



## Minutes of December 3, 2024

A meeting of the Wausau Water Works Commission was called to order at 11:03 a.m. in City Hall on Tuesday, December 3, 2024. In compliance with Wisconsin Statutes, this meeting was posted and receipted for by the Wausau Daily Herald on December 2, 2024.

Members Present: President Diny, Commissioners Gehin, Force,

Member Excused: Commissioner Watson

Webex: Commissioner Robinson, Andrew Dow/Donohue, Dr. Griffin Cole. DDS, NMD, Dr. Ashley Malin/Assistant Professor- Dept. of Epidemiology

Others Present: Eric Lindman, Scott Boers, Ben Brooks, Brad Wendtland, Susan

Wojtkiewicz/Donohue, Christy Schweiss/Wausau Resident, Sandy & Michael Bautsch/ Wausau Resident

### \*Public Comment\*

Schweiss commented a study of 299 mother/child pairs in Mexico, higher prenatal exposure to fluoride in pregnant woman are associated with lower cognitive function in the children 4-6-12 years old. It's a major public health threat. Fluoride exposure in utero is toxic and the damage to children's brain are greater in fluoride than it is to lead, mercury and arsenic. I hope we could stop this fluoridation and other states are getting rid of the fluoridation too.

Bautsch commented the EPA must make some regulatory changes but wanted to play a couple of minutes an interview regarding fluoridation. See [Youtube](#) at 5:33. As the next level of administration coming in, we should look at fluoridation, vaccinations and everything.

Diny requested an email be sent for the source of that interview played.

Bautsch commented fluoridation should not be ingested, looking at toothpaste, if you swallow a pea size amount it is recommended to contact poison control. There's a lot of exposure throughout the day from when you get up and shower, coffee, cook pasta in water, brush teeth, all of it there's fluoride in it, then Dentists topically apply it. Some products in history have been deemed safe like lead, cigarettes, alcohol, cocaine were once healthy as fluoride but we find out its not, so with children and babies getting formula, where are the safety studies that prove there is no harm?

### 1) Approve Minutes of November 4, 2024 Meetings.

Gehin motioned to approve minutes. Seconded by Force.

Motion carried 3-0.

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

Lindman highlighted the first items are the WDNR's Safe Drinking Water Loan and the Clean Water Loan used to build the new water treatment facility and upgrade the wastewater treatment facility. Clean water fund loan has been closed with the DNR, we are finalizing close out documents within the next month or two. The water treatment is still open, some warranty items

and lockout tagout project items ongoing, but hope to have that completed next 30-45 days. Both loans should be closing out shortly. Update of the GAC, placed online since last week, our PFAS level have been below DHS recommendation and non-detect. This was our long-term solution so we could stay below any upcoming regulations for PFAS but there's still some programming updates over the next month or so.

Robinson questioned short chain PFAS break through and follow up on the bacteria issue from the last tank last month?

Boers replied with the caustic soak on that vessel, issue was resolved. We tested between ion exchange and GAC during start up and those PFAS samples came back non-detect, so we did not have any short chain breakthroughs at that point. We did sampling at each of the 6 GAC vessels that were non-detect as well.

Force requested a complete report on the GAC system, possibly January or February in how the system is working, what the numbers are, and information related to build up of PFAS on the carbon.

Lindman commented an update related to our proposed leachate meeting is scheduled with the DNR next Tuesday, minutes are included in the packet from last meeting. We continue moving forward on cooperation with marathon county landfill toward the start of the pilot. Wastewater has the operations technician interviews and we sold the tv van on the government auction.

Force commented we haven't had great track record with onboarding and the willingness to accept the offers and starting wage.

Brooks replied it depended on the individual's need for job and willingness to learn.

Lindman replied, if we had experienced people apply, we would run into the issue of where we can offer them wages and typically cannot adequately pay for past experience. If we have someone with little to no experience, it's their personal preference.

Director's Report Placed on File.

### **3) Discussion and Update with Presentation on the Final Results of the GAC Pilot Study.**

Dow presented the slides in the packet starting page 32-42. See [Youtube](#) at 21:28 with discussion.

Robinson questioned the gallons used before the changeouts and requested full presentation on GAC life cycle cost liability and expected and reactivated carbon vs virgin carbon.

Dow replied after 1 billion gallons treated. Reactivated carbon removes PFAS just as well. We'll have more data in the next couple of weeks.

Gehin requested that we tour the facility as it's beneficial to visually observe this process.

Boers suggested that the full report is best done in February that will allow time to get information from running the plant. PFAS samples are taking anywhere from 3-4 weeks to get results, we'll have another set coming up so 2 results back by then, we can run a tour between now and then.

Force replied, February sounds good.

No Action Taken.

### **4) Presentation on Fluoridation in Drinking Water.**

Diny commented there's a couple of presentations and reminded Presenters of the 10 minutes allotted, with that, Presenter Dr. Cole started with page 43-60. See [Youtube](#) at 50:18.

Gehin questioned if New Hampshire and Vermont had natural fluoride in their water?

Dr. Cole replied that every source of water whether groundwater or surface water has natural fluoride and calcium fluoride. The lethal amount of calcium fluoride would be 3,750mg/kg of body weight but when looking at silicon fluoride, its 125mg/kg.

Force questioned where the onset of fluoridation in drinking water occurred.

Dr. Cole replied there's supposed to be a 15-year study where they added sodium fluoride but after 5 years, they just started fluoridating. The American Dental Association (ADA) were against this in 1944 but three months later, they started adding this and that's how it got rolling.

Presenter Dr. Malin started with page 61-77 at [Youtube](#) at 1:11:35.

Dr. Malin stated fluoride in toothpaste is high so if more than pea sized amount is ingested you are to contact poison control.

Robinson recapped that there is reason for concern and questioned if Dr. Cole utilized fluoride topically and if studies differentiate between the types of fluorides and their impact on neurological development?

Dr. Cole replied he sold his practice 3 years ago but had never used the fluoride topically.

Dr. Malin replied studies looked at fluoride from all sources, measured in urine or sometimes plasma. EPA reports that fluoride exposures are from community drinking water in most adults in the States.

Force questioned the data with the court ruling, studies in China and Mexico were cited. The information presented today were from studies in USA, why didn't the judge utilize these reports when making the decision for the case in California?

Dr. Cole replied, the judge was relaying on the NTP report, trying to condense so that both parties could agree on what reports were acceptable. As Dr. Malin mentioned, there is a study in the country in Los Angeles but it was too late to make it into that NTP report.

Dr. Malin commented that the report was included in the legal proceedings in the trial against the EPA.

Diny thanked the community that were in attendance and stated Wausau Water Works will continue to ensure the safety of our drinking water.

No Action Taken.

#### **5) Update on Financial Operating and Capital Budgets.**

Diny commented the request was from Force.

Force commented he was ok with postponing this to next month.

No Action Taken.

#### **6) Update on Meter Replacements and Schedule Moving Forward into 2025.**

Boers started we removed a meter from 1973 and have things to catch up on and improve.

Diny commented good news, we previously had low meter supply issues and now we are catching up on dead and under reporters and have a goal of around 4,000 meter replacements in 2025, so we are doing more.

Gehin questioned the reading for the 1973 meter and if we tested all meters according to the PSC. It'd be interesting to see what the revenue change would be and if we are extending the day to accommodate the meter exchanges.

Boers replied PSC only requires us to partially test meters but since we're finding such a big disparity from installing the new meter and removing the old dead meter we test all of them on the way out so we have meter accuracy over billing with the new meters. It'd be hard to know what kind of water usage we are losing just from the testing. We are doing our best to keep meter change outs within our normal business hours but have made exceptions for customers to meet them after hours.

No Action Taken.

**7) Update on the Lead Service Line Replacement for 2024 and the Proposed 2025 Schedule.**

Lindman commented for the 2025 LSL replacements we brought a Reimbursement Resolution and proposed DNR funding allocation to the Finance Committee for their approval to begin work. e did well in principal forgiveness at \$8.8 million and \$6.1 million in loan. We're working to amend some language in the CIP agreement and will have a closing date coming up with the DNR for both the 2024 funding and 2025 funding. For 2025, we'll discuss with Ehlers on how much can be paid from utility annually vs tid vs general obligation and other possible funding sources because the loan portion is strictly for public side, principal forgiveness we received covers 100% of private side.

Robinson questioned worst case scenario when looking at the \$6.1 million loan repayment?

Lindman replied we'll have to look at that with Ehlers, it's a 20-year loan at .25%. We want the commission to be aware of what's happening moving forward as things happen through the Finance Committee to the City Council on any potential projects moving forward.

Diny commented there's several options, the loan portion could go onto rate side or other potential that hasn't been fully vetted out but we'll have to balance that out.

No Action Taken.

**8) Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Sole Source and Contract with Asterra for Leak Detection Satellite Imagery and Leak Location.**

Lindman stated there's no cost received yet, but it would be collaboration with Village of Weston, City of Schofield, City of Wausau, and Village of Rib Mountain. It's a technology that's newer using satellite imagery to determine potential leaks using ground penetrating radio waves. Green Bay has been using this for 6 years and there's other municipalities beginning to use this as well. It identifies smaller specific areas to look for leaks vs looking at an entire subdivision or section of the city. Its great technology that's been proven. We're thinking it may be about \$40-\$50 thousand but there's no details and cost at this point so we'll bring it back if you're not comfortable with the sole source without specific numbers.

Force stated he'd like numbers before approving the sole source but it looks promising.

Diny replied, we'll bring this back with numbers.

No Action Taken.

**9) Discussion on the WDNR, Bi-Annual Wastewater Treatment Plant Inspection and Class A Exceptional Quality Biosolids Final Determination.**

Brooks commented DNR representatives visited November 20<sup>th</sup> for the inspection and the inspection went well. We've been approved for class A biosolids verbally and we are waiting on the formal letter from the DNR. Class A biosolids can be distributed on land without DNR pre-approval. There's was talk of excluding Wausau's current mercury limit during inspection in the next 5-year WPDES term. After the inspection we received an email that both mercury and copper will be excluded from our next permit. We are expecting to receive the next draft permit in June/July and we'll send it to legal at that time.

Lindman commented staff has done an exceptional job with all new processes and treatment, effluent has been high quality and now getting the Class A Classification.

No Action Taken.

**10) Recognition of Award Recipient Brad Wendtland, Wastewater Plant Operations Supervisor. WWOA Operator of the Year.**

Brooks commented Wendtland received the Northcentral District Wisconsin Wastewater Operator of the Year Award for his dedication, skills, expertise and going above and beyond.

Wendtland commented it was a long process to get the upgrade completed for the plant with lots of hours for call ins and early mornings with late nights from all of us. I've been here about 14 years. Lindman stated this was well deserved and congratulations. Gehin and Force both acknowledged this is a significant award and congratulated Brad and thanked him for his dedication

No Action Taken.

**11) Discussion and Possible Action Approving a Sole Source with Kocourek Ford for Cargo Van.**

Boers summarized this is for the vehicle approved at the last commission meeting and bringing it back as a sole source through Kocourek Ford. We could go to different markets and get quotes but wanted to stay local.

Robinson questioned the cost. Boers replied \$60,118.50.

Motion Carried 3-0.

**12) Adjourn.**

Force motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Gehin.

Motion carried 3-0.

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

Gina Vang, Recording Secretary

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