



Minutes of July 7, 2020

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:30 p.m. in City Hall on July 7, 2020. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on July 2, 2020.

Members present: President Rosenberg, Commissioners Force, Robinson, Herbst, Gehin.

Others present: Eric Lindman, Dave Erickson, Scott Boers, Valerie Swanborg, Toni Vanderboom, Steve Opatik/Becher Hoppe, Tonia Westphal/Clark Dietz.

1) **Approve Minutes of June 2, 2020 Meeting.**

Herbst moved to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020 meeting. Seconded by Robinson and the motion carried 5-0.

2) **Director's Report on Utility Operations.**

Lindman highlighted the well 11 tests that were bacti positive. Boers explained that well 11 had a bad bacti sample. During the process of disinfecting the well to get some samples, a 24 inch valve in front of the well failed. Staff is working on repairing that and a valve is being built. We can then disinfect and get that well back online.

Lindman talked about the LSL grant funding and advised there is approximately \$200,000.00 left to disburse. Sell has been sending out letters to the areas of previous reconstruction projects and we are back to the 2007-2008 projects. There has not been a lot of interest and it really goes back to cost. It now has to cover replacement of the concrete and sidewalk squares. The line replacement itself can be approximately \$2,500.00-\$3,000.00 and the commission had approved \$3,000.00 per property. When you add in replacement of the sidewalk it can be an additional \$1,500.00-\$2,500.00 which would be out of pocket for the homeowner. The challenge is that if we want to apply for the next round of grant funding this fall, it looks a lot better if we've expended the grant funding that we already have. Some consideration needs to be given into possibly increasing the grant amount to accommodate for these additional costs. In the past, the grant was available to homeowners where we were doing street reconstruction so the sidewalk replacement and things like that were taken care of under the reconstruction. Boers advised that we started sending out notices starting from 2017 working back systematically and giving residents 2 weeks to express interest so we can earmark funds. To date if you add up all of the letters that have been sent and every one of those took the funding it would total \$1.6 million. To date we've had 2 properties that have taken the funding in those past projects and 1 that has been approved but not yet replaced. The issue we are going to start running into now is that some of the contractors that are enlisted in the program are booked up through September. Force asked if it is possible to use a horizontal drilling technique to get under the sidewalk instead of breaking it apart. Boers explained that even if the service is bored in, they still have to have excavation by the curb stop which typically lies within the curb and the sidewalk. Lindman advised that the commission needs to look at possibly increasing the \$3,000.00 grant amount per property that was previously approved. Maybe

increase it to \$5,000.00 or \$5,500.00. Force advised that he wants to see this money be used and get as many done as possible. If that has to include the sidewalk excavation, so be it. Gehin asked if homeowners have also been replacing the sewer lateral. Boers advised that typically they do however the sewer lateral replacement cannot be included in the cost of the water line replacement and it is not eligible under the grant funding. The excavation can be covered under a common excavation. Typically the homeowners are responsible for the cost of the PVC pipe. Gehin asked what the average cost is coming in at for the water lateral replacements. Boers advised approximately \$2,900.00-\$3,000.00. Herbst asked if there were specific areas that this funding was being offered to. Boers explained that a stipulation to the funding is that it has to result in a full lead line replacement, including the utility side. We've been concentrating on areas of new construction or past construction where the utility side is already copper. If we were to open it up city wide, the cost for replacing the utility's portion of the water service is 2-3 times more than the private side. So every \$3,000.00 in grant funding we gave out would cost the utility \$6,000.00-\$9,000.00.

Gehin noticed that Strand inspected the line on 1st Street. Did they inspect the vault down below across the tracks? Erickson advised he didn't think so but they do have a meeting with them on Friday and they can go over maybe picking up other things like that.

Robinson asked if the I & I study could potentially modify the long term capital plan. Lindman responded it will and he thinks it will prioritize where we have issues. Once we get the flow monitoring done we may have to do some additional monitoring to isolate some areas within the city. It will help us focus on where we need to spend those dollars. Lindman advised they will set up some capital costs for us on what they would recommend prioritizing. We put together a 5 year capital plan but that can change every year depending on the data that we get or issues that we have within the system whether it's water or sewer. Robinson stated that he would anticipate potential additional funding sources with the I & I study. Lindman advised that he thinks that there would be. We are always looking for additional funding sources.

Deb Ryan spoke and wanted to mention that she did receive a letter regarding the lead line replacement program. She was surprised to have received a letter stating that Elm Street is now eligible. She recommends a list of different streets for the alderpersons to reach out to and recommends an updated list of plumbers as some have said they should no longer be on the list.

Gehin expressed his gratitude to staff for their work setting up the groundbreaking ceremony and that once construction and engineering is complete, it is the staff that needs to step in and make things run at these new facilities.

Force asked if it is within their power to increase the amount of the LSL grant funding we give per property. Rosenberg advised it is. We can't necessarily do that today but can we can definitely put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Director's Report placed on file.

3) Discussion and Possible Action on 2021-2025 Capital Projects.

Lindman advised at the last meeting there was a request to break down what we are borrowing vs the operating budget. This is what we anticipate borrowing on an annual basis based on what we know now. Our street reconstruction projects are a big part of our borrowing. With the 2 facility projects we are really focusing in on the distribution and collection system.

Gehin asked about the Evergreen lift station force main project and if we are replacing the entire length of that. Erickson advised that it freezes almost every winter and they need to go out with the jetter and pump it out. They want to look at what it would cost to trench that in a little deeper and insulate it better so we don't have that problem. Other than the concept he doesn't have other details yet. Gehin noticed quite a few control panel replacements. Is that to make them ready to tie into the new system or is this just upgrading the panels themselves? Erickson advised that many of the panels do not meet code requirements. Some need to be updated from a technical standpoint and some from a code and safety standpoint.

Force stated when you take out the large amounts for engineering, design and construction of the plant, we have a borrowing amount that trails out for years. How does what we are borrowing compare to what we've been borrowing in the past. Lindman stated that we've been staying pretty level. Typically with the state trust fund, on some of these projects it's really easy to borrow and then pay that back

through the utility. When we look at our street projects, we talk to finance and run borrowing as they feel is in the best interest of the utility. The large projects that will be in the ground 50+ years are good projects to borrow for. The shorter projects such as repairs, operation and maintenance is what we use our operating budget for. So this type of borrowing would be the same as was done in the past. Lindman stated he would like to get to a point where we can do more with cash and less borrowing. He does follow the guidance of Finance and what they feel should be borrowed and what they feel should be paid in cash. He could have them attend the next meeting and go over that. Robinson asked if there is a schedule for our bond payments and how do we factor that into the capital project timing. Lindman advised he can work with finance to have something put together. Robinson stated it is a great time to borrow as the rates are so low. Lindman thinks that is why Finance has been recommending to borrow because the financing has been so low on some of these projects, especially through the state trust funds.

Motion by Robinson to approve the proposed capital budgets for water and wastewater. Seconded by Herbst. Motion carried 5-0.

4) Discussion and Possible Action on a Wausau Water Works, Water Saving Program.

Force advised that he and Boers worked together to identify elements for the program and some of the needs and questions they have about resources. Steve Miller is also interested in working on this. They feel the consensus is to move forward with this, the question is how go about doing it. What will we call it, do we need a logo and are there others within the municipal structure that would be interested in joining in on this. Robinson did suggest that this program be made multilingual. Rosenberg advised that the County does something similar to this and she can reach out, get some ideas and a feel for the budget needed to put this together. Robinson advised he can also reach out to other communities that have a rain barrel program.

5) Discussion and Possible Action on Approving the Wastewater Plant Operations Supervisor Job Classification.

Lindman advised this is part of the organizational chart that was approved last year. This is creating and classifying a Wastewater Plant Operations Supervisor vs just having a senior plant mechanic. We needed somebody that had more administrative and supervisory responsibilities. Vanderboom helped write the position description and then it was classified by our outside consultant. Robinson questioned whether it was truly a nonexempt position, Vanderboom advised that is a typo and it is an exempt position. Force asked where the grade 17 ranks into the line of salary grades. Vanderboom stated that grade 17 is the lowest grade supervisory position that they have. All of the supervisory positions are falling around grade 17.

Motion by Robinson to approve the Wastewater Plant Operations Supervisor Job Classification. Seconded by Gehin. Motion carried 5-0.

Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned.