



OFFICIAL MINUTES REGULAR MEETING

MEETING: Wausau Water Works Commission
DATE/TIME: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 11:00 AM
LOCATION: Wausau City Hall – Council Chambers
407 Grant Street, Wausau WI, 54403

MEMBERS:
Mayor Doug Diny (P) Aaron Griner
Jim Force Deb Hadley
Peter Gelhar

Members Present: Doug Diny, Jim Force, Deb Hadley, Peter Gelhar, Aaron Griner
Members Not Present:
Members Excused:
Present 5, Not Present 0, Excused 0

Noting the presence of a quorum, the Chairperson called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM.

1 Consideration of the minutes of the preceding meeting(s).

December 2, 2025 Regular Wausau Water Works Commission Minutes

Introduction of the new Water Commissioner, Aaron Griner.

- Motion to Approve the minutes of December 2, 2025 by Gelhar, Seconded by Hadley. Motion carried 5-0.

2 Director's Reports.

Report placed on file.

- a. Drinking Water Division Updates- Leak Detection Results for 2025, 2025 Main Breaks and Repairs, 2025 Meter Exchanges, 2025 Locates completed, No water calls, 2026 Main Breaks/ Service Leak

Force asked if the 26 main breaks and 32 service leak repairs were from the Leak Detection Study or prior work. Boers confirmed they were included along with other identified issues. Westrum Leak Detection, contracted for acoustic surveys every other year, has two visits remaining (2027 and 2029) and costs little over \$10,000 every other year. Asterra Leak Detection will conclude next year. Griner asked about water meter replacement timeline; Boers hopes within two years, depending on regulations and staffing. Lindman noted new meters' life span of 20 years versus 10 previously, resulting in better replacement schedule once these are all changed.

- b. Drinking Water Division- Federal Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) Update

Boers reported that EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Revisions require annual notices to customers with galvanized, lead, or unknown service lines. Utilities must now track private service materials and update inventory through DNR/EPA. Homeowners are asked to self-report with photos or contact CIP for verification; updates are recorded in GIS. Notices will continue until all services are confirmed non-lead or replaced. Lindman noted progress: initial estimate of 8,000 lead services reduced to about 7,100 as inventory is verified.

- c. Wastewater Updates: Headworks Screening Project and Cherry Street Lift Station.

Brooks updated the commission on the Headworks screening project and Cherry Street Lift Station. Existing screens are 15 years old and unserviceable; replacements will be done one at a time.

d. Wastewater WPDES Permit Update

Brooks reported WPDES permit comments were submitted via email (attached). Final approval from DNR for Class A biosolids has not been received, so sludge continues to be tested and treated as both Class A and Class B for the past two years to show compliance. Hadley suggested involving legal to expedite resolution; Force noted the cost impact. Lindman stated prior outreach to the Assistant Secretary received no response. Brooks will follow up again.

3 Discussion.

a. Discussion on Water Rate Comparisons

Boers reviewed water rate comparisons from PSC data for Marathon County, AB Class Utilities, and statewide rankings. Force suggested sharing this with ratepayers in a Q&A format; Hadley proposed including it in the newsletter. Griner questioned sustainability of current rates; Boers noted an analyst will review in spring and suggested small annual increases (3–4% like WPS) to avoid large jumps. Groat explained PSC allows short-form increases of up to 5%, haven't done one in a while and full-rate cases require supporting materials; PILOT funds (\$1.5M water, \$485K sewer) support general city operations and cannot be eliminated. Lindman emphasized rising costs and the need for periodic adjustments to mitigate future impacts. Force requested a visual of rate increases over the past 10–15 years. Lindman noted that's only for water; the sewer is separate.

b. Update on the solar array project and possible schedule

Lindman reported that once RFP responses are received, staff will review and forward them to the Finance Committee, considering regulatory changes, project timing, and tax credits since the July 4th construction schedule will not be met. EPA grant results are expected May/June 2026. Griner noted Finance previously voted against sole source but believed paying 5% upfront before July would meet the deadline. Lindman clarified construction cannot start by July; design and bidding will push start to August/September. Starting after July 4th shortens the completion deadline to end of 2027 (vs. 2028) but still allows 30% tax credits, with potential for additional credits based on census data and American-made materials.

c. Discussion on the annual Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT) paid to the city by Wausau Water Works

Lindman reported the PSC-established PILOT is about \$2M; the City is forgiving \$400K–\$500K. Water portion is \$1.59M and sewer about \$485K. Council set these amounts during budget meetings. Finance is finalizing year-end and working with Ehlers on future rate case analysis, including operations, capital costs, and debt service. Groat noted Workday implementation delayed closing books, but the goal is for early completion this year, aiming to meet PSC filing deadline without extensions as in previous years. PSC report includes financial and statistical data. Force discussed PILOT applicability. Groat recapped PSC mandates PILOT for utilities; other nonprofits only pay if negotiated. Examples include Curling Club agreement. Lawsuits have challenged enforceability for nonprofits. Old water plant is excluded from PILOT calculation; demolition costs are covered by City. Ownership transfer is still under utility but could be updated to City. Council approves PILOT via resolution; PSC calculates based on assets and tax rates. Utilities can pay less if Council authorizes. Griner raised concerns about perceived “double-dipping” for taxpayers and asked if a private utilities sector would pay taxes or comparable if we were to go through WPS for water services or another provider. Groat will confer with City Assessor; state statutes govern tax obligations, whether a private utility would pay real estate taxes to the city but she will follow-up.

4 Adjournment.

Next meeting scheduled March 3, 2026 at 11:00 AM.

- Motion by Griner, Seconded by Force, to Adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at

12:08 PM.

The recording of this meeting may be viewed on
YouTube [@CityofWausauMeetings](#)



City of Wausau
(715) 261-6500 | clerk@wausauwi.gov
wausauwi.gov

