

**NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 5, 2018**

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on September 5, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. at the Civic Center.

Pat Becker called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Bob Mullen, Dan Casey, Gerry Warner, Mike Kastens, and Pat Becker.

A motion was made by Mike Kastens to approve the agenda, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2018 meeting, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

A motion was made by Dan Casey to approve July 25-31, 2018 & August 2018 bills and disbursements, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Baker Tilly – Report to the Utility Commission:**

Kim Schultz from Baker Tilly gave an overview of the 2017 Audit report for utilities. Debt to equity and financial are very strong.

**Capital Improvement Plan:**

Joel Enders distributed and reviewed books containing a draft 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan. Staff recommended Commissioners take 30 days to review the draft CIP, particularly project priority rankings. Concurrently, staff will be refining funding options and scenarios with Trilogy Consulting as part of the ongoing Water and Sewer Rate Study.

**2019 Budget:**

The following were reviewed, and key needs identified as part of the 2019 budgeting process:

- Budget Vision
- General Themes
  - ⊙ Safety & Family First
  - ⊙ Efficiency through Technology
  - ⊙ Destination Employer
  - ⊙ Health Insurance
- Budget Timelines

More information containing dollar amounts will be presented in October, with the finalizing of the 2019 Budget expected to take place in November.

**Emergency Mass Notification System:**

Several years ago, City staff identified the need for a mass notification system that would alert residents in the event of a power outage, water main break, sudden road closure, utility work, or localized emergency such as a gas leak. Last summer, the City and St. Croix County investigated the possibility of jointly adopting a mass notification system, but were unable to resolve concerns over access control and situational use.

Recognizing the continued need for a mass notification system, staff recently contacted several vendors for updated price quotes and information. Demonstrations were provided by Civic Ready, Nixle, and Rave Mobile Safety. All three systems offered similar functionality, but staff (including Police, Fire, and Utility personnel) concluded that Rave offered the best fit for New Richmond at the best price. Rave allows designated staff to quickly send notifications via text, email, phone, RSS feeds, and/or social media to all users or to a geographically defined area. Residents sign up for notifications via portals on the City/Utility website, and may choose sign up for all or specific types of notifications. This system will allow the City to quickly and effectively notify residents about situations/conditions that affect them.

The proposal specifies an annual fee of \$3,000, plus a one-time setup fee. Costs are proposed to be shared between the Utility and the City. Gerry Warner moved to enter into a service agreement with Rave Mobile Safety according to proposal, seconded by Mike Kastens, and carried.

**2018 Sewer Televising/Repairs:**

In 2014, the City began an annual sewer televising program which has carried on for four years. The information gathered in the sewer televising program has helped to identify areas for reconstruction, such as N Starr Avenue, to address infiltration and deficient pipe conditions.

Because of the amount of sewer line televised (roughly 27 miles), there is a lot of data for City Staff to catalogue, and thanks to Kyle Wells, GIS Analyst and Kayla Harle, Summer Intern, much of that work has finally been done this summer.

With the organization of this information, many areas have been identified for minor repairs, such as root control, or grout injection to address infiltration. Knowing that these items need to be addressed, and that we have televised all of the older areas of town, staff is proposing to take a year off from televising, use the \$25,000 in televising funds to implement some of the needed repairs in 2018, and pick up the televising in 2019.

Staff have specifically reached out for proposals to address infiltration in the area where the Knowles Avenue sewer main crosses Paperjack Creek, which showed significant infiltration. Proposals from two firms ranged from \$22,032 to \$57,728.

Bob Mullen moved to approve the proposal from VisuSewer for grouting the sewer main along Knowles Avenue at the Paperjack Creek crossing, not to exceed \$25,000 with a one-year warranty, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

#### **WWTP Facility Plan/EVAAL Presentation:**

City staff have worked with MSA to prepare a Facility Plan for the Wastewater Treatment Plant, which was completed in 2018 using funds allocated through the STH 64 Coalition. Jeremiah Wendt reviewed the executive summary of the WWTP facility plan:

#### **WASTEWATER FACILITY PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The City of New Richmond is located in St. Croix County, Wisconsin, approximately 8 miles east of Somerset, WI and 65 miles west of Eau Claire, WI. The population of New Richmond was 8,375 in the 2010 Census, with current 2017 estimates of the population at 8,909 (WI State Demographer).

The original wastewater plant was constructed in 1981 and underwent a significant upgrade in 1999. The 1999 upgrade expanded the plant through the addition of primary and final clarifiers as well as an additional aeration tank. A UV disinfection system was added in 2010 and improvements to the aeration system were made in 2013 that included a new PD blower and EPDM membrane diffusers added to the aeration tank. The facility discharges to the Willow River which eventually feeds into Lake St. Croix.

The City began the Wastewater Facility Planning process in 2016 due to projected rapid growth from the construction of the St. Croix Crossing project. The project involves the construction of a new bridge across the St. Croix River which is anticipated to lead to significant regional growth. Part of the project included a growth mitigation package of \$400,000 designated to St. Croix County to help Cities plan for wastewater treatment facility needs and expansion alternatives that will accommodate projected population growth while protecting human health and water resources. The New Richmond Wastewater Treatment Facility Plan was one project that was selected by a coalition of impacted Cities for funding.

The purpose of this Facility Plan is to evaluate the condition of the existing treatment facility and collection system and assess the ability of the systems to meet the 20-year wastewater treatment needs of the City of New Richmond. Based on the existing capacity of facility, it appears that the existing wastewater treatment facility largely has the capacity to meet the projected 20-year wastewater design flows and comply with the future effluent requirements without upgrades.

The primary exception to this statement is the new phosphorus Water Quality Based Limits (WQBELs) that are being imposed on the facility as part of the Lake St. Croix TMDL process. The new limit was imposed as part of the new WPDES permit issued in 2018. The new permit changes the facility's effluent phosphorus limit from 1.0 mg/L to 0.075 mg/L and 0.62 lbs/day (6-month average), and 0.225 mg/L (monthly average). The existing facility will not meet this limit without upgrades.

The WDNR gives permittees three options for compliance with the ultra-low phosphorus effluent requirements: 1) technology upgrades to meet the limits, typically tertiary filtration and chemical addition; 2) adaptive management within the basin to reduce in stream phosphorus levels below an established in stream threshold (0.075 mg/L in the case of the Willow River); 3) phosphorus trading with area agricultural concerns to offset the amount of phosphorus discharged by the facility above the permitted limit.

In order to determine the best possible strategy for the City of New Richmond, the facility planning process evaluated all three potential options. It was determined that the best alternative initially for the City to pursue would be adaptive management. The aim of the adaptive management program would be to use the first 5 year permit term after adaptive management adoption to begin to develop partnerships within the basin with the aim of transitioning to a trading program once projects and partnerships were solidified. The City will also use the next four years of their interim permit to add

a variety of minor upgrades to the facility to prepare for phosphorus compliance and minimize the phosphorus release of the existing facility.

Bob Mullen moved to approve the WWTP Facility Plan, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

### **Community Outreach Meal Donation Request – September 18<sup>th</sup>:**

The Community Outreach Meal is a monthly community-wide meal held at United Methodist Church the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month from 5:00 – 6:30 p.m. The meal is free and open to everyone in the community. Typically, each month one of the local churches takes a turn preparing and serving the meal.

This year, one of the churches dropped out of serving the meal. We were asked to assist in sponsoring a meal in the month of September. Staff recommended New Richmond Utilities sponsor the event with the use of community funds in the amount not to exceed \$600.00.

Gerry Warner moved to approve \$600 towards the Community Outreach meal in the month of September, seconded by Mike Kastens, and carried.

### **Department Reports**

#### **Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:**

- Mandated items pertaining to the DNR survey with a September 1<sup>st</sup> deadline have been addressed.
- Staff is working on water service replacements on the east alley west of Minnesota Avenue
- Locates continue to increase in numbers
- Staff continues to do meter work, as well as sewer and water inspections for new construction
- Jetting has begun
- Lift Station inspections are scheduled for mid-September
- North Shore lift station – Quality flow will be installing panels above ground
- Root control – about 6200 feet of pipe have been treated

#### **Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:**

- Last month the brush assembly was removed from the fine screen at the plant, the replacement cost is \$2,000. Discussion took place between Steve and Jeremiah, and they are not going to replace the brush assembly at this time.
- The City wide generator service is being done
- Lift station antennas have been raised at two sites, communication has improved
- Doing a lot of plant maintenance this month – including changing oil on all major equipment

#### **Weston Arndt, Electric Superintendent:**

- WPPI Energy Services Representative Stacie Running was introduced as the new WPPI ESR.
- WPPI Energy Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held on September 13 and 14 at the Madison Marriott West.
- Customer Mailings - WPPI is performing a residential customer satisfaction survey.
- Focus on Energy will be sending out a postcard to encourage participation in a furnace tuneup and smart thermostat bundle program.
- Staff is planning efforts for public power week, which is the first full week of October. With not having a customer appreciation picnic, staff are looking into a grab-n-go breakfast concept.
- WPPI Selected Finance and Operating Ratios  
WPPI provided a benchmarking report that compares New Richmond Utilities to other WPPI members. The data corresponded well with the audit report provided by Baker Tilly. Some highlights:
  - ⊙ Rate of return still strong at 7.05% for 2017.
  - ⊙ The NRU load factor is lower as compared to other utilities.
  - ⊙ Power Cost is 88% of expenses.
  - ⊙ Sales revenue breakdown: Industrial 55%, Other commercial 10%, Residential 35%.
- Miscellaneous Updates
  - ⊙ Darren O’Flanagan went on call in August. We now have four journeyman linemen taking call.
  - ⊙ Rustic Ridge / Grand / Greaton primary underground improvements are underway. The improvements thus far have allowed us to switch 45 homes from the East First St circuit.
  - ⊙ Street light poles on 140<sup>th</sup> St are installed from Richmond Way up to GG.
  - ⊙ Pole Testing is scheduled for mid to late September.

#### **Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:**

- The 2019 budget is in full swing
- Working on the Water & Sewer Rate study, sending Trilogy information as requested
- Continuing Disclosures for the Water and Sewer Bond were filed
- Lien processing begins in September

**Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:**

- Street and Utility projects are moving along
- East 4<sup>th</sup> St pavement pulverization will be done next Monday
- Trail on County Rd A will begin within the next few weeks
- SEH is finishing up with the Water Model Project
- Sanitary Survey with DNR has been completed – staff working to keep things in compliance

**Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:**

- Working on updating the Financial Management Policy plan
- Working on Public Works Policies with Jeremiah and his department

There being no further business, a motion was made by Gerry Warner to adjourn, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:41 a.m.

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Pat Becker, President

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Gerry Warner, Secretary