



Minutes of October 1, 2019

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall on October 1, 2019. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on September 26, 2019.

Members present: President Mielke, Commissioners Herbst, Force, Gehin, Miller.
Others present: Eric Lindman, Dave Erickson, Cheryl Sell, Diane Thoune/Clark Dietz, Steve Opatik/Becher Hoppe, Tonia Westphal/Clark Dietz, Ken Ligman/Becher Hoppe.

Mielke began by welcoming Commissioner Miller. Miller has been involved in our community for many years and was an educator with the Wausau School District. He has graciously agreed to join us.

1) Approve Minutes of the August 6, 2019 Meeting.

Gehin indicated there was discussion under item #5 about wells 3 and 7. He has mentioned to Lindman that he would be more than happy to pursue getting the consent decree changed so we could abandon well 3. He would enjoy doing something like that. He has already spoken with the DNR and has a trail to follow. He thinks it would be great if we could get that well offline. We will have to go through a court proceeding as that well had been contaminated.

Gehin moved to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2019 meeting. Seconded by Herbst and the motion carried 5-0.

2) Director's Report on Utility Operations.

Gehin advised that we didn't mention that the Tapping Team from Wausau got #1 and will be going to Orlando for the national competition. Lindman apologized for missing that, they came in at a time of 1.44. Their actual tapping time was 1:34 but had a 10 second penalty. Their goal is to get under 1:30 so it is definitely in national competition time and is very fun to watch. They will be heading to Orlando in June 2020.

Gehin asked about the August 22nd event on Pied Piper. He was wondering if that was ductile iron or steel pipe. Sell responded that she believed it was ductile. Gehin asked if the one at DPW was steel or old cast. Sell advised she didn't know for sure. She does know that when staff dug back through old records, they had found previously when that 14" river crossing pipe was down, it also caused a main break in that neighborhood. So it must be something with the flows, pressures or water hammers that when that river crossing is down it effects that neighborhood. Gehin thought the crossing itself was steel but is curious as to what is in the DPW yard.

Force had some questions about item 1.b. under General Updates: underground piping work

and streets vacated for the YMCA project. Is the city doing any more piping work, relocation or rebuilding of any kind connected with that project. He understands from City Pages, it looks as if McIndoe Street will be closed. Lindman advised we do not have any proposed piping work related to that project. We replaced the piping under the section of Franklin Street and 2nd Street that was vacated last year. As for the vacation of McIndoe, the jurisdictional transfers for the rerouting of the highway will go to CISM on October 10th and they are proposed to go to the City Council on October 22nd. Force asked if they expect any additional underground water or wastewater line work related to that. Lindman advised they do not.

3) Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Water and Wastewater 5-year Capital Budgets.

Lindman stated this budget is the same as what was presented at our last meeting. We have been talking with Ehler's and they are working through our budgets and capital budget planning. They plan to come in November. At the same time, they are putting forth a proposal to the PSC for a drinking water rate study. That is why this was delayed as we did anticipate them coming to this meeting. They do feel the rate study should be done by mid-October. They'll submit that to the PSC to request a step rate increase for the new drinking water facility. They will present to the Commission at the November meeting.

Force requested we go back to the Director's Report - Drinking Water Division in regards to the 6 service leaks/7 hydrant leaks. What is the status of repairs? Sell responded that the crews are out working on the hydrants, 3 or 4 of them have just been O-rings. 2 of the service leaks were on the homeowner's side and there are 1 or 2 on the utility side that need to be dug. With the rain it's just been too wet. All leaks have been addressed however not all have been fixed to date.

Force indicated that this doesn't sound like very many leaks for a system of our size, are we really that tight. Gehin advised that we will have our share of breaks come winter which will add up for water loss, we normally average approximately 25 a year. Sell agrees that sounds about right.

Force asked how we evaluate the city wide leak survey report. It doesn't seem like a very complete survey and he's just questioning the results. Sell responded that in the 3 years that she's been here, we've been very proactive renewing and fixing what we can. We also do a lot more investigating when people call with water complaints. Prior to that, she doesn't know how thoroughly those were investigated. She feels it is a very good leak report and is satisfied that the results are accurate.

Force asked about the trips that water and wastewater staff has made to look at ion exchange and cloth filters. What were the results and were they favorable visits?

Erickson advised there are 2 competing filters that we are looking at and they have different filter membranes. Both of them would meet our specs and have good recommendations. Our plan is to bid out both options and evaluate them when we get the bids on our project. The major difference in the filters is that one flows from the outside in and the other flows from the inside out. It will come to the cost, pros and cons of each filter.

Opatik said they toured the Burlington and Elkhorn water treatment facilities to look at their anion exchange processes. The reason they have anion exchange in place is to remove radium from their drinking water. The same process would be used here except to remove color from the water in Wausau. The purpose of the visits was so staff could see what it looked like full scale and query the operators about how often they have to work on them, maintenance schedules and basic layout. In both cases, without speaking for the water staff directly, he feels they all came away with the understanding that this is a straight forward treatment process, not

necessarily a tremendous amount of maintenance once they're up and running. They learned a few things such as the types of valves that are used on the units and that we may want to look at changing to a different manufacturer. They also gained some understanding of the way you recharge anion exchange. It's like a supersized version of a softener system that would be in your home and they recharge with a salt brine. The unit sits outside however we'd be looking at taking that whole system indoors at the new plant, partly for ease of operation and partly for the northern climates.

Continuing on with agenda item #3: Lindman asked if any of the commissioners had any questions on the budget.

Gehin advised he had questions under the wastewater division, Cherry Street lift station force main for \$200,000.00. That's not very old, what is the plan there. Erickson responded that we've been looking at our maintenance schedule on force mains and we haven't been pigging them. The Cherry Street force main is pretty long, it hasn't been pigged and doesn't have any insertion points. It's not as serious as the Industrial Park force main but we anticipate we will have to construct some access points to do the pigging and it is on the maintenance schedule for 2023.

Gehin asked if we have any documentation on whether we are getting lot of rags at the Industrial Park lift station bar screen, that's a lot of money and causes additional maintenance. Erickson advised that we could document how often there are issues and have to clean that out. We are also replacing the pumps so we may have less trouble with rags. Gehin asked if we have documentation of staff having to unplug a pump or valve of rags. Erickson advised they can put something together for him.

Gehin also brought attention to the line item for Industrial Park lift station parallel force main for \$1.7 million. We could technically just use the old system as a parallel line instead of constructing a new one. Erickson indicated we do use that when we do maintenance, etc. The concern is that the flows are increasing and in the future we don't anticipate it will be able to handle the flow, it's already somewhat of a struggle to handle peak flows through that alternate line. Once we get the existing line pigged and take a look at the condition we may want to reevaluate that. Gehin advised he doesn't mind it being on the list but he would rather not project when it's going to be done as he personally thinks it won't be done. Lindman asked if Gehin if he wanted to push that off another year. Gehin thinks we should leave it in as a potential item but he wouldn't earmark it for a year to be done until we have the other things completed, same with the Industrial Park bar screen arrangement, we're not sure they're going to happen. Lindman agreed we can shift those items.

Gehin inquired on an item under the sewer collection system. He knows there are issues with hydrogen sulfide in the interceptor line that goes past Kolbe & Kolbe but to date, he doesn't know of any reports from staff as to the extent and wondered if we need to be doing something until that is complete. Erickson advised the one thing we need to do is a thorough evaluation of it and that will cost quite a bit but we are definitely behind schedule on getting any part of that done in 2019, which includes inspecting and heavy duty cleaning. Gehin asked if we are replacing a portion of that right by the plant with the river crossing. Erickson said the part between the plant and Department of Public Works will get replaced. Gehin advised that would be great opportunity to evaluate that segment. Erickson said some of the parts that have been most effected by the hydrogen sulfide are farther upstream where there's more turbulence in the manholes than downstream where it flows slower. Gehin asked if we've done anything to reduce the turbulence. Erickson advised he'd have to evaluate that.

Force advised there was an article in one of the local media outlets regarding a DNR public hearing on the loan funds, is that something we should be aware of? Lindman responded that

they just got notice of that yesterday. Lindman thinks that article may be for something different. Force said there was a date associated with it. He thought it was for the state loan funds. Mielke stated they will continue to have public hearings so everything is open and transparent.

Mielke entertained a motion to accept the 5-year Capital Budgets minus the adjustments of the Cherry Street lift station force main for \$200,000.00 and the Industrial Park lift station parallel force main for \$1.7 million as requested by Gehin.

Motion by Force to accept the 5-year Capital Budgets minus the adjustments for the Cherry Street lift station force main for \$200,000.00 and the Industrial Park lift station parallel force main for \$1.7 million. Seconded by Gehin. Motion carried 5-0.

4) Discussion and Possible Action on Approving Contracts 1, 3, 4 of the Siphon Line Crossing Projects.

Lindman explained, as the commissioners know, we had 4 different projects: the Sturgeon Eddy project is taking place right now and will be wrapped up this fall. We had contracts 1, 3 & 4 that we rebid. We did get bids on those and there is a letter from Becher Hoppe in the packet with their recommendation. This bid did go through the Board of Public Works and this is to let you know that we'd like to move forward with these. We're working on the project schedules and what's going to go this year.

Ligman advised the Sturgeon Eddy siphon crossing is in progress. Contract 3, which is the work on Sturgeon Eddy that will intercept the existing siphon and bring it down to the new siphon will be underway shortly. Contract 4, which is replacing part of the large west side interceptor at the wastewater treatment plant site is slated for this fall. Contract 1, which is the siphon along Thomas Street Bridge will be done next summer.

Ligman also wanted to comment on the hydrogen sulfide discussion. To construct Contract 4 which will happen this fall, the contractor is going to have to bypass all of the flow in the west side interceptor by pumping it. That might be an opportune time to make an arrangement with whoever the subcontractor is to move over to the 2 manholes in question and bypass the flow so the city could clean it and televise it to get a feeling for the extent of the corrosion. That's not part of any of the contracts but is something that could potentially be worked out.

Force asked about the recommended contractors, Jahnke, Haas and Jake's, where are they from. Ligman responded Haas is from the Thorp area, Jake's is from Ironwood and Jahnke is from Athens. Opatik advised all of them are working on other jobs in Wausau right now.

Gehin asked for clarification that Lindman is looking for the commission to reaffirm what the Board of Public Works has approved. Lindman advised he wanted to provide an update on these contracts, give them a chance to ask any questions and for them to reaffirm their approval to move forward.

Motion by Gehin to approve the contracts. Seconded by Herbst. Motion carried 5-0.

Force noticed the \$2 million bid from Jahnke is \$328,000.00 lower than the initial bid in April, is there a reason for that? Did the scope of work change? Ligman advised the scope of work did not change. The April bid was a lump sum and contractors have to put in a safety factor for unknowns. Lindman's suggestion for rebids was to make a unit price for each significant work activity. That takes away from some of the unknowns and that is the cause for that difference.

5) Discussion and Possible Action on the Proposed PFAS/PFOS Rules Being Imposed by the WDNR.

Lindman mention in the media there's been a lot of talk about PFAS/PFOS. Right now

there are regulations on drinking water which is at 70 parts per trillion through the EPA. The DNR is looking at the wastewater side too. On the drinking water side the DNR is proposing to reduce that limit from 70 parts per trillion to 20 parts per trillion. This is a significant reduction and parts per trillion are tiny numbers. Right now our history of testing is anywhere from 8-15 parts per trillion. Lindman wasn't sure if that was part of the permit. Sell advised she thought it was just based on request, it's not part of routine testing. Every so many years they just throw it in there. Lindman said there will be public comment requested by the DNR on the proposed limit of 20 parts per trillion. A little more of a challenge will be the wastewater side because there is not a testing method. That's not been confirmed by the DNR as far as how to test for PFAS in wastewater and biosolids. At this point, the DNR has asked approximately 125 municipalities in Wisconsin to test for PFAS in the wastewater, he thought it was less than 20 that actually did it. We have chosen thus far not to do it based on recommendations from the League of Municipalities and MEG. Their legal team puts this information together and follows this for us. Most of this stuff is coming from industrial sites, whether any is being generated from industrial sites in the city, we don't know but this could have far reaching impacts for us. Whether we will have to treat for it or if the biosolids end up having this in it, will they make it retroactive and make us go back to test fields, etc.

Lindman advised this is another good reason for moving the treatment plant to a different location. If we do have to treat for this at least we'll have the space to accommodate for that. Michigan is on the leading edge of this. They've had a lot of PFAS in their biosolids and they've been able to reduce that by just working with the manufacturers.

Gehin expressed his concern with testing for parts per trillion. This is very fine eyed and sampling is critical. Anything could potentially throw off a sample. I'm not sure how we get a representative sample. He's not downplaying it and knows it's a big concern but when we take a sample we better be really careful about that side of the process.

Force asked about when we go to the drying process of our biosolids, are we going to have a PFAS/PFOS problem in our Class A biosolids? Erickson responded that it would take more heat than our dryer would do to break it down. Force asked what the temperature the dryer will be at. Erickson advised he thought it was about 400 degrees, just enough to dry the water off. He believes if you had the proper incinerator that may do the job but he's not sure what temperature breaks down those compounds. We can't expect at parts per trillion you're not going to find any. It's everywhere, in our blood, carpet, food wrappers, clothes, etc. The idea that sludge will have zero is not likely.

Force brought up the fact that there is also question on whether it is in our edible plants. Some states have banned biosolids application.

Lindman will continue bringing this forward as he receives more information and if anyone hears anything to forward that on as well.

No action necessary.

6) Discussion and Possible Action on Approving the Industrial Park Force Main Access Points Project.

Lindman said we bid out adding those access points so we could clean and pig that long force main. The bids came in and A-1 Excavating was the low bid at \$444,000.00 and high bid was McCabe at \$617,000. Clark Dietz had contacted A-1 and they are still comfortable with their number. We do have the money in the budget for this with a total budget for the Industrial Park lift station at \$1.3 million for engineering and construction. Gehin asked how many entry points we were looking to put in. Ligman advised 4 access points. Gehin knows some are on the railroad right of way, are we having issues with that. Thoun advised we have the permit application in and are working with them back and forth to get it approved.

Lindman said ultimately the idea would be to get these access points in and then schedule the cleaning depending on the timeline.

This bid is just for the access points. Motion to move this forward carries 5-0.

Gehin asked if we will have a report from Ehler's or if they will be present. Lindman advised they will be here but has asked that they have information ahead of time for the packet.

Force discussed the possibility of addressing that pipe at Reservoir Hill Park. He realizes it won't be fenced in but from an aesthetic point it is a pretty ugly structure sitting in the middle of a very nice park. He wondered if the parks department could plant some bushes around at least 3 sides of it, still leaving access to the pipe. Lindman advised we'll work with Parks Department and do something. If not this year, maybe in spring.

Force brought up his concern with a recent vote from the County to continue the current practice of spreading manure in the winter. That in turn ends up in streams and contributes to the phosphorous load in the river eventually. He's wondering if there are any city council members that are also county board members that could be encouraged to have the county reconsider that. It doesn't make sense to spend all of this public money on phosphorous control when the county does nothing about manure spreading in the winter. Mielke advised there is one member and that is Dave Nutting. Force advised he could certainly talk to Dave.

Opatik added that the EPA and DNR have excellent sections on their websites with fact sheets regarding PFAS/PFOS for the general public.

Miller expressed that he is humbled and thankful to be part of the Commission. He went through the packet and is very impressed with the work that is being done. He will do his best to keep up with what is going on.

7) Adjourn.

There being no further business to discuss, motion was made by Herbst to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Gehin. Motion carried 5-0.