



Minutes of March 4, 2014

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall on March 4, 2014. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on February 28, 2014.

1) **Roll Call**

Members present: President Tipple, Commissioners Gehin, Rebman, Winters and Utilities Director Marquardt. Excused: Commissioner Otto.

Others present: Dick Boers; Dave Erickson; Deb Geier; Ken Ligman, Becher Hoppe Associates; Don Swailes, AECOM; Ian Coburn, Neptune.

2) **Approve Minutes of February 4, 2014**

Mr. Gehin noted that under Agenda Item 4 the word clear was missing. The last sentence in the paragraph before the motion should read, "It was felt that the robots would get hung up on the number of obstacles in the clear well."

Motion by Mr. Rebman to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2014 meeting with the noted change. Seconded by Mr. Winters. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

3) **Director's Report on Utility Operations.**

- There have been 16 main breaks this year, 2 services leaks, 7 main freeze ups and almost 300 homes/businesses that have had their services thawed. There are another 200+ properties running water in known problems areas and dead ends with pumpage nearing 7.5 mgd per day. Typically we are at 4 to 5 mgd per day. However, only about 3% of customers are running water.
- The water plant has hired an outside contractor to finish up tile work in the filters as staff has been busy with winter operations.
- Due to the number of breaks and frozen ground, we have had to call in an outside source to help locate the breaks. A correlator would have been very beneficial this year and would be beneficial for future years to come.
- A property on McIndoe Street has a lot of water coming into his basement. Crews responded over a weekend and took water samples. The samples came back as ground water. Staff isolated the mains in the area to see if the water would slow down; however, it did not affect the water coming into his house. Staff will keep an eye on this property as the frost leaves the ground.
- We are on track to meet our permit discharge limits for February.
- Dave Erickson met with the Marathon County Health Department, Rib Mountain Metro Sanitary District and the WDNR to discuss our mercury minimization program. All felt that 2013 was a good year and no changes were proposed for 2014.
- The cold weather has also been affecting sewer mains. Staff has been steaming lines. Schofield is running their water, which enters our sanitary system.

Between Schofield and Wausau customers that have been asked to run their water, the flow at the Wastewater Plant is up about 1.5 mgd.

- Infratech is scheduled to make entry today in the 1st Street Storm Sewer to assess repairs needed to prevent infiltration.
- Ken Rye is working with Engineering to prepare the CIP Rehab Project for bid opening in April. The project will include 9,900 feet of 8" pipe and 1,300 feet of 10" pipe.
- At the February meeting we talked about the phosphorus variance legislation and intended to draft a letter of support to review at this meeting. A public hearing was held last month and the legislation passed both houses two weeks ago. The variance gives the City up to 20 years to get the equipment and lower our phosphorus. In the meantime the City can make payments to the County or work with farmers to lower phosphorus.

Motion by Mr. Gehin to accept the Director's Report as presented and place on file. Seconded by Mr. Winters. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

4) **Discuss Winter Weather Operations**

Director Marquardt explained that there are 169 places where water is running and 290 services have been thawed. Where there were a number of residents frozen, we have asked the surrounding houses to run water. There have been 18 residents that have been thawed a second time at their expense. One residence, occupied by a tenant, was thawed a third time. Staff has made contact with the property owner and he was going to make sure we did not have to go back a fourth time to thaw. Mayor Tipple questioned how much water needs to run and Dick Boers responded typically residents are informed to run water at a pencil width stream. The additional water is increasing what is treated at the Wastewater Plant. On the water side, pumpage has increased approximately 2 ½ mgd.

Director Marquardt stated there has been over 1,000 hours of overtime and comp time accrued this year. Beginning February 17th, the crew went to a split shift (one crew worked 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and the other 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.) and returned to the regular shift this week. Depending upon upcoming weather, we may need to go back to the split shift. Boers stated the frost could last until the middle of April and as the temperature warms during the day and gets cold at night, frost is pushed down.

Director Marquardt stated beside the ground water issue on McIndoe Street, staff received a call regarding water entering the old Billy Moy's on Washington Street. However, this dried up as of today. WPS was working on the dam yesterday which could have influenced water into the basement.

Boers mentioned that due to the extra pumpage, they are using 35% to 40% more chemicals and electric could also increase 300%. Director Marquardt stated Alderpersons and property owners have asked about a City-wide running of water, but at this time only around 3% of accounts have issues. Erickson indicated on the wastewater side the chemicals are fed at a constant rate so there should be no increase in chemical costs. Chemicals are also used to treat the sludge, but that is after it is thickened so extra clear water should not affect the cost. There are extra pumping costs but it is not as bad as on the water side.

5) **Discuss Wastewater Rate Adjustment for the City of Schofield**

Director Marquardt stated that the City of Schofield is asking their residents to continuously run water. They reached out to Dave Erickson to ask about an adjustment on their bill for the wastewater that is treated. Staff inquired with the Rib Mountain Sanitary District on how they will charge Mosinee, but they have not yet determined how adjustments will be made.

Erickson explained that the rate charged to Schofield has been set at \$1.64 per unit since 2010. When that charge was set up, they used \$0.44 for a volume charge and the remaining rate is based on BOD, total suspended solids and phosphorus. He feels it would be reasonable to charge the normal rate for what we would typically expect to see in February and the rate of \$0.44 per unit for the

extra water. In an average February, Schofield would have used 9 million gallons. They have used 12.7 or an extra 3,416,000 gallons for the month of February. If charged the full rate the bill would be \$27,933. If the proposed reduced rate is charged the bill would be \$20,443 for the normal water usage and \$2,009 for the extra water usage for a total of \$22,452. The first few days of February they used around the average amount of water but toward the end of the month, they were using twice as much water. Based upon that, the full rate bill for March would be \$42,140 and \$27,867 would be the reduced rate bill. Mayor Tipple stated in the spirit of working with area communities, it makes sense to use Erickson's recommendation. Mr. Gehin stated in subsequent years there will always be a spike of clear water associated with spring runoff so this should not be considered every year.

Motion by Mr. Gehin to follow Dave Erickson's recommendation as a billing means with the understanding that this is an unusual winter and would not necessarily apply in future years. Seconded by Mr. Rebman.

Mayor Tipple requested the Commission send a letter indicating what was decided and that future years will be looked at separately.

There being a motion and a second, motion carried unanimously 4-0.

6) **Request to Solicit Quotes for Correlator**

Boers explained how a correlator functions to pinpoint water leaks. Currently if we cannot find a leak we hire Ferguson, who charges \$600 if the leak is located, \$300 if not. This year we have hired Ferguson six times. The City also hires Westrum out of Iowa every other year at a rate of \$9,500. Approximately 15 years ago, the Utility looked into purchasing a correlator; however, the units were very complicated and expensive. Units are now more operator-friendly and cost under \$20,000. He believes with time spent looking for leaks and equipment wear and tear, the unit will pay for itself in two years or less.

Mayor Tipple questioned if this unit could be rented and if it would eliminate the need for hiring Westrum. Boers replied the unit would have to be purchased. He further stated that during a demo of the product, two small leaks were found. This unit can be used continuously and would eliminate the need of hiring a detection company. Mr. Gehin questioned the percentage of loss under the Public Service report. Deb Geier replied it is in the upper 20's with 15 being the goal. Mr. Winters asked if we are under a multi-year contract with the detection company. Boers answered the contract has lapsed.

Motion by Mr. Rebman to solicit quotes for a correlator. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

7) **Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Mr. Gehin to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Rebman. Motion carried unanimously 4-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

/s/ Keene Winters

Secretary