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Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday, February 5, 2026, 5:00 PM

MINUTES

- 1. Call meeting to order.**
- 2. Roll Call.** Committee members: Mike Michaud, John Hurtle, Greg Sandstrom, Dale Fayerweather, Kelsey Gilmore, and also present was Dave Vosen
- 3. Review and approve meeting minutes from 11/13/2025 meeting** - Motion to approve the minutes made by Greg Sandstrom seconded by Kelsey. The motion passes five to zero.
- 4. Utility Plant staff update/report** – Dave Vosen reported that we still need to get lead and copper water samples completed before the end of June. We still need about another five to ten homes to get enough samples. We need to do 20 samples each half of the year. We would like to get the list of possible sample locations expanded.

We have had some frozen water meters in the village. I just ask people to keep an eye on where the water meters are. Make sure that space is heated so it does not freeze.

I did get a price for insulating the exterior of Well #2 building. Just a budgetary number of around \$7,000 dollars. I'd like to work with Mike on looking at the electric bills that we get for that well and to see what we've been paying to keep that building heated in the wintertime.

We still have some work that needs to be done on Well #2, and the packing glands still need to be fixed. We need to find the money we're going to need to spend on that work. For the PH control, we're probably going to have to take a little while to complete it.

The sewer collection system is still working fine. At the Wastewater Treatment Plant there's still some issues. The RAS pumps are on the agenda, so I won't discuss that right now.

- 5. Discussion/Action on Water System Issues.**

- 1) Water Meter bill public comments, error update and discussion.** – Brian from Pepin Auto discussed the changes to the water usage amounts on his Bill in the October and January billing cycles. Meter reading differences on the bills were discussed. There were some issues with his meter readings from October and January. Brian is reading his meter weekly now to keep track of usage. He inquired whether the meter could be tested. Mike Michaud stated that the Public Service Commission in Madison is reviewing all the factual details around all these meter reading issues. Whatever they decide will determine next steps for many of these locations that were impacted. Dave Vosen indicated that he wants to install a new meter there after one more quarter of billing cycle. Mike Michaud stated that we'll keep working on your situation.
- 2) Water Meter replacement program update** – Mike Michaud reported that so far since we started installing the newest meters in 2021, we've installed 179 new meters and 31 of those have been converted to remote capability radio reads. We're probably more than halfway or about halfway through the inventory of new meters at this point.
- 3) Update on DNR requirement regarding PH Control** – Mike stated that we received a notice that the DNR wants to have a technical conference with us. They want to look at all the details about what we've been doing to correct the requirement to add pH control to our system on the 25th of February.

Back in 2023, in April, we were told that we didn't need to do this. And then all of a sudden, in October of 2023, we got a letter that said we did need to do it. They want us to do pH control up to 7.5. We are usually running about 7.4 since we got the new pH meter. So, we're actually close to their target right now. Mike stated that historically our readings have been at acceptable levels. We need to have more discussion with the DNR about next steps.

Mike Michaud stated that at some point we're going to probably want to make a recommendation to the board about how to pay for all this stuff or how much money they have to find. Unless we can find some grant money, we may have to increase rates.

- 4) Water loss containment efforts.** Mike asked whether fixing that last leak made a difference. Dave stated that It was substantial, 50,000 to 100,000 gallons of water leaking, but as soon as we got it fixed, we dropped down to under 100,000 per day. It looks like the leak was about 50,000 gallons per day. The leak was located near Locust and 5th St.

- 5) **Backflow prevention devices inspection update.** The committee reviewed the latest report from HydroCorp. We've got a five-year contract with these guys to come in and do all the cross-connection inspections. There was some progress this year. Two commercial accounts still need inspections. There are still 2 violations under the public authority section at the Fire Hall. We do not have cost estimates yet for fixing those issues.
- 6) **New Surge Protector for Well #2.** Each well house has an electrical surge protector in it. In #2 Well house, right now one of the legs, one of the phases is in a failed mode. It's not working. The repair price is about \$3,400 to replace it. The consensus was that this is kind of a high priority repair thing. Greg Sandstrom made a motion to recommend that the Village get this replaced ASAP. Seconded by Dale. Motion passes all in favor.

6. Discussion/Action on Wastewater Treatment Plant status & Issues.

- 1) **Discussion on Public Comment period for Draft of WWTP operating permit.** The Draft permit issued by the DNR was publicly noticed in the paper, back on January 22nd. They're renewing our WWTP operating permit for the next five years for the wastewater plant. Some of this just carries over year to year.

But two things that are new here are we have phosphorus trading credits now, which we did not have in the last permit. The other item that is new is they want us to do sludge testing for PFAS chemicals.

The state legislature passed a new statute that requires sampling for PFAS of all the WWTP emissions. In our case, since all our sludge commingled with other plant's sludge up in Ellsworth and they're the ones who are doing the land spreading.

We have a contract with the water quality trading clearinghouse to buy phosphorous credits from the Hope Farm School. The Hope Farm School had to go and get certified as a seller for those trading credits. The Water Quality Trading Clearinghouse people worked with Hope Farm to go to the DNR and get the DNR to review the project. They decided that the plan was good and that it would generate 74 credits for pounds of phosphorus per year. Marketplace Clearinghouse as a broker that does the deal between the buyer and the seller. We purchased 60 Credits/yr from them on a 10 year contract. We were spending about \$20,000 a year on chemicals to control the phosphorous and we're paying \$6,400 a year for the credits. So if we can cut our chemical use in half, we'd be way ahead with having the credits instead of buying chemicals all year long.

There are some clarifications we want to make to the proposed contract regarding this phosphorous trading item, and we will be filing comments to the DNR requesting those changes to the draft.

- 2) **Update on DNR Inspection action items.** The updated action item list was reviewed, this list is current as of 10/30/2025. Dave said Number three, looking at the bugs under the microscope, we're doing that. That one's complete. Item four on this list, the aerators tanks, we're just going to have to set up a schedule and just clean it. It hasn't been done in a while. Since our intake screen doesn't work, we're not solving anything by cleaning this, we're just going to be putting back everything into it right away unless that screen is repaired. The sludge judge item is completed. Number 10 got completed and 11, good for now, still need to resolve future needs. 13 is done, 14 is done.
 - 3) **Update on RAS pumps status, installation, and VF Drive repair.** The RAS pumps are being replaced. We did receive the new pumps. We've got one installed and got it up and running. The install of the second pump and concrete work is still pending. There was discussion regarding the need for SCADA system updates to get better pump and valve control. Our current SCADA service group is very expensive, and they are located too far away.
 - 4) **Update on intake Screen and Conveyor status.** The heater in the screen room has been repaired. It has been out of service for quite a few years. The main water line to that building has been repaired so we have water in there now also. However, we discovered two more leaks in the line that need to be fixed. Still working on getting quotes on options for the intake screen and auger repair. That is going to be an expensive project.
 - 5) **Update on WWTP Phosphorous control efforts.** The biological phosphorus removal is just based off the Dissolved Oxygen meters. We need to get that issue resolved first. After that we can look at optimizing this system.
 - 6) **Waste Valve replacement recommendation.** We still troubleshooting that problem on the waste valve. To be determined.
 - 7) **Dissolved Oxygen meter replacement.** There are issues with the accuracy of the dissolved oxygen sensors. It looks like we may need to get those replaced. Also issues with the blower control system that need to be addressed. We are considering changes such as lowering the minimum speed below 30%.
- 7. Discussion/Action on Committee structure/Mission Statement.** Greg Sandstrom reported that he contacted three governmental units now. Wabasha was the

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only one that said they had one. Alma didn't get back to us. He has one sample from Clark County. Mike suggested we table this for tonight, we can review it and we'll get back to it at the next meeting.

Mike commented on the committee structure part of this and was wondering if it makes any sense to have subgroups inside our committee structure where some of us get more specialized in understanding and working with the water system and some of us work on the sewer system. Greg Sandstrom pointed out that it would be better to have fewer layers of decision making for efficiency in decision making.

There was an extended discussion about the best way to proceed to identify the financial resources needed to accomplish all the sewer and water system projects that are needing to be done.

- 8. Set next meeting date.** The committee consensus was to meet monthly in order to deal with all the issues that need to be addressed. Future meetings will be set for the first Thursday of the month, before the board meeting.
- 9. Motion to Adjourn.** Motion to adjourn by Dale, seconded by Greg. Motion passes.

Mike Michaud-Chair