



Minutes of February 2, 2016

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall on February 2, 2016. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on January 28, 2016.

1) **Roll Call**

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

Others present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Dave Erickson, Ken Ligman, Becher Hoppe; Tonia Speener, Clark Dietz.

2) **Approve Minutes of the January 5, 2016 meeting**

Motion by Mr. Rebman to approve the minutes of the January 5, 2016 meeting. Seconded by Mr. Gisselman. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

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

Boers stated Well 9 was put back online on Wednesday. There has not been much use to run the well yet, but from what has been ran it appears there has been about an 8% increase.

Staff has been working on a RFP and getting contractor insight for the Plant PLC update. The plan is to post the RFP on the website this week.

The cold snap in January has caused some line breaks and the correlator was used, which has proven to be quite effective. Boers indicated that since the 1st of the year there had been 8 water leaks, 6 main breaks and 2 service leaks. The week of January 17th the cold snap caused 5 main breaks and 1 service leak. The frost levels went from 6"-8" the week before to 4". Mr. Gehin suggested summarizing the amount of time and money saved by using the correlator.

Reminder letters were sent to homes where wells were once known to exist requesting either a confirmation that the well no longer exists, or to schedule an appointment if not sure. Staff has been working with the vendor installing the new software in the Inspections Department to include a module for the well program, which should help streamline future permitting.

Staff has been working with the City-County IT Department and Neptune/Ferguson to get the Gateway software moved to a server. Currently it resides solely on a PC, and performance has been degrading. Moving to a server will improve performance and allow us to upgrade the Gateways, which may improve reading performance in some of the outlying areas. One option would be to have Ferguson house the information on their server.

During a recent MEG-Water meeting, it was noted that the PSC is looking to do a complete rewrite of PSC185, the utility's operating rules. There are a significant number of changes which could have a major effect on utility operations. These include monthly billing versus quarterly billing, cutting down the time to issue bills from 50 days to 20 days, and possibly requiring thawing laterals that are not electrically conductible, among other changes. MEG-Water is putting together work groups to help delineate the issues. Mr. Rebman noted the last several years they have been trying to promote monthly billing. Mr. Gehin said that would have been

difficult without the current system that is in place. This would still be a lot of work and may require help from other staff. Mayor Tipple added there would also be an increase in postage.

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

The digester project has been delayed by the spell of very cold weather. We hope to have the two digesters ready to go by the end of January. We continue to have problems with foaming in the south primary digester. Erickson stated the hope is that when the second primary digester becomes online they can flip between the two, which may help with the foaming. They are also looking at the amount of solids and running the mixers back and forth. This morning he was informed the north primary can be put into service.

Becher Hoppe is working on the digester cover replacement project to be bid out in 2016. Ligman indicated they are having difficulty with the gas storage compressor replacement. He hopes within the next two weeks to have that resolved.

The gas ball has been pressurized and the micro-turbines are running. The old gas mixers ran hot and now we have more issues with moisture freezing in the gas lines. The matter will be resolved when the gas ball repairs are made and the gas lines are insulated. Mr. Rebman suggested using a heater similar to what is used on farm tanks.

We are adding two vehicles to the DPW list of leased vehicles. The vehicles were included in the 2015 and 2016 capital budgets. Lindman explained that on the motorpool side for the City, the light duty fleet will be leased rather than purchased. The Utility is looking at tying into this program. The specialty vehicles would still be purchased.

We are preparing bid documents for engineering services for lift station replacement, architectural services for roof replacements, installation of a third pump at the Industrial Park lift station, bidding for the replacement of the tractor pull behind spreader, bidding for the replacement of the two RAS pumps, and sand replacement for the sand filters. These projects are all either carried over from the 2015 budget or included in the 2016 budget.

Ryan Dwelly started as our new Sewer Maintainer.

Ken Rye reviewed the sewer cleaning schedule for 2015. The sewer crew televised 180,000 ft. of sewer main and root sawed 101,000 ft. They also completed 58 trenchless repairs, at an average cost of \$501.68 per repair. We estimate the trenchless repairs saved over \$250,000 compared to traditional excavating.

The sewer department is preparing a list of sewer mains that will be proposed for slip lining in 2016. They will also be looking at slip lining a portion of the laterals in areas where there is known significant infiltration. The inflow/infiltration is an ongoing issue and is a project that needs to be investigated. The simplest fixes will be addressed as time permits (manhole lid replacement, grading, etc. to reduce inflow) but the infiltration will take more investigative work prior to pursuing any projects. One of the challenges with this work is that the sewer laterals are the responsibility of the homeowner and a decision will need to be made if the city is willing to spend money on the laterals or if there should be outreach to the public to have them pay for all or a portion of this work.

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

4) Make recommendation for the purchase of carbon dioxide for the Water Treatment Plant. (Bids were opened by the Board of Public Works on January 26, 2016.)

Boers stated three bids were received. Air Products submitted a bid of \$0.0555 per pound, Mac Carb submitted \$0.06615 per pound and Praxair \$0.109 per pound. Staff recommends accepting the low bid from Air Products. Boers noted that currently this is being purchased from Airgas; however, they did not bid as they felt their product did not meet specs. We had been paying \$0.0439.

Mr. Gisselman moved to approve the purchase of carbon dioxide from Air Products. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

5) Discussion and possible action on request for sewer consumption adjustment for a residence on Eagle Valley Lane.

Erickson stated the residents of this property had gone out of town for a funeral and left their automatic sprinkler system running for a few days. The bill mounted to several hundred dollars in extra charges. The water usage cannot be adjusted. The sewer could possibly be adjusted, but a policy was adopted a couple years ago where sewer is charged for the amount of water that runs through the meter. This is a common problem as even Erickson has left water running at his house without realizing it. Erickson believes in this case there were 130 units used, which was approximately 50 units higher than normal. Due to the existing policy, staff recommends not adjusting the sewer consumption.

Mr. Gisselman moved to follow policy guidelines set forth by City policy. Seconded by Mr. Rebman. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

6) Discussion and possible action on the relocation of a water main in order to construct an airplane hangar.

Lindman explained there is a hangar proposed that originally was supposed to be 60' x 60'. However, the hangar will now be an additional 6' to the north and will cross the water main. The Utility will need to relocate the water main in order to accommodate the new hangar. This will cost approximately \$18,000, which will be split between the airport and the hangar owner. The sewer main will remain in place as it is deep enough that it will not be affected. The Attorney's Office will be writing the lease agreement.

Mr. Gehin moved to approve the relocation of a water main in order to construct an airplane hangar. Seconded by Mr. Gisselman. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

7) Discussion and possible action on the possibility of painting a logo or mural on the gas ball at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Lindman stated the gas ball near the river at the Wastewater Treatment Plant will be repainted this year. It was suggested to paint a logo or mural on it facing the river. However, Erickson recently brought it to Lindman's attention that the gas ball cannot be seen from the river due to vegetation. Depending upon the number of colors of the logo, the cost would range between \$7,000 and \$10,000. There has been support from staff due to the activity along the riverfront and proposed trails. Mayor Tipple suggested if costs for a logo are explored, there should be some kind of guarantee that the logo will not have to be repainted for some time. Mr. Gehin noted that he was never a fan of this because of maintenance and he provided an example of the water tower off of I90/I94 by Madison. Lindman added that if three to four colors are used, the mural should last as long as the paint system which should be 15 to 20 years.

Mr. Rebman moved to pursue costs for the painting of a logo on the gas ball at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Seconded by Mr. Gehin. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

8) Discussion and possible action on improving existing public outreach related to drinking water and wastewater treatment.

Lindman explained that Mr. Force requested this item due to the recent events in Flint, Michigan. He believes Mr. Force would like discussion on if there should be additional public outreach and if so what that should be. Mayor Tipple believes people take for granted the service of clean water. He offered items of consideration such as additional outreach on public access, the City website, a presentation at Council, or an article in the City newsletter. Mr. Gisselman stated that Neighborhood Groups are always looking for speakers, which is another way

outreach that could be done. Mayor Tipples feels strongly that additional outreach is something to pursue. Lindman indicated that staff would start with the Neighborhood Groups. Speener stated they have worked with other communities regarding lead and has a PR person that deals with this. She offered to speak with staff to see if the Utility would be interested in piggybacking with the efforts they are already working on.

The Commission directed staff to come back with an outline of priorities to improve outreach.

9) Update on the budget for the Digester Mixing and Heating Project.

Lindman stated between the primary and secondary digester mixing and heating capital projects and the gas storage project, the total funds remaining are \$146,000. He has an estimate for the gas ball restoration and certification of \$400,000, which is already included in the budget. We are still within budget on the project and there is still work remaining to do. The project is moving forward and he hopes to be back up to full operation this spring.

10) Discussion on the Strategic Plan.

Lindman provided a plan that was put in place several years ago. He pointed out that the developing and maintaining safety policies along with maximizing personnel resources through reorganization will begin this year. He feels the existing strategic plan is an outline that we can grow with as we move forward. He asked the committee if anything should be added or should be a priority. This plan, along with studies that were previously completed, will be used to create a plan moving forward for both Water and Sewer.

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

Lindman stated the Water Utility is doing better and believes it will balance out through the first quarter. The Wastewater is in good shape. Moving forward he believes there may be discussions with the PSC regarding a possible small rate increase on the Water side. On the capital budget side, a couple of the street projects that were budgeted for will not be completed this year. A revised budget will be brought back to the committee.

The last meeting a summary was requested to show a comparison of revenue and expenses. The graphs provided show the Water revenue spiking in August 2015. This analysis will be provided again at a future meeting.

12) Adjourn

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