yes. I mean, right now it's been helpful for the last year and a half, collecting [inaudible 00:24:55] data. It is still helping in terms of running some of the plans. Is it a hundred percent yet? No.

Tim:
Okay, thank you. It's pretty interesting, too.

Mario:
Thank you. Yes, it's very interesting, and it's one of those tools that allows us to be flexible and anticipate what is happening so that we can make the correction as needed. The next item is the security memo, which is kind of an update of what we have and what our police force has been able to do as far as citations. Are there any questions on that?

Suzanne:

I'd like to ask a question and I will ask it in a way that can be answered in public session. About two years ago this issue kind of came to a head, just for a variety of factors, and we aggressively did something about it. I don't know if this is an overview for Sunny or Paul, maybe if you want to ask, but we got a report I think from you Paul, or maybe an outside firm, giving us a roadmap to what we should be doing. Does this list, which looks robust, here, of what has been done, does that cover most of what was on that list, and have you changed priorities or are you still planning on doing more of the things that were on that original list?

Paul:

Some of the projects that I completed were on that list. For instance, I don't want to give the town, but October 2024, that was one of the things that was on the list, and also the hiring of the officers was on the list that I've done. And like I said, you could see at the bottom the activity difference on the property.

Suzanne:

And there was an expectation of more robust technology to help, I'll use that general word, to help with security. Has that also been enacted to a large degree of what you were expecting?

Paul:

Yes. I reported on that probably a year ago. Of those items that I've been using, I have about 25 of them now. So yes, it has.

Suzanne:

Great. Okay, good. So that list, which really was the expectation to get done over the next while, has been fulfilled, and now you're continuing to improve it on a more normal, ordinary course of business way.

Paul:

Correct. Now I am more focused on upgrading infrastructure. I can leave it at that, if that's okay.

Suzanne:

Sure.

Paul:

Okay.

Suzanne:

Okay, great. Thank you.

Paul:

Thank you.

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Mario:

Thank you, Paul. Any other questions?

David:

Nope.

Mario:

Okay. Well, that completes the report. Is there a motion to adjourn as Environmental, Health and Safety and go back to the Authority meeting?

Suzanne:

I motion [inaudible 00:27:58].

Mario:

And the second?

Catherine:

Second.

Mario:

All those in favor?

Committee members:

Aye.

[ENVIRONMENTAL, HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING ADJOURNS AT 12:56 PM]