



Minutes of November 4, 2024

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 11:00 a.m. in City Hall on Monday, November 4, 2024. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on October 30th, 2024.

Members Present: President Diny, Commissioners Robinson, Gehin, Force, Watson
Others Present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Ben Brooks, MaryAnne Groat, Laura Scudiere, RN/
Health Dept., Stacey Morache/Wausau Resident, Matthew Balgord/Wausau Resident, Dr. Jeremy Hoffman, DDS/Dental Vision-Weston

1) Approve Minutes of October 1, 2024 Meetings.

Watson motioned to approve minutes. Seconded by Force.

Force questioned if Equiflow website was made more prominent and easier to find and requested operating budget summary be compared against prior year, current year and actual because what's provided in the packet didn't reflect that.

Lindman replied equiflow is updating their website and we'll be updating ours with additional public outreach and information. Groat is here and will go over the budget at that time.

Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comment

Morache began that she shared an EPA webinar with some members of this commission concerning fluoridation in drinking water. The webinar was presented by the Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, a division of translational toxicology. Dr. Kyler Taylor & Dr. Andrew Rooney who works with NIEHS Toxicology risk assessment gave the most recent toxicology programs monographs summarizing 19 studies deemed high quality, 18 finding adverse effects from fluoride in children's IQ's, 53 studies found 46 with just some negative effect on fluoride in children's IQ, in conclusion they found higher fluoride exposure is associated with lower IQ in children as well as low confidence and other neurodevelopmental and cognitive effects in children. 15 studies assessed with this confidence rating, 8 of 9 found association in learning, memory impairment, neurobehavioral effects in infants, learning disabilities such as ADHD. They explained fetal and developing brains are vulnerable in addition, formula fed babies were at higher risk of fluoridation toxicity on a per body weight basis than exclusively breastfed infants. After their presentation, a question to Dr. Taylor was asked, "What are the recommendations to a pregnant friend?" In which she replied, "She'd need to purchase unfluoridated water during her pregnancy." On Sept. 24, 2024, a federal district Judge found that 0.7mg/L dose in drinking water, considered optimal, based solely to avoid discoloration of the teeth posed unreasonable risk in IQ loss in children, under the toxicology law that requires a response. How do we protect those suffering from kidney disease as they are not able to remove excess fluoride from their bodies and in the elderly that causes brittle bones. Adding fluoride to water provides limited benefit as compared to 50 years ago, rather than the 25% reduction in tooth decay, the review showed it only reduced tooth decay by ¼ of 1 baby tooth. Clearly the risks outweigh the benefits unless you

devise a plan to inform the public about the health risks, I ask that you remove it.

Balgord commented that fluoride has been researched by experts but wanted to bring to light, the logic and reasoning. One thing to learn from history is so that we don't repeat the mistakes in the past. We've had a lot of toxic chemicals in the past, tobacco, DDT, mercury, lead. There was a lot less politics with everything back then but now there's a lot of politics in this fluoride whether your liberal or conservative, no one wants to be poisoned if this is what it's been identified. Dentists would say what about the economically, disadvantaged children, you could fix the tooth but are we creating damaged brains through this. Dentist would say it's safe, we've seen less cavities but has there been any research regarding effects to the brain, kidneys, thyroid? There's a warning on back of toothpaste, do not swallow. I think some fluoride is damaging the stomach, is it accumulation of this chemical. I had a leak in the water service on the city side, what ate that lead pipe, was it accumulation of that chemical that is known to go through glass, steel, concrete, lead. Share quote from Thomas Jefferson, "Man once surrendering his reason, has no remaining guard against absurdities the most monstrous and like a ship without rudder, is the sport of every wind. With such persons, gullibility, which they call Faith, takes the helm from the hand of reason and the mind becomes a wreck." We need to use reasoning when making a decision.

Dr Hoffman, Dentist practicing at Dental Visions in Weston and past president of Central Wisconsin Dental Society and currently sit on the board of trustees. Community water fluoridation is under threat but this protects teeth from cavities. In young children and adults, even that topical fluoridated water benefits them. This topic was citing issues of autonomy. As a Dentist, when I think of Public Health, what water fluoridation is part of, doing the most good for the most people with the least amount of money, fluoridated water fits this to the T, benefits everyone in the community regardless of income, age, race, education or access to dental care. Lifetime cost of one person drinking fluoridated water throughout their lifetime is less than the cost of one filling. There was a report released from the national toxicology program that reviewed 18 reports linking fluoridated water to children's IQ scores, keep in mind 15 out of 18 are not from North America, they're from China and India where their water levels with fluoride are much higher than here. Is this an apple-to-apple comparison, 2 were from Mexico, and the last was from Canada with challenges to their methodology who wouldn't share their data with researchers regarding their finding. This is a water commission meeting, but on the 1st page after the title page, in bold print- "This monograph and addendum do not address whether the sole exposure to fluoride added to drinking water in some countries IE Fluoridation at 0.7mg per liter in the US and Canada is associated with the measurable effect and IQ." There's been talk about toxins and toxicity but it's the dose that makes the poison for example: Warfarin is a blood thinner to reduce heart attack, too much, then it's rat poison, it's the dose that makes the poison. Every bit helps our most vulnerable populations and strongly ask that you continue water fluoridation.

Received email comment- attached at the end of minutes.

2) Director's Report on Utility Operations.

Lindman began there's an EPA Fact sheet in the packet that provides brief overview of some of the major, significant type changes that we are going to see that will impact our resources, money, budgets. These rules were finalized and will become enforceable in 3 years. Does anyone have any questions on those, we've talked about them previously but now they're finalized.

Robinson questioned in light of our past discussions, subject to availability of resources, would there be a problem with attaining the compliance with the new lead and copper rules.

Lindman replied we'd have to reprioritize some work and have quite a bit of additional testing. Right now, we test 1st liter, but with this it would require 1st and 5th liters and don't think it's as intuitive to get that 5th liter sampling, we'd have to have staff go in and do that. We'll have to double the number of tests to 2x a year, quadrupling the tests needed and would require significant set of

resources annually. We've already begun the lead service line replacement plan this 1st year; the goal was 553 but we'll end up about 600 replacements this year. This morning, we got the funding list, total request was \$14.9 million, \$8.8 million is principal forgiveness, \$6.1 million is loan. The principal forgiveness will cover the private side replacement 100%, so that's good news. The \$6.1 million loan would be to cover the public side replacement. Next year, we're proposing 1900 replacements.

Force questioned likelihood of completing this job within 10 years and how many lead service line replacements we had left?

Lindman corrected, it would be about 13 years because the LCRI doesn't become enforceable for 3-years. The proposed schedule is 5 years but there are residents who are not voluntarily replacing their lines and that's when we'll have to get back to the ordinance potentially. We had people not allowing us into their homes so we'll see more of that but it's a small number. We're estimating somewhere around 7,300 left. There's going to be an economic impact but we'll have to determine what that economic impact is on a year-to-year basis and where the funding would be coming from whether it be utility rates or city funding general obligation?

Diny stated the ordinance was passed by this committee and taken to the committee of the whole who's since tabled it.

Lindman stated we talked about resources, the commission and council did include adding staff to the water utility which would be beneficial for us, these are some of the regulations coming down that will significantly strain our resources. I've been working in the water and sewer industry in public works for well over 20 years and in the last 3 to 4 years, I've seen more legislation come out then in my previous 20 years, it has been incredibly intense, we felt some of that here at the commission and at council level. I don't think we are done yet, there may still be some additional legislation and regulations coming in the next 2 to 3 years that may require additional resources moving forward.

Boers updated that construction of the Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) Treatment facility has one vessel left before startup. The contractor has been struggling to get a safe sample on the last vessel, they started a caustic soak this morning, hoping to have safe samples turned into the lab by Thursday this week to start up by Friday afternoon.

Robinson questioned what a safe sample meant and if the residual was how it was brought in or if it was the manufacturing and installation?

Boers replied, it means the tank is struggling to get a safe Bacteriological sample on it, so they'll do a caustic soak, we can't use chlorine because it would wreck the carbon, the soak would raise the pH of the water and hopefully kill the bacteria. I would suspect that it was probably the material brought in or how it was pumped into the tanks, they're doing some investigation but I don't know that we'll find the actual cause but the tanks were all safe tested prior to the carbon being placed and one this tank failed a safe test.

Force questioned when we'll be solely relying on the carbon units and not the resin?

Boers replied, the resin would be running in front of the carbon, so if everything goes as planned with safe samples, we'd have the carbon after the resin, so any PFAS passing through the resin would be picked up by the carbon, we should be online completely Friday afternoon if all goes to plan. The water changeout in the system usually takes about 3 days. In the packet, there are some results from our quarter 3 testing that shows we are under the DHS recommended 20 parts per trillion for PFAS, we have some shorter chain breaking through that ion exchange resin, the carbon will pick those up. The resin wasn't designed to remove PFAS, it's intended to remove TOC, we could regenerate it but we won't have to replace once the carbon is online.

Lindman stated there's an update on our discharge of quality effluent at Wastewater and the Northwestern lift station if anyone else had any other questions.

Director's Report Placed on File.

3) Presentation by the Marathon County Health Department Regarding Fluoridation in Drinking

Water.

Diny stated Marathon County Health Department Nurse Laura Scudiere is here to present on fluoridation in water. See Presentation at 31:18 via [YouTube](#) and starts on page 26 of the packet.

Robinson questioned if Scudiere was aware of any studies relative to bioaccumulation in tissue relative to fluoride intake from multiple sources as it relates to brain health or other tissue and if there were any study that looked at the whole issue of total bioaccumulation relative to all sources instead of just in water.

Scudiere replied after speaking with Wisconsin Oral Health Team, there have been no studies that provide scientifically convincing evidence of any negative effects of fluoride exposure overtime at the recommended level but the best person to answer that would probably be Dr. Dunkl at the State Oral Health Team.

Force stated the city of Portland had a public referendum, years or months ago and fluoride was no longer added into their water.

Diny questioned how dosage was determined?

Hoffman replied there's a difference in adults vs infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) had some guidelines about reducing the amount of tap water used when making formula because there were some concerns but not positive about the exact amount, that was guidance a few years ago. In terms of adults, 0.7mg/L added, back in dental schooling in 2000, you'd have to drink a bathtub full of water to overdose on fluoride in the water. It wouldn't be the fluoride but the fact that you diluted your electrolytes so much from drinking that much water at once.

Lindman replied, we would rely on the Department of Health and other medical agencies to provide us information, even with the court ruling in California, we haven't heard from our regulatory authorities, the EPA or the DNR, so we'll reach out to the DNR statewide or EPA nationwide on this issue. If there are recommendations from DHS or otherwise, we would reach out to our contacts in public health and reach out to public with our newsletters.

Gehin stated there is natural fluoride in the ground water, were we feeding or supplementing it?

Boers replied we're averaging 0.7mg/L in the drinking water and we're supplementing as each well varies from 0.6mg/L to 0.9 mg/L but we just add to get to the recommended level.

No Action Taken.

4) Discussion and Update on Drinking Water PFAS Levels for Treated Water and Discharge Water from Backwashing.

Boers began results included in the packet were from our quarter 3 PFAS testing from both our entry points 400 and 500 which show shorter chain items breaking through close to 15 parts per trillion on each of those entry points. Entry points are different combinations of wells, 3 wells on one entry point and 3 wells on the other entry point. The outfall samples are non-detect required by DNR for some of the discharge. The flushing water coming out of our carbon vessels that we were discharging to outfall were also required to be tested for PFAS. The values we were discharging were non- detect, I think we hit 1.5 parts per trillion of the PFHxS which is below the limit of quantification that could be a variable but with the next sample it disappeared, its very promising looking at the water going through our carbon that there is non-detect PFAS in it. When the system goes online, we will do additional testing for PFAS and are required by DNR for quarter 4 sampling and the results will come here once they are available.

Gehin questioned if outfall was to the stream or sanitary sewer?

Boers replied to a retention pond outside of the facility but will eventually get to the river.

No Action Taken.

5) Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Development of a Pilot Study to Begin Accepting Leachate from the Marathon County Landfill.

Lindman began a meeting was held with Marathon County Landfill, with regards to next steps and putting together a pilot. Another meeting is set for tomorrow and we're trying to include the DNR in a future meeting to get their recommendations with things they want to see as well. There are minutes from our last meeting in the packet.

Brooks stated there was discussion for long term, short term. Short term would be to run a pilot and see the impacts of the leachate. Between short term/midterm, we'll have some discussion if there's any potential exemptions available or make aware from short to long term. Medium term is 100% acceptance of the leachate that would vary with the DNR discussions in the future. The landfill is looking at clean water funding as we are for treatment improvements. The landfill is proposing to put in a reverse osmosis system to treat leachate and then the wastewater plant will be a backup for leachate disposal when the reverse osmosis has downtime. With us not receiving our draft permit yet, the discussion with DNR needs to take place first before us moving forward with the acceptance of leachate.

Robinson wanted us to look at this as a systemic issue, as we have the issue of leachate being generated by the landfill, issue of effluent discharge standards to the upcoming WPDES permit, and long-term basis of what we do with our biosolids if regulations come. Neither the landfill nor the wastewater treatment plant accumulated this but we're being asked to deal with this, so keep in mind the leachate effluent in biosolids when having those discussions. The Administrator last month talked about innovation fund coming out through the Department of Revenue that would aid reduction cost or intergovernmental costs and that would be good for our ratepayers.

Brooks replied discussions that took place as far as landfill accepting our biosolids as a cover source, there'd be a pilot ran as well as the spent resin filters from the water treatment facility, there are a lot of unknowns at this time. Moving forward, we'll discuss more with DNR discussions in person if we could get everyone together versus online meeting but to make them aware. It still leaves our effluent as a source of contamination to Wisconsin River and that's what needs to be taking into consideration. We could take the leachate and they could take our biosolids but that still leaves our effluent possibly being compromised.

Lindman reiterated that it would be one of the biggest challenges, we want to do this but we need the DNR to be onboard and not for it to be punitive on either the landfill or the wastewater plant but to start that discussion with them as we approach the subject to find a solution.

No Action Taken.

6) Operating Budget Quarterly Update Through September 2024.

Groat started with the Sewer Utility fund, where the budget was prepared on a modified accrual basis for 2024 & 2025 focusing on the impact on cash. The operations column for Sewer through September shows \$8.3 million in revenue, \$7 million in expenses, \$1.2 million profit this year. We have some non-cyclical expenses like interest payments made May 1 and November 1 that have impacted the results. Capital Projects like Eau Claire Blvd. and some are waiting for closing with DOA, these projects would be paid out of the utility's operations profit like the transportation equipment. We received closing notice yesterday for the treatment plant so that loan will be closing. Once it closes, we'll have to contribute \$720,000 annually to our capital replacement fund and that would need to be established by 2028. The council approved budget modification for Headworks project taking the \$800,000 fully funded by the DOA either grant money or borrowing and funding the cherry street lift station with ARPA. At the next meeting, I could include 2025 budget so that you'll have this year's budget, next year's budget and actuals to date. I'll add that to next month's report. Water Utility shows \$8.7 million in revenue and \$6.09 million in expenses, similar situation to the bottom line where we have to make our final interest payments and our payment in lieu of taxes and

that would have an impact on our final numbers but we'll see that we're generating a profit at the end of the year. Some differences on revenue and capital projects and expenses are related to timing, like the solar project that never had a revenue source or water meters that have not been transferred from the general fund that was \$1 million then \$800,000 from ARPA, then miscellaneous equipment funded from operations but from a financial standpoint we'll finish up the year in good shape.

Robinson questioned where the funding is coming from the capital side because its not reflected in the operational projected revenues? For example- Sewer shows capital contributions of \$36,000 but capital outlay of \$1.8 million. What is our role relative to the budget because we review the capital side and rate increases but not always the operating budget, at some point, there's some disconnect. Council approves operating budget but we recommend capital so I'm lost to where our role is relative to funding sources and responsibilities.

Groat replied it shows up on top either as proceeds from borrowing, grants or capital contributions as ARPA financing or TID financing or projects that are special assessed. We are waiting for closing on some of these projects from DOA, we will have funding from DOA when we close from the Eau Claire Blvd around \$400,000. Equipment funded 100% from operations. Treatment plant loan we just received closing but there's a couple of projects not completed.

Lindman questioned if it would be more helpful for the Commission not to have capital expenditures and only see operational as Robinson's point, in the past, capital has always come here but the operating never really has, my feeling is that it should be and I'm hoping with Workday, it would help us present that to you so you can become more familiar with the operational side as well as the capital side. I've seen some benefits to what workday is able to do from a presentation standpoint but I'm happy to bring the city attorney to the next meeting, for the roles.

Groat replied we could place that on 2 separate sheets or try a different presentation next month when we'll have the 2025 budget. I was researching and its hard-to-find other water utilities who are giving financials in an open forum but we'll give it a try. Water utility's cash position is showing strong revenues compared to expenses and given other funding sources for other capital projects, I felt we were able to do that throughout this whole budgeting in workday, next year we'll have the capital in workday and would be easier to do budget to actual.

Diny states it just seems intuitive to have the full picture here whether we are authorized to approve or not, our input is important.

No Action Taken.

7) Discussion and Possible Action Approving the Replacement of an Existing Truck.

Boers stated the memo included a recap of the request to replace an existing truck with funding we had at the beginning of the year but had to back out because we didn't feel it was appropriate at that time not knowing where we would be. Since then, we've come across different funding sources to allow cash availability so we'd like to make the purchase. We have 3 vehicles that could use replacement, a 2008 truck, 2016 van that was inexpensive and a smaller 2011 truck that needs replacement. The hopes are that by the time we get our purchase in we would retire the old truck at that time.

Lindman stated this is not adding to the fleet, it's a replacement.

Force motioned to approve the replacement of an existing truck. Seconded by Gehin.

Motion carried 5-0.

8) Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Research Project with the Water Research Foundation for Regeneration or Disposal of PFAS-Laden Drinking Water Residuals, Media, and Waste.

Lindman began we were approached by the water research foundation to enter this study with them to start looking at some of our backwash residuals we have that were recently tested. They'd be looking at testing and doing research on backwash from the resin and backwash from the GAC. There is no cash outlay for us, the water utility would take the samples but we wouldn't have to pay for lab costs. We step into these things, hoping to be proactive with the regulatory agencies sort of like with the leachate and the landfill, we must be proactive this might be an advantage to us and to other communities. This would help us look forward so we have a good understanding of what we're doing and staying in communication with our regulatory authorities at the same time on what we're doing, this would be beneficial in getting information. If we don't do it, someone else would, so this is a way for us to be proactive.

Robinson motioned to authorize participation in the research project with the Water Research Foundation for regeneration or disposal of PFAS-Laden drinking water residuals, media, and waste. Seconded by Gehin.

Lindman stated this is expected to begin in about 6 months and we expect a letter of involvement coming which we are authorizing the mayor to sign.

Watson questioned if it would take extra time from daily duties and if they would present their findings to us?

Lindman replied they would present in different workshops like down in Chicago water research foundation, they present their R&D and its very informative and being a part of this would be very beneficial.

Gehin questioned if this was a stand-alone foundation or if this was related to the EPA?

Lindman replied this is a stand-alone foundation that has done multiple studies as far as destruction of PFAS and biosolids and soils.

Motion carried 5-0.

Force questioned if we addressed the confined space instruction received from the public?

Diny replied we haven't but it was received as public comment and we'll place it in the minutes to address as an inquiry.

Lindman replied all our staff are trained in confined space and other training information addresses chemicals and corrosion and I'll be happy to respond on how we address that.

9) Adjourn.

Watson motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Gehin.

Motion carried 5-0.

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

Gina Vang, Recording Secretary

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