



Minutes of April 3, 2023

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 1:42 p.m. in City Hall on Monday, April 3rd, 2023. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on March 30, 2023.

Members Present: President Rosenberg, Commissioners Herbst, Robinson, Force-WebEx
Others Present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Ben Brooks, Anne Jacobson, Valerie Swanborg, MaryAnne Groat, Tonia Westphal/ Clark-Dietz, Joe Kafczynski/ BecherHoppe.
Via WebEx: Susan Wojtkiewicz/Donohue, Matthew Bednarski/CDM Smith, Amrou Atassi/CDM Smith.

1) Approve Minutes of March 7th 2023 Meeting.

Robinson motioned to approve minutes. Seconded by Herbst.

Robinson requested correction page 7, Item#8, last paragraph reflect word ratify instead of gratify. Housekeeping error will amend typo. Amended.

Motion carried 3-0.

2) Director's Report on Utility Operations.

Lindman began project updates are for Water and Wastewater with direction where staff was going with updating job descriptions and proposals moving forward for the course of the year.

Robinson questioned final deliverable date for the Drinking Water Treatment Plant.

Lindman replied, submittal was received from the Contractor after this was written. Staff and Engineers have a meeting to go over it. Submittal requested the release of all the money except for \$100k but we were not in favor of that, we still have items that are not fully operational from automation to mechanical. We'll formally respond after we review the full extent of the request is. The contracted completion date set was February 9th, beginning February 10th, there's been liquidated damages assessed each day.

Force questioned landscaping plan for solar field.

Lindman replied we are not working on that side at all.

Herbst questioned the position awaiting human resources and the interviews.

Brooks replied offer has been accepted and waiting on an official hire date from Human Resources for the Wastewater Collection Technician. The Wastewater Plant Operation Technician interviews ended last Friday and we've narrowed it down to 2 applicants for the 2 positions open and just need to make an offer.

Director's Report Placed on File.

3) Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Communication Plan for Private Side Lead Service Line Replacement.

Lindman began Clark-Dietz with help of CDM Smith put together a Lead Service Line

Replacement (LSLR) Plan and it has been submitted to the DNR. For 2023, City Council approved \$500k in ARPA Funds to replace private side lead services along our street reconstruction projects this year. The City's going to contract the work on the private side but we needed to initiate using the communications plan and that's what the presentation/discussion is about today. It's about how we will be going about approaching communication and moving that forward for 2023.

Westphal stated this was a summary and specific information that relates back to the LSLR Plan submitted to DNR but the entire plan remains in draft and waiting for DNR comments.

Atassi w/CDM Smith presented the slides beginning on page 21 of packet.

Westphal capped the ultimate goal was to develop best practices, learn/get homeowner feedback, public feedback so we could pilot this, when the full program launches next year we could work out the kinks along with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's). The FAQ's come from other communities, what other people had questions on, one from past projects were restoration requirements and process. This project would gather information to have a robust piece as we move forward over the next number of years. Every year we will learn a little bit more and add to the scope of the project in terms of communications. Atassi also mentioned translating, we talked about Spanish and Hmong and we will be working with Dale at Department of Health Services to help distribute these literature pieces. It would be by design, when your outreach material is put together, the idea is to have something more general in nature for the LSLR Program related to today's program, next year and in addition would have some outreach and FAQs that showed the project this year. This piggybacks from the City's Capital Improvement Projects for Henrietta and 10th Ave as those are already in your pipeline. We are playing catch up to get the communication plan put together and work with the funding made available to replace the private side LSLs. Ideally it would be parallel to work with City Engineering team in advance or while they are working on it. Another thing in terms of public outreach are public meetings that are anticipated probably mid-May one for each of the projects. The Contractors haven't had their pre-construction meeting yet but the schedule could be nailed down a little more once we have that information. There are some gaps in the full scope but what's happening is what are in the FAQ's. We are working with the City Staff to determine what we've used for outreach and entry forms in the past, current and adapting existing templates to add this piece so we don't recreate something already done. There's a lot of technical support happening through GIS and Engineering.

Robinson questioned the timeline/project of Henrietta and 10th? Would we be working with Hawthorn Hills? Schools that are missing in here. County is in same boat as City for new Website. How will we fair with tenants versus landlords? Ultimately, it's the landlord that would give you access for the work. What sort of outreach would we have in planning with Landlord Associations and others?

Lindman replied we are looking at Henrietta and 10th and one block of Grant. We have about 90 or so service lines for 2023.

Westphal replied at City level, GIS Staff has put together list of property owners that would receive mailing and there would be face to face contact with the tenants.

Atassi reiterated we must reach out to both the landlord and tenant. We don't want the homeowner to come back and say why they've altered their home without consent.

Lindman stated we'd have to have permission from both landlord/owner and the tenant who would give us authorization to go in. Robinson did bring up a good point on meeting with the Landlord Association. We've had a couple of people on those projects come up to engineering and ask about lead service lines so that's a good thing because people are aware and taking time to come talk with us.

Robinson encouraged we speak with Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS) as well and we could also help with some of that outreach.

Force stated maybe we could create a task force with this presentation and have members

from the Commission, people from the City/landlords, or members of the Landlord Association and/or Homeowners in areas most likely for replacement to make sure the media is right as they differ from place to place. We get their questions for the FAQ's, questions specific to Wausau. Test media and messages being proposed to see if there are any difference. We haven't had good luck with public meetings. From my view, solar panels public meetings have been unsuccessful. There's also an issue with the school consolidation plan, where the public is complaining they weren't involved with the planning or informed properly. I'd hate to see our lead service line program suffer because of either of those two events. Is a Public meeting the right way to go or other avenues of getting this out and communications of what we should have done or didn't do. We want to be successful and that's the reason behind my comments.

Lindman replied one of the biggest components missing was the continued communication. We'd reach out once and then later reach out again. The continuation of communication and consistency through the project is one big takeaway so far from past years. We hope the plan laid out right now will help us address that, because of the timeline, we are not only providing education generally to the public but at the same time contacting homeowners on these projects. There are a couple things happening at the same time. In future projects, we would have a more general communication and then work into project specifics but in this case, we are doing them in parallel.

Westphal stated the FAQ's are in draft form and should be done in the next week or two but if there are people, we could consult to weigh in on that we do have a bit of time to do that.

Atassi reiterated that the FAQ's can also be delivered in person and/or placed on doorknobs. (video/audio was cutting in/out)

Rosenberg recapped, generally we just heard we are using this as first draft and will iterate overtime and not just dropping off a random sheet of FAQ's, we will be interfacing with folks.

Robinson stated during the day, you'll get only about a 30-40% at home rate. If you are going down Grant St, Henrietta there are a lot of rentals and units. Multi-pronged approach to make sure you are getting as much word out as you can. The new GIS system will help with some of that and engage early with the health department in a strategy from their health educators in how we could communicate with that population. He'd like to see a debrief of the Commission as this is a resource intensive approach, if we could replicate it or if there's best practices, more efficient than others going into the future. Are we looking for a motion to adopt/implement this or just moving ahead with this? Another suggestion encouraged would be to reach out to the local officials in those areas, there are 2 Council members. As well as reach out to corresponding County Board of Sups that would have contacts in those county health perspective.

Lindman replied we will be moving forward with this.

No Action Taken.

4) Discussion on Future Educational Presentations and Policies the Commission Would Like to Consider.

Rosenberg began the topic came from the fact that we have a lot going on. This would entail topics we want to explore in the future but not topics themselves. We'll be keeping a list.

Robinson's topics included:

- 1) What are the regulatory changes known for the lead service lines or near completion that would be affecting both the Water and Wastewater operations? What implication would those have on operation and budgets? Which are required and which are best practices?
- 2) Where are we with studies in terms, lead service lines, corrosion control, in terms of scope of projects, who's involved, deliverables, if it were staged and stepped, what step are we in, what's the next step? Long term obligations.

- 3) Update on what went well with both the facility upgrades. What are the challenges posed by the new facility not anticipated? Are there policies/ramifications going forward that would need commission involvement? Are there supply side issues that change the way we go about budgeting or approaching bidding? Opportunity or challenges or policy changes in context of the Commission?

Force's topics included:

- 1) Are we staying on track with PFAS issues in our system, finding the source of these contaminants post GAC. Monitor PFAS in our Water and Wastewater going forward. Where PFAS is coming from? Example: CA- finding PFAS in Sewer, washing clothes.
- 2) What is the disposition of old Water Plant property?
- 3) Energy efficiency- Johnson Controls discussion last week to consider Solar. Solar at the new Water Plant Site, we must be conscious of energy saving methods and procedures to fulfil both City and County.

Rosenberg stated the national push for lead service line replacement anticipating good news tomorrow to push us and get going for a quick turnaround meeting. Sometimes we have conversations adjacent to this commission, or folks have inside knowledge. Recently DNR was present at our Council meeting to talk about responsible party and maybe it's worth our time to talk about that at the Commission because we know the process is slow and understanding is the best way to reach that.

Robinson stated he would be happy to lead that but DNR's resource is limited. Hopefully we have a speaker at the May 2nd PFAS seminar (Wausau). There are some folks in New York and Milwaukee that may be good resources for us.

Rosenberg stated maybe we could have an educational presentation on our Agenda to get everyone up to speed with folks attending conferences. Understanding where our interests and people lobbying on behalf of utility. We've got a couple of good ideas so that's good.

No Action Taken.

5) Adjourn.

Rosenberg stated our next scheduled meeting is for May 1st, but based on some of the news tomorrow, we might want to have a special meeting scheduled week of the 17th, we are hoping to meet with the Finance Committee.

Force questioned if we were doing rain barrels this Spring?

Lindman replied there has not been any direction to move something forward for the rain barrels. First year we did well, last year not as much participation. If you'd like we can continue to pursue that.

Rosenberg stated we could talk about that at a future meeting.

Robinson motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Herbst

Motion carried 3-0.

Link to view meeting in its entirety: <https://tinyurl.com/wausaucitycouncil>

Gina Vang, Recording Secretary

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