

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

Date of Meeting: October 17, 2018, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Members Present: Lindman, Groat

Also Present: Mayor Mielke, Jim Force, Dawn Herbst

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and received by the *Wausau Daily Herald* in the proper manner.

With a presence of a quorum, at approximately 5:25 p.m. Chairman Lindman called the meeting to order.

Presentation on the Proposed Sewer Rate Increase

Lindman stated almost 60% of the Utility is funded by residential users with the remainder industrial, public authority and commercial properties. A typical residential user has a 5/8" or 3/4" meter. Quarterly a resident is billed a flat rate fee as well as a usage fee. Currently there is a \$17 flat rate fee quarterly along with a volume charge of \$2.59 per unit. Lindman explained that 100 cubic feet of water equals 748 gallons per unit. On an average, most residents use approximately 4.3 units per month. With the proposed rate for 2019, a quarterly bill would see an approximate increase of \$26. Lindman provided an example using his bill from the past year. He is an average user and his annual increase would be approximately \$107, which is a monthly increase of just under \$9.00 per month.

Lindman provided the project implementation schedule for the Wastewater Treatment Plant upgrades, which showed the proposed phased rate increases. Initially four different rate increases were proposed; however, there will most likely be two. If the full \$80 million dollars needs to be borrowed, the next rate increase would be approximately \$3.00 to \$4.00 per month.

A site plan was provided that showed the areas to be repurposed or rehabbed and where new structures would be located.

PUBLIC HEARING: Sewer Rate Increase

Lindman explained public comments would be accepted and questions would be documented with the information to be presented at the November 6th Wausau Water Works Commission meeting.

Deb Ryan, 702 Elm Street, stated she is on a fixed income as a lot of other seniors are. She filters her water before drinking or giving to her cats and dog. She worked for the City of Escanaba in the 70's and has a better understanding of the Utilities and how changes have happened over the years with using Badger meters. The meters and meter readers were magnetic with no electrical needed and were very reliable to the change in technology. She believes the City within the last 5 to 10 years was using another meter that was electronic. A staff member, who has since retired, was adamant that the City would continue on with that meter. A few years ago she talked with her hometown and found out they were looking at Sensus meters. She has learned in the last year that the City has agreed on using Sensus. Ryan believes that roughly 30% or 50% of meters are from the other supplier and will be replaced. Being an accountant and seeing the debt the City has been doing on the general fund side, she feels every penny should be justified. She added that the Water Commission meetings are held during the day and are not videotaped. She has asked what cities are part of receiving our services and found out that the City of Schofield is. Ryan questioned why the City of Schofield is not a part of the board as it seems this is billing without representation. She is concerned with all that happened with the City of Brokaw and understands there are regulations. She questioned where the discussions were with making this a regional improvement. From everything she has seen over the last few years, the City is in the highest debt ever and she

wants every penny justified. She would like to see what the plan is to replace the 100 year old pipes within the City. She has not seen any sound, long-term plan that is financially conservative and thrifty.

Mayor Mielke stated Water Commission meetings will be filmed and held in the Council Chambers starting in November. He added discussions are currently in preliminary stages regarding regionalization with other communities.

Dennis Urbanek, 1505 Pine View Lane, stated the increases will be dictated largely by the amount of capital spent on this project and by the borrowing rate the City will incur. He recognizes that the State has a new permit requirement in terms of phosphorus, which the City needs to meet. The slides addressed things such as increased capacity and building for the future. He questioned the cost of just the improvements needed to be within the permit limits. He thought a number of years ago there were substantial dollars allocated for energy and rehabilitation and now we are rehabbing again. He has not seen anything in terms of the decision making process. He asked what capacity means; are we getting flow limited; are we BOD limited; are we suspended solids limited; are we temperature limited if under waste load allocation; or all of the above. Urbanek questioned if the problem is with the facility and exceeding the limit capacity or if the problem is with infiltration during heavy rain storms. He feels increasing the region of supply is an interesting concept. He asked if we have any type of firm, written, legal commitment from the other municipalities that they will engage the Wausau system. If so, what are they willing to do and when would they be willing to do it. He questioned the recourse if they decide later on that they can do it more cost effectively than Wausau can. We have to be in compliance with phosphorus and there are always repairs that need to be done. With the amount of money involved, he wondered what we need to legally do and what the rest of the project is. Repair and maintenance needs to be done and done well. He is not looking for things to be put off for 5 years and jeopardize our operation. It would be helpful to him to have additional information to understand the thought process, where we are on a capacity basis, and the technicalities that come with waste load allocation being on the Wisconsin River.

Mark Dillman, 129 Weston Avenue, stated the river crossing in the southeast neighborhood is quite old. As we have learned there is no alternative if the system does not work other than big tanker trucks hauling. He questioned if this problem would be resolved with this project. Lindman stated the river crossings are a different project that we are currently under contract with an engineering firm for design. The first crossing should be constructed next year and possibly the second one, near Thomas Street, the following year. Dillman said it would be catastrophic as far as phosphates into the Wisconsin River. Lindman explained additional warning devices have been installed at the crossing. Dillman stated with the combination of storm and sanitary sewer, everyone's basement would become a retention area for sewage. He does not know the legal liability of this and would not want to be a part of it.

Lindman appreciates the comments received. There have been two presentations to the Committee of the Whole thus far with the plan to hold more. One of the items we are looking at capacity wise is wet weather flow. Once we get above 24 million gallons a day we begin to see the treatment process break down; not to where we are exceeding limits but that is the direction we are headed. Other capacity issues, such as disinfection, need to be addressed. The design of the treatment plant is pervasive because of its age. We start running into code issues and building issues when we look at improvements regarding UV. To break down the phosphorus issue at this point is difficult but it will be easily \$12 million to address this one item. As we look at other pervasive issues and adding items regarding phosphorus, we are likely to exceed \$12 million. At the next presentation they can dive into capacity issues and regulation limits.

Ryan said under presentations to the Committee of the Whole there is normally no resident input. She suggested opening this up to get more input from residents. Lindman stated the idea with the presentations is to provide information and details to the governing body. The public always has access to staff. Staff plans on holding other presentations and the public is welcome to attend. If there are any questions from that, staff can sit down with residents. The comments received tonight have been helpful to steer the next presentations.

Mayor Mielke stated a lot of these facilities and equipment date back to the 30's and 50's. The last time there were major updates was in the 80's. Things get old and there are State requirements. This is the start of the procedure to inform the public. This is an expense that we all will benefit from for something that we all use.

Ryan stated most corporations look at long-term plans. Ryan does not know who was here in the 80's but believes someone dropped the ball as long-term plans should be looked at every 5 or 10 years.

There were no further comments and the public hearing was closed.

Groat moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Lindman. Meeting adjourned at approximately 5:50 p.m.