



## Minutes of July 1, 2014

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall on July 1, 2014. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on June 25, 2014.

### 1) **Roll Call**

Members present: President Tipple, Commissioners Gehin, Otto, and Rebman.

Others present: Dave Erickson; Deb Geier; Valeria Swanborg; Kevin Fabel; Ken Ligman, Becher Hoppe Associates; Don Swailes, AECOM.

### 2) **Approve Minutes of June 3, 2014**

Motion by Mr. Rebman to approve the minutes of the June 3, 2014 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

### 3) **Staff Report on Utility Operations.**

- Crews have switched over the plant clarifier to the south unit. The Distribution Crew has been assisting in the cleaning of the north unit.
- The Distribution Crew has remained busy repairing hydrants along with leaking stubs, laterals and mains. We are still playing catch up from the severe winter.
- The valve in front of the Courthouse was repaired on Thursday night, June 12. This work needed to be done after hours due to shutting the water service down for the Courthouse and to accommodate lane closures on Forest Street that were needed to perform the work safely.
- Supervisors have been busy with performance reviews with the employees. It has been a good chance to sit down with each of the employees to discuss their duties and has allowed the employees an opportunity to discuss issues along with their professional development.
- The water quality report will be in the hands of the residents prior to the July 1 deadline. This report is a federally required report which contains information about the constituents found in our drinking water. Since federal regulations require this report to contain a great amount of “boiler plate” language, this is the one newsletter that we typically hear complaints about. Efforts are made to include some interesting, fun things to lighten the overall report. The report is also required to be published in Spanish and Hmong.
- Deb Geier and Scott Boers had the opportunity to take a tour of the Waterous factory in St. Paul, MN on June 18. It was a very interesting tour. Many of the hydrants we have in service are manufactured at that factory.
- We have been getting a number of complaints regarding the patching of holes from breaks over the winter. Due to the number of holes the work has been contracted out, but the late spring has also delayed the repairs. Work is expected to start in about a week.
- The tank to haul water for bottling has been ordered, but has not been received yet. We have received a couple of requests for Northwoods Mist, and hope to be able to accommodate the organizations. However, until the tank arrives we won't be able to

bottle and our supplies are gone.

- WMZK / Radio One Communications LLC WI did not like the terms to maintain the transmitter and antenna on the Brown Street Water Tower and therefore have decided to look elsewhere. The antenna will stay as the County has talked about taking it over.
- The Wastewater Plant is on track to meet permit limits for June.
- Stevens Point intern James Napierala started working full time for the village of Hudson. Our new intern is Jake Carron and he is catching on quick.
- Visu Sewer is working on the sewer lining project.
- Flow is finally returning to normal levels. The new step screens have been working very well even with the higher than usual flows we had this spring.
- We have pretty much emptied the sludge accumulated in the storage shed over the winter. We are still a little behind in emptying the secondary digesters. The new tractor worked well for spreading.

Motion by Mr. Gehin to accept the Staff Report as presented and place on file. Seconded by Mr. Otto. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

#### 4) **Consider Northwoods Mist Donation Requests**

Geier explained that Nicolet Bank is requesting 300 bottles of water for a benefit for the Never Forgotten Honor Flight and the Kings Veterans Home. Geier did tell them that we could not guarantee the water would be available as it is dependent upon the arrival of the new tank. Mayor Tipple recommended Nicolet Bank be contacted again to reiterate that the water may not be available.

The second request is from the Festival of Arts. Again, until the tank arrives we cannot guarantee bottled water will be available.

Motion by Mr. Gehin to approve the donation requests from Nicolet Bank and the Festival of Arts pending the bottled water is available. Seconded by Mr. Rebman. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

#### 5) **Discuss and make recommendation regarding the Water Rate Structure**

Geier introduced Valerie Swanborg, who is the new accountant in the Finance Department. Together they have been working on a water rate study. One item that came up was how we want to request the breakdown for the rates. Typically in the past a declining rate of three tiers was used for both residential and non-residential customers. Over the last several years, the PSC has been pushing more conservation rates or inclining rates, especially for residential customers. They will allow a mixture of rates; therefore, an inclining rate could be used for residential customers and a declining rate could be used for non-residential so that economic development is not hampered. We could also stay with the current structure or go to a flat rate. The study needs to be submitted to the PSC in July. Other charges that could be incorporated are a non-sufficient fund charge. The current charge is \$25, the City's bank charges \$30, and Customer Service charges \$40. Staff is looking to increase this charge from \$25 to \$40. A charge for final readings could be implemented; however, staff does not recommend this charge because it could discourage people from scheduling finals and leaves outstanding account balances. Another charge is a missed appointment charge. Staff would like to apply for this as it does take staff and vehicle time to go to appointments and then no one shows up. Staff would also like to increase the deposit for construction meters to \$100 and raise the bulk rate for dispensed water at the plant to \$0.50 per 100 gallons from \$0.30. Additionally, the after-hours calls rate could be increased from \$55 to \$100 and normal calls from \$40 to \$60, which basically covers the labor and vehicle. The PSC will make the final decision to the rate structure.

At approximately 1:45 p.m., Mr. Winters entered the meeting.

Mayor Tipple asked if there are any thoughts regarding using an inclining or declining rate and excluding the business customers. Geier stated it seems the PSC has been going towards inclining rates for residential customers. Mr. Gehin questioned where the break point would be. At this point, Geier does not know what the PSC will recommend. Mr. Gehin stated at 60 units the Utility is not likely to get much extra revenue. Geier noted that Weston has 10 to 12 inclining rates. An inclining rate would affect large families the most or customers who use a significant amount of water for outside watering. Mr. Gehin asked what the peak summer demand is. Geier stated it is in the 8 million range. Discussion followed on inclining versus declining rates. Mr. Gehin questioned if items could be reserved after we hear back from the PSC. Geier believes once we get the preliminary numbers from the PSC it will be brought back to the Commission

before it goes to hearing and things can be readdressed at that point.

Under the premise that we may be able to modify the structure, motion by Mr. Gehin to approve an inclining rate for residential and irrigation customers, and all staff recommendations on the special charges. Seconded by Mr. Rebman.

Mr. Winters asked if there is a target date for this to go into effect. Geier hopes it will go into effect in the first quarter of next year and added it takes about 6 to 9 months to turn a rate study around.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve an inclining rate for residential and irrigation customers and all staff recommendations on the special charges carried unanimously 5-0.

**6) Discuss and make recommendation regarding proposed amendments to Chapter 13.62 of the Wausau Municipal Code**

Kevin Fabel stated as a requirement of our WPDES Discharge Permit, the City is required to administer a pretreatment program. This regulates industrial users who discharge to our Wastewater Treatment Plant. Earlier this year, the EPA and the DNR made changes to the state statutes and federal codes. As a result of those changes, our Sewer Use Ordinance needs to be modified to mirror those changes.

Motion by Mr. Rebman to approve the proposed amendments to Chapter 13.62 of the Wausau Municipal Code. Seconded by Mr. Otto.

Mr. Gehin stated there have been some concerns with rags at the lift stations and questioned if the language was strong enough to deal with rags. Fabel stated these amendments do not apply to residential.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve the proposed amendments to Chapter 13.62 of the Wausau Municipal Code carried unanimously 5-0.

**7) Discuss and make recommendation regarding the Offer to Purchase property at 1524 Cleveland Avenue**

Erickson stated the Offer to Purchase had a contingency whereby if an issue came forward it would have to be approved by the Commission. The time period has lapsed so now a closing date can be scheduled. The City Surveyor has completed the survey and the City Assessor has prorated the taxes through the end of June.

Mr. Otto questioned if this meets all the criteria regarding the purchasing of property. Mayor Tipple confirmed.

Mr. Winters moved to approve the Offer to Purchase property at 1524 Cleveland Avenue. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 5-0.

**8) Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Mr. Rebman to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Otto. Motion carried unanimously 5-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

/s/ Keene Winters

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Secretary