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Utilities Committee Meeting June 4th, 2026 at 5:00pm

DRAFT MINUTES

- 1. Call to order:** John Hurtley called the meeting to order at 5 pm.
- 2. Roll call:** • Members present were Mike Michaud, John Hurtley, Kelsey Gilmore, Greg Sandstrom, Dale Fayerweather, also present Ron Goldner.
- 3. Public Comments:** Dan Fedie asked for clarification on agenda item 8E regarding water sample locations. Key points discussed were that the water sampling requirement is a DNR routine requirement that occurs every few years, not annually. The requirement originates from federal law related to lead and copper in municipal water systems. Samples are taken at the kitchen faucet of homes built before 1982, as those may contain lead or galvanized pipe materials. As far as is known, all village service lines are copper. If test results reveal a problem, follow-up action would be determined based on those findings.
- 4. Jeff Pellegrom Refund Request:** Property owners Jeff and Mary presented information regarding an ongoing billing dispute regarding their residence at 1485 First Street, that they purchased in September 2025. Summary of the issue: Two water meters at the property were replaced in December 2025. Q4 2025 bill showed a usage charge of \$2,103.56 (approximately 172,000–190,000 gallons). Q1 2026 bill with new meters showed a combined usage charge of \$61.15. Historical meter readings prior to their ownership averaged 4,000–5,000 gallons per meter per quarter.

The residents understand the Q4 charge reflects accumulated unread usage from previous billing periods that was captured when meters were replaced, not actual Q4 usage. They stated they have paid all fixed charges plus an additional \$200 toward usage. An outstanding balance of \$1,936.50 remains. They requested that the outstanding balance not

affect their short-term rental permit renewals (deadline: June 30), while the matter is resolved.

The Committee members acknowledged it was not reasonable that a residential property would use 190,000 gallons in a single quarter. It was noted that this property is one of approximately 60+ locations with meter reading irregularities, three of which have filed formal complaints with the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC). Mike Michaud stated that any resolution approved by the PSC will be applied uniformly to all affected properties. The committee discussed whether to make a formal recommendation to the Village Board that the outstanding balance should not affect short-term rental license renewals. Mike Michaud stated this is a matter for the Village Board, not the Utilities Committee as the committee does not have jurisdiction over administration of the Short Term Rental License ordinance. No committee recommendations were made. Residents were advised to bring the matter to the Village Board meeting on Monday.

Pellegrom Sewer Billing Dispute: 401 First Street (Jeff & Mary) Jeff and Mary also raised a billing dispute regarding their commercial property at 401 First Street (Breakwater Blue). They have been charged a 3-unit fixed sewer charge multiplier of \$406.95 per quarter since purchasing the building in April 2023 (12 quarters). The published Village of Pepin utility rate sheet lists the fixed quarterly sewerage charge at \$136.65 per meter — with no provision for a per-unit multiplier. The building has never had three functional dwelling units during their ownership; a building permit is currently in process to convert to a single unit. They contend the multi-unit multiplier is not codified in any published ordinance or public tariff. They allege inconsistency in how this rate is applied across other village commercial and multi-unit properties.

They have an outstanding public records request (submitted May 20, paid \$25 fee) for sewer billing records across all village addresses has not been fulfilled.

They are requesting: (1) Retroactive refund of \$3,255.60 (overcharge of \$271.30/quarter x 12 quarters); (2) Immediate account realignment to a single fixed sewer charge of \$135.65 effective March 1st.

Committee discussion: Mike Michaud stated that Wisconsin state law allows municipalities to set rates by resolution (not necessarily by ordinance), and that the Village Board adopted this rate structure at a

prior board meeting based on a consultant's rate study. Residents disputed that the referenced board minutes constituted a clear, published rate authorization for commercial per-unit billing. The committee did not reach consensus on jurisdiction or on making a recommendation. Residents were directed to attend the Village Board meeting on Monday with all documentation (quarterly bills, etc.).

5. Review and approval of 5-14-26 meeting minutes: Minutes from the May 14, 2026 Utility Committee meeting were reviewed. A spelling correction was noted ("Goldner" was misspelled in the previous minutes). Motion to approve: Greg Sandstrom, Second: Dale Fayerweather. All in favor. Motion carries.

6. Update on Utility Staffing Situation: Utility Plant Staff Update / Report: Brad Anderson began his first weekend of on-call duty. Initial performance was satisfactory. One new Issue noted: The sludge blower has a problem with the VFD (Variable Frequency Drive). LW Allen is scheduled to attend on Tuesday to address this. Some facility concerns were raised by a committee member: An unlocked portable diesel generator fuel tank is present at the facility. A request was made to install a padlock immediately to prevent fuel theft or contamination. Action: A lock will be placed on the tank. Also, a water valve with a vice grip instead of a proper handle was observed. To be investigated.

7. Utility Plant Staff Update / Report: Ron Goldner reported that Brad Anderson began his first weekend of on-call duty. Initial performance was satisfactory. Issue noted: The sludge blower has a problem with the VFD (Variable Frequency Drive). LW Allen is scheduled to attend on Tuesday to address this. Some facility concerns were raised by Greg Sandstrom. An unlocked portable diesel generator fuel tank is present at the facility. He requested to install a padlock immediately to prevent fuel theft or contamination. Action: A lock will be placed on the tank.

8. Update on Utility Staffing Situation. Brad Anderson was confirmed as the every-other-weekend operator (also works for Plum City). Aaron continues to cover Fridays; Brad covers alternating Saturday/Sunday. Dave Vosen works Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. The committee considers operations to be fully staffed. Item to be removed from future agendas.

9. Discussion / Actions on Water System Issues:

Water Meter bill errors update and discussion: No changes since the last report. The Village Board is expected to establish a procedure for calculating back-billing corrections.

Update on DNR requirement regarding PH control: Awaiting registered correspondence from the DNR regarding pH control system installation requirements. The village submitted additional pH readings and is awaiting the DNR's reply.

Backflow prevention devices inspection update: No update. Dave Vosen was attempting to contact the inspection company to confirm scheduling and ensure village buildings are included.

Update on chlorine pump upgrade. DNR approval received. Project may proceed. Estimated pump cost is approximately \$635 each.

Update on search for water sample locations. The DNR has pulled its sampling requirement — no samples currently required. Committee discussed whether to continue identifying sample locations (15 of 20 identified) to build a database for future use. The consensus is to continue identifying addresses proactively, so the village is prepared when the DNR requirement resumes.

10. Discussion / Action on Wastewater Treatment Plant Issues:

- a. *Update on bypass gate, bar screen, and conveyor status:* Midwest Mechanical to be contacted regarding a quote for the bypass gate repair. Replacement materials for the bar screen and conveyor were ordered about 4 weeks ago; lead time is six months from date of order.
- b. *Update on dissolved oxygen meter replacement:* Meters have not yet been ordered. This is a DNR requirement. Action: Compile cost information and submit it to Randy for approval without requiring board action, if under the approval threshold.
- c. *Update on blower repair:* A motor bearing and fan issue was discovered after initial blower repair. A spare VFD drive from an RAS pump was used as a temporary fix, but this causes the system to misidentify as two RAS pumps, resulting in communication faults. Operating in manual mode currently. LW Allen coming Tuesday to assess reprogramming options.
- d. *Waste Valve replacement quote:* The current waste valve requires manual intervention every 10 minutes during wasting operations, which takes approximately 1 hour 15 minutes of staff time. A direct-replacement automated waste flow valve is proposed. Quote: \$10,000 (20–24 week delivery). Electrical work required — scope to be confirmed with LW Allen and Dorner. Committee discussed sourcing a qualified instrumentation electrician (potential contacts at paper mill in Eau

Approved: 07.09.2026

Posted: 07.17.2026

Claire). Motion: Recommend to the Village Board to approve ordering the replacement waste flow valve — Greg Sandstrom Second: Mike Michaud Vote: All in favor. Motion carries.

11. Discussion/action on project list and project financing: John Hurtley and Mike Michaud met with Dave Vosen to assign estimated costs to capital projects. These figures are for planning purposes, not based on formal quotes. The project list was prepared to support an upcoming sewer rate study, ensuring future costs are incorporated into rate design. The rate study consultant has been provided with the project list. Action: Direct follow-up conversation needed with the rate study consultant Bauman Associates. Mike will contact Tracy to get more information.

12. Set the next meeting date. Next regular Utility Committee meeting: Wednesday, July 9, 2026 at 5:00 PM (Thursday before the July 13 Village Board meeting).

13. Adjournment. Motion to adjourn: Kelsey Gilmore. Second: Greg Sandstrom. Vote: All in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Mike Michaud
Secretary