



Minutes of November 3, 2015

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall on November 3, 2015. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on October 29, 2015.

1) Roll Call

Members present: President Tipple, Commissioners Force, Gehin, and Gisselman.

Others present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Dave Erickson, Deb Geier, Valerie Swanborg, Ken Ligman, Becher Hoppe; Tonia Speener, Clark Dietz; Keith Donner, Village of Weston.

2) Approve Minutes of the October 6, 2015 meeting

Motion by Mr. Gisselman to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2015 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

3) Director's Report on Utility Operations

Geier received an after action report yesterday regarding the tabletop exercise that was performed on October 15. There were no major issues and the City was found to be strong as far as knowledge of what needs to be done in a critical situation. One of the scenarios was an incident during a blizzard with a watermain at the Plaza Hotel making a river down 17th Avenue heading toward Stewart Avenue. Another scenario was a snowplow driver running into a booster station. These were extreme scenarios but intended so a number of different employees would have to face issues. An issue of concern was how to get in contact with critical customers and other affected customers. Typically Geier has in the past and this will be part of a succession plan. The Fire Department has a list of commercial buildings with contacts and this software can also be used by the Utility. Another issue of concern is communicating with the general public. The Police Department uses Code Red, which could be used as a resource to contact people to let them know of issues with outages or road closures. This was very valuable training and it enabled staff to find out some of the resources that other departments have. This training also helped alleviate the concerns of outside businesses as they now know we have plans in place to address issues as they come up and have the means to contact them. Mr. Force questioned how businesses are contacted now regarding a critical situation. Geier sends out press releases and posts items on Facebook. Mr. Force questioned how Code Red works. Geier explained it is a telephone dialing system that leaves a message about the situation. Mr. Force asked that staff look into obtaining this form of communication and report back to the Commission. Geier stated staff also knocks on doors to communicate with residents. The Police Department has a group of volunteers that could also assist with knocking on doors.

Lindman stated four customers were recently turned off for not responding to requests for private well inspection. One of the four has contacted the Utility for an inspection and has been reconnected. The other three are still turned off and the properties are believed to be

vacant. The three properties are also incurring monetary penalties.

Neptune has contacted Geier to be a part of a presentation at the AWWA Conference next summer. Neptune's radio read meters have been a great asset for the City. In December, Neptune would like to do a video shoot for a national campaign.

Staff had a two-day training session for the new correlator. Boers indicated the training was intense but went well. Lindman stated breaks will be able to be pinpointed better and will minimize time in the field.

Tom Stieber retired in October after 31 years with the City. He served in the capacity of a meter technician. This position will be replaced with a distribution maintainer. The position has been advertised and there is an accepted offer. The new employee will be starting November 16.

The Distribution Crews are working on hydrant repairs, valve repairs and an early main break.

There was a lime system pump control failure at the treatment plant. These repairs will be done in-house with a cost of parts at approximately \$4,600.

Staff is working on proposals for treatment chemicals. These will be presented at the December meeting.

Water meter replacement is ongoing. Additional money for the purchase of meters was approved last month. A report on the number of meters replaced this year will be presented next month.

The first deferred payment plan has been initiated for well abandonment. Initially a threshold of \$300 was approved, but this one was for \$200. Staff felt it was beneficial to get the well abandoned with the grant program from the DNR. Currently the well permit fee is \$15 for five years. This fee should be increased as an incentive to get wells abandoned. A recommendation will be brought back to the Commission in the future.

Last month the Commission approved an agreement with WMZK. The agreement was emailed to WMZK but there has not been a response. If Lindman hears from WMZK he will update the committee, but at this time there is no agreement.

The Wastewater Plant is on track to meet permit limits for the month of October.

Reconstruction of a manhole in the 900 block of South 8th Avenue started yesterday. This was an emergency repair as the manhole had started to collapse. Staff obtained a couple of quotes and then proceeded with the repair. Merrill Gravel and Construction is completing the repairs.

Kulp's Roofing has completed the repairs to the wastewater plant roofs.

The digester heating and mixing project has been delayed by delivery of equipment. The project is anticipated to be completed by mid-December.

The wastewater staff has been purging methane from the gas ball for an inspection, which is scheduled for Friday. Erickson indicated that current staff has never seen the inside of the gas ball, which was built in 1939. Erickson explained that the methane is burned in the boiler and combined with the microturbines to produce electricity. Mr. Force explained that plants are going back to this to generate their own power. Mr. Gehin believes the ball was last inspected in 1988 or 1989. Erickson stated since the last inspection nondestructive testing was done from the outside to measure the thickness.

Weather has been good and the plant is caught up on sludge hauling. If time and weather permit, more loads may be spread.

In preparation for a proposed feasibility report, Lindman has been reviewing the 1982 and 1987 sanitary district reports, which were completed by Becher and Hoppe. A recommendation will be made at a future Commission meeting regarding the possibility of moving forward with a feasibility study.

Three developments look positive to be completed in 2016. Two developments will include multi-family units and both will require water and sewer extensions. A single-family house

is being constructed on Hawthorne Lane and will require a sewer extension. The projects were included in the 2016 CIP budget.

Request for Proposals will be prepared for the Cleveland Avenue Lift Station replacement and possibly the 72nd Avenue Lift Station replacement or upgrade.

Mr. Force asked if Mayor Tipple has spoken with anyone from Rib Mountain about the potential of joining the Rib Mountain Metro Sewage District. He is concerned if a feasibility study is done and then it is determined that politically it is not feasible. Lindman stated that a letter was received from Ken Johnson asking for a commitment from Council. It was felt that the City should take a look to see if economically it would be a benefit. Keith Donner, Village of Weston, indicated that members of Rib Mountain Metro received a notice that next week a meeting will be held regarding the facility plan for potential expansion.

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

4) Discussion and possible action on beginning uni-directional flushing in 2016.

Lindman explained that Becher Hoppe had prepared a uni-directional flushing report for the Utility. Staff would like to begin uni-directional flushing in 2016. This will be time and resource intensive to do. Boers indicated that currently we are required to turn 20% of the valves every year, which amounts to approximately 1,200 valves a year. If this program is implemented, the Utility could possibly be placed on a ten-year rotation for turning valves. Mr. Gehin questioned if the entire City would be flushed in one year. Boers believes it would take two to three years to get through the entire City with the older areas targeted first. Lindman feels the first time this is done it would most likely take three years to get through the entire City. Boers explained that the way flushing is currently done is to flush the system the way the water typically flows. Studies have found that the pipe is cleared of contaminants better if the flow is reversed. The flow of the water is reversed by closing or opening valves depending upon where you are at in the system. This has been recommended in the last two water quality studies and will help alleviate lead and copper issues. However, there is a possibility of breaking more valves. Overtime may also be involved as once a flushing sequence is started it is recommended to stay on that sequence until the water clears up. Other cities have done this with some sequences lasting 20 minutes to 22 hours. Boers does not foresee any 22 hour sequences for the City, but there is no guarantee.

Motion by Mr. Force to approve beginning uni-directional flushing in 2016. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

5) Discussion and possible action on adopting a process for approving capital projects.

Lindman indicated that last month when the list of capital improvement projects was discussed, it was questioned how projects get approved after the budget. Lindman described an outline he created regarding the approval process. He indicated the process is not new but now the formal steps are in writing. Mr. Force questioned if there is a short and long range planning process in place. Mayor Tipple explained the CIP process on the City side, which includes a five year plan. Lindman explained that the capital improvement list includes a five year projection but there is not a master planning document. Geier indicated there is a strategic plan, but it has not been updated. Mr. Force asked that this document be placed on a future agenda.

Mr. Gehin moved to approve the process for approving capital projects as drafted. Seconded by Mr. Force. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

6) Discussion and possible action on approving an on-call plant operator as recommended by WIDNR.

Lindman stated that when the process of placing distribution maintainers on an on-call rotation for the Water Utility, it did not include the plant. The DNR has recommended the designation of standby operators. Staff would like to put a rotating schedule in place. This would

not add to the number of staff but would add approximately \$6,000 a year to the budget. Boers explained that currently the operating system calls out when there is an alarm. Typically employees are very good on coming in but there was an incident on the weekend of September 19. Three of the four employees that were notified of an alarm were out of state. The other operator was not home to receive the call. This was a minor incident where there was a power failure to one of the booster. It was a minor glitch but could have been catastrophic if the booster was down for several hours. Mr. Gisselman questioned how many people would be on call. Boers replied three will be on a rotating schedule. Currently there is a three week schedule that rotates on the weekends. Staff would like to stay with that. Mr. Force questioned how everyone was unavailable if there is a rotating schedule. Boers explained that they work 2 2/3 hours on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Outside of those hours they are not required to be on standby. Mr. Gisselman questioned if \$6,000 was enough. Boers said that it is 9% of their wages for the week and they would be on call seven days, Monday morning until Monday morning. A requirement of being on call is the employee must be within one hour of the City.

Mr. Force moved to approve adding an on-call plant operator as recommended by the DNR and added that he would like a report to hear how it is going. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

7) Discussion and possible action on the approval of a water service line connection on Hawthorne Lane for a new home.

Lindman stated a house is being built on Hawthorne Lane. A watermain is located on the west side of Hawthorne Lane but there is not a service to the property. The Utility would run a service from the main line to the property line. Mr. Gehin questioned if this would be done this fall and Lindman replied yes. Today's rates would be used for the assessment, which is based upon the ordinance.

Mr. Force moved to approve the water service line connection on Hawthorne Lane for a new home. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

8) Discussion and possible action amending the procurement policy to exempt water meters from competitive purchasing requirements and sole source documentation.

Lindman explained according to the current procurement policy, the purchase of goods over \$25,000 requires a bidding process. Because we are using Neptune meters due to compatibility with meter reading, staff would like to recommend that the procurement policy be amended to include an exemption for Neptune water meters. Otherwise a sole source purchase process would have to be followed every year. There are other exemptions currently in place in the procurement policy. Mayor Tipple offered background regarding the bid process followed last time meters were ordered and the amount of staff time and effort spent.

Mr. Force questioned if there was anything in place that would assure we are obtaining good value for the money. Lindman stated the meters allow us to bill people accurately, determine water loss and read remotely. Mr. Force asked how we would know if a supplier is charging more for the meters than they should be. Mr. Gehin said when he was acting as Director of Public Works he made inquiries and found that the Utility is charged equal or less for meters, which is incumbent upon the staff to do. Geier explained that the Neptune system is guaranteed to be backward compatible, which you do not get with a lot of the other systems. Additionally, the sales rep has indicated that the Utility should contact Neptune directly when purchasing for the large change out. Neptune offers more of a factory direct pricing for the large purchase. Mr. Gisselman questioned when the Utility decided upon the Neptune system. Geier stated Neptune equipment has been in place for a number of years, prior to her starting with the City. They have had other meters, but it has been found that the Neptune meter is the most reliable.

Mr. Force does not want a situation where a supplier feels they can charge whatever they want. Discussion followed.

Mr. Gehin moved to approve amending the procurement policy to exempt water meters from competitive purchasing requirements and sole source documentation. Seconded by Mr. Gisselman.

Mr. Gehin feels the word bid should be struck and replaced with proposal on the procurement policy under purchase of goods. Lindman will notify the Finance Department of this.

There being a motion and a second, motion to approve amending the procurement policy to exempt water meters from purchasing requirements and sole source documentation carried unanimously 4-0.

9) Discussion and possible action regarding water distribution and sewer collection facilities on Northwestern Avenue and possibility of expansion into Weston.

Lindman stated that one of the proposed developments for 2016 is off of Northwestern Avenue. Keith Donner, Village of Weston, has indicated to Lindman that there has been discussion in the past regarding facilities for serving a portion of the Village with water and sewer. A past boundary agreement indicated that whichever community installed facilities first would look at serving customers on the north side of the Eau Claire River along Northwestern Avenue. This agreement has since expired. If this would be an option in the future, we should look at sizing the facility accordingly. This would serve 50 to 60 units. Mayor Tipple questioned if the units currently have private wells. Donner confirmed and stated currently there is not a plan to serve them with public sewer and water. However, if the need arises, the Village of Weston would like to know if the City is still looking at it with the same perspective that whichever community is in a better position to provide the service would do so. Weston would not propose to detach the neighborhood from the Village but rather they would become customers of the City of Wausau. Mayor Tipple questioned if there was a feel from the residents as he would not want to do a feasibility study and find out the neighborhood would not hook up based upon costs. Donner indicated it has not been done recently. In the past it was nearly a 50/50 split. Mr. Gisselman questioned if this would extend to Camp Phillips Road. Donner stated there is water to the south side of the river across from the Scout Center. The extension would end about a half mile from the neighborhood, which is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ miles or more to Camp Phillips.

Mr. Gehin questioned if the City or Village would run the pipes. Donner stated it is not to that point yet but would be feasible either way. They would be willing to explore any options for issues as they come up. This agreement would keep the options open for the neighborhood. Donner questioned if a consultant would be retained to look at how to provide the service or if it would be done by staff. Lindman stated the developer's plans will be reviewed when submitted and then a developer agreement would be obtained. Lindman indicated it is more of a capacity issue. Mr. Gehin has reviewed the elevations and it appears the area could be easily served off of the base system. The question would be if it should be an 8" or 10" pipe. Lindman stated once a developer agreement is initiated, discussions would continue with Weston.

Mr. Gisselman moved to approve the installation of water and sewer facilities to the proposed Higginbotham development on Northwestern Avenue and to look into the feasibility of extending facilities to the Village of Weston. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Mr. Gehin noted that any agreement made with Weston will need to go through proper City committees.

10) Discussion and possible action on acquiring property near Campus Drive for the possibility of drilling a new production well.

Mr. Gehin explained that this parcel is the Hanz pit and part of it is in the City and part out. Boers indicated there were five or six test wells and the one with the best production was located across the street from Well 11. Mr. Gehin stated not knowing what will happen with the Town of Maine, it may be prudent to talk with the property owner to see if there is interest to sell so it could be protected for the future. The property is currently owned by Mathie Construction. He believes Mathie is using it for storage of blacktop to be recycled. Discussion followed on the

location of the proposed well.

Lindman has heard that they are asking \$1 million for the property. Right now the water system has the capacity to supply for a significant number of years. This would be for long range planning. Mr. Gehin would like to see if the owner is interested in selling and what the price would be. At that point the Commission could decide if it should be pursued. Lindman noted that this area could be used for spoil piles, which are currently taken to DPW. To date, DPW has charged the Utility approximately \$90,000 to house the spoils this year.

Mr. Gehin feels it would be prudent to make an inquiry with the property owner and maybe obtain a first right of refusal. Mr. Gisselman would like a planning document with background information and the potential for the future. Mr. Gehin feels two wells could be drilled with the capacity of 3,000 gallons per minute.

Mr. Force moved that the Commission express an interest in pursuing the property further and directed staff to explore the possibilities of the site. Seconded by Mr. Gisselman. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

11) Monthly Financial Reports and ongoing tracking of the budget.

Swanborg stated the State Trust loan funds were received in September. Positive cash in both water and sewer reflect the receipt of the loan proceeds. In September we were able to pay back the additional advance from sewer above what was covered by the loan agreement. At the time the money was advanced to water, the water cash flow was negative. The water cash account is at a positive \$720,000. The interfund advance will not be paid back until the end of December to allow revenue to build and payment of the immediate cash flow problem. The water amount loan from the State Trust fund was nearly \$1,000,000. The cash is lower than proceeds received, meaning the deficit is starting to be covered.

12) Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Mr. Gehin to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Force. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.