



## Minutes of June 3, 2025

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 11:05 a.m. in City Hall on Tuesday, June 3, 2025. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on May 30, 2025.

Members Present: President Diny, Commissioners Robinson, Force, Watson- 11:10am

Member Excused: Hadley

Others Present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Tonia Westphal/Clark Dietz

### **3) Appreciation of Joe Gehin's Years of Service to the Wausau Water Works Commission.**

Diny presented Joe Gehin with a plaque in honor of 11.5 years of service on behalf of the Mayor, City Council, Wausau Water Works Commission and Utility staff.

Gehin thanked everyone and offered for staff to not hesitate in calling him for any inquiries as he'd appreciate it.

No Action Taken.

### **1) Approve Minutes of May 6, 2025 Meetings.**

Robinson motioned to approve minutes. Seconded by Force.

Motion carried 3-0.

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

Lindman began last month had updates from the USEPA with the most recent updates included in the memos and statements here, especially on PFAS proposing what to do, we should expect more details and information on that. Included as well are AWWA's response and review of USEPA's statement. He asked if the commission had any questions and added that he anticipates more details and information, as well as data on how they are going to proceed would become available.

Robinson noted EPA is not modifying the four parts per trillion PFOA/PFAS, based on work that has been done, 90-95% of the sites that have those 2 have others. They've delayed developing standards from any of the other PFAS compounds generally you'll catch with the PFOA/PFAS sampling.

Diny noted we are under the four parts per trillion PFOA/PFAS and are ahead of the game.

Lindman noted the lead service line updates, that the contractor was paused about a week and half on actual replacements because they were not caught up on restoration, they did catch up and last week began lead service line replacements again. We are working closely with CIP and they are doing a better job this year.

Force questioned the rock formation inquiries from a resident and if that were resolved.

Lindman replied CIP has been in contact with her directly and scheduling, we've also had a couple of individuals where areas of rock were a concern so they've been in contact with them as well. If the commissioners receive any feedback, questions, or concerns from the community, we are happy to meet with them. We anticipate CIP hitting a milestone of 1,000 LSL's replaced in

June, that's kind of a recognition milestone. Once that comes out and gets established, we'll notify the commission, the council and send out the proper notices for possible quorums for each. There are recruitment updates and we did have a facility on the water side got broken into.

Boers began young individuals broke into one of the booster stations and turned themselves in after the fact. They initially flooded the booster station, luckily, none of the pumps were on at that time when they flooded it, they did dry out and didn't cause to much damage. We tried them the day it was flooded and nothing worked so we were looking at probably about \$50,000 worth of damage, but it ended up drying out so they're getting off cheap, they're relatively lucky, with 480-volt power going into that building and blowing water around, they could've easily been killed.

Diny stated they could've been electrocuted.

Force questioned which station, if anyone's been apprehended, if there were any criminal charges, if the facilities were secured, whether we had television monitors, if we did anything to prevent this from happening and what the motivation of why someone would do this if they were not stealing or gaining anything personally? If police are doing some investigation into this, he'd like to see a report particularly on why somebody would do this.

Boers replied they turned themselves in after the fact, damage was minimal because a lot of the stuff dried out but it could've been about \$50,000 worth of damage. We're bringing this back for actual action because we are looking at upgrading our SCADA system that would have video capacity, we could add cameras to ones we have and then possibly doing some fencing or other things too. We're seeing a large increase in this kind of action; we have another booster station with the door partially kicked in because someone tried getting into it, another that was vandalized where they stole the hose, there's no good explanation.

Diny stated these locations are out everywhere so we'll bring this back.

Boers: the issues show up on the SCADA system, we have intrusion alarms, motor sensors and items that are on that which will show up as an alarm but if we are half hour, 45 minutes to an hour out, a lot of damage can be done in that time.

Lindman continued that wastewater operations technicians were able to obtain CDL Licenses, something we pay for, its good they're making progress, we are hiring people without any certifications. The headworks screening project starts June and will go through late summer of 2026, it'd be nice to have that done and will be a bit disruptive to operations during construction. There was a question about disruption of traffic with Washington Street siphon replacement, we're going to close one lane of Washington Street so there won't be full road closures on one side but will be necked down in front of the chamber for a few weeks till they get out of the street.

Force questioned the update of the water distribution maintainer position?

Boers replied HR has not heard back from the second candidate yet.

Director's Report Placed on File.

#### **4) Discussion, Update and Review of Utility Staffing Challenges, Retention and Recruiting.**

Diny commented there's a lot of good information in the packet for you to review along with the memo showing current employees and proposed number of employees, the Baker Tilly study from 2022 has a lot of good reading with their justifications.

Lindman began this was brought back but the HR Director is not available, she had other obligations today but will be coming to July's meeting, she has been reviewing all the information over the past 4-5 years, she'll be able to provide you with her opinions and potentially have a discussion with the next steps of the utility and apologized for the late memo.

Robinson requested we break this down to 2 components. 1 being recruitment and retention from the perspective of ability to recruit the right people once we have them, can we retain them and what policies we need to advance that. The separate issue of staffing levels, the cost associated with increasing the staff to meet the report's recommendations. If we could break it down, how do

we deal with the current allocation of staff and specifically what policies we need to look at fringe benefit package? Are there other incentives we need relative to hiring that whole concept of CDL onboarding and the process associated with that, we can't keep our current positions filled but before start looking at new ones, we have to address the problem of how we do with that. We could get recommendations relative to salary schedules, attraction, recruitment, retention policies that would be extremely helpful, understanding that we got these reports, if we could deal with in a sequential manner.

Lindman agreed and stated we have all that information that was put together over the last few years that we've presented here, so we'll update those numbers and bring them back and break them out for you.

Force recalled remembering this report about 2 years ago and would like to see a quick summary of the recommendations that were contained in the Baker Tilly Report and what our response has been. Salaries was just one component of this report, there were comments on safety, asset inventory and other activities that Baker Tilly found lacking in our system and if they still were, I would like an update on what we did in response to some of the comments from Baker Tilly study.

Lindman replied he'd provide the update at the next meeting.

No Action Taken.

#### **5) Discussion and Possible Action Approving Wastewater 2024 Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR) and Resolution.**

Robinson motioned to approve Wastewater 2024 CMAR and Resolution. Seconded by Watson.

Lindman recapped this annual report was a self-grading of the Wastewater facility and is reviewed by the DNR that highlights any violations, as you read through the report, our effluent has been very good, biosolids has been good, the plant has been running well and staff have been doing a good job with the new plant upgrades. We'll be starting the headworks screening, hopefully, we won't have any significant impacts on our final effluent and biosolids with the projects and the disruptions.

Robinson thanked staff for this report as it reflects the work being done, he highlighted the issue of phosphorous removal as it's a burden for people that live in an urban setting to remove phosphorous coming from rural areas that need to be addressed. We're making good headway. It looked like we are starting to trend a little bit higher on suspended solids, are there any concerns raised with that, its incremental increases but seems to be trending in an increasing manner?

Lindman replied he'd spoken with Brooks about that along with the phosphorous and Brooks didn't feel it's a concern at this point but that they were monitoring that. As far as anything they're doing at the plant and the processes, I will have to refer to Brooks if they were making any changes for that TSS. With our new plant, we do have the capability to lower our phosphorus even more, we're meeting our effluent requirements and exceeding those. One of the discussions we continue to have with DNR is how this phosphorus trading is done with outside entities and was hoping that we'd be able to trade internally with our storm water to keep our rate revenue inhouse, to help meet our compliance with storm water side, but there's still questions on that. There was another municipality looking at the same thing, it would be beneficial because with the storm water quality issues and the nutrients removal requirements is going to be a continued issue moving forward.

Force questioned if there were any organizations available anymore in view of current reductions in government services that could come and do analytical review of energy use and make recommendations for the power consumption and use of biogas. He wrote a story on Dekalb, IL which received some support from GE and the State of Illinois that saved a lot of money on

energy expenses.

Lindman replied not that he knew of but could ask around, we're having an issue with the moisture with the new boilers in our biogas side, so that's been an ongoing issue but we could run the turbines but may have to do modifications on the biogas side to remove some of that moisture which may be a project that's coming.

Diny recapped this resolution will go to council to approve at their June 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.  
Motion carried 4-0.

**6) Discussion on Adjusting the Date and Time of the July Commission Meeting.**

Diny began the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in July falls in week of the 4<sup>th</sup> we're looking to see if we could move meeting a week out, the following Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> any questions, comments, suggestions, either or? With commission replying good either way, we'll put it down for the July 8<sup>th</sup>.

No Action Taken.

**7) Adjourn.**

Watson motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Robinson.  
Motion carried 4-0.

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

Gina Vang, Recording Secretary

S:\WaterWorks\Common\WaterCommission\2025\July\WWWC\_20250603\_Minutes.doc.