



MINUTES

WATER & SEWER COMMITTEE
AMUNDSON COMMUNITY CENTER
200 SPRING ST., CAMBRIDGE, WI 53523
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2026, 6:30 PM

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** President Hollenbeck called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
 - a. Members Present – President Hollenbeck, Steve Struss, Mat Hughson, Mitch Sands, and Matt Dozois
 - b. Others –Utility Clerk Josie Stine, Utility Superintendent Darnell, and Village Treasurer Brian Wilson
2. **PROOF OF POSTING:** Confirmed - Upper and Lower levels of the Amundson Center, Cambridge Post Office, Badger Bank, Bank First, and the Village website.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT:**
 - a. A resident (Bette) reported an unusually high-water bill tied to November usage (22,000 gallons), billed in December. An outside spigot was found running and turned off by a passerby; cause unknown. Auto-pay has processed.
 - b. Not on agenda; board cannot take action this meeting. Standard relief policy allows sewer-only credits up to 100% if water does not enter sewer.
 - c. Plan: calculate a sewer-only credit and apply it to the account at the next meeting when agendized; Bette need not attend. Resident has turned off exterior spigot from inside to prevent recurrence.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
 - a. Process reviewed (motion, second, discussion, vote). Some items may be addressed later under reports; Q&A at end if needed.
 - b. Motion by Struss to approve minutes with a minor change. Change wording on 3rd page from “Rockdale Water” to “Rockdale Wastewater”; Motion seconded by Dozois; approved by voice vote.
 - c. Conclusion: Minutes approved.
5. **APPROVAL OF BILLS:**
 - a. Motion to approve bills in the amount of \$123,442.63 was made by Struss and seconded by Hughson.
 - b. Discussion:

- a. COWC charges include variable O&M (flow/concentration-based) and a fixed charge; higher amount attributed to I&I and adding Rockdale flows. Follow-up with COWC and Dancing Goats; committee meeting next week.
- b. Interest on a loan expected to be the last such payment; future operating costs may rise; net effect uncertain (~\$20,000 less possible).
- c. Water bond interest structures vary; public works fuel allocation varies by usage/timing.
- d. Wisconsin Rural Water Association membership renewal deemed good value.
- e. Alliant streetlights cost ~\$1,600/month (LEDs in place).
- f. PSN fees decreasing with enrollment; ~ \$200 monthly reduction since staff start.
- c. Roll call: Sands yes; Struss yes; Dorsois yes; Hallenbeck yes; Houston yes.
- d. Conclusion: Bills approved.

6. REPORTS:

Utility Superintendent Darnell reported the following items to the committee:

- a. Welcome/orientation for member Sands.

Well 2 Generator: New standby generator installed and operational; staff trained; old unit to be removed later (auction via Wisconsin Surplus possible).

Customer Curb Box:

- b. Leaking service line before shutoff; curb box paved over on utility driveway. Plan to cut out and attempt operation; excavation if needed.

Water Tower Maintenance:

- c. Expansion joint replaced; interior cleaned/inspected (5-year cycle). Tower drained starting 2026-05-18; refilling began 2026-05-19; bacteriological sampling 2026-05-20; if clean, return to service with second sample; if failed, re-disinfect and isolate (holiday weekend risk).

Meter Changes: Ongoing replacements; detailed counts via Josie.

Advanced Meter Testing scheduled for all 2" and 3" meters in late July; flat per-meter rate, no trip/replacement charges. Scope: meters not tested in the last two years. Pricing considered fair.

Commercial Cross-Connection:

- d. Plan to complete commercial cross-connection inspections in fall. New vendor (near Hayward) offers a day rate for cross connection inspections and flat rate per double-check valve (Dalton Y). Access coordination critical. Status of HydroCorp contract for commercial remains unclear.

In-House Capability and Equipment Requirements

- e. Team lacks calibrated equipment and certification to test meters internally.
- f. Conclusion: Continue outsourcing meter testing.

Lift Station Cleaning

- g. Main lift station (West Side Park) cleaning set for first week of June; one-day duration expected.

Leak Detection and Hydrant Status

- h. Faith Leak Detection to be scheduled within two weeks for suspected water main break on Highway 18.
- i. Hydrant flushing found a stem/valve leak to add to repair list. Three non-operational hydrants (Hwy 134; Hwy 18 & England; near the shop—hit, insurance claim). Quotes in progress; insurance to cover shop hydrant replacement minus deductible.
- j. Conclusion: Schedule leak detection; repair/replace hydrants, pursue insurance claim.

Training and Certification

- k. Iron removal and zeolite softening class completed; tests scheduled for Friday, May 29, including sanitary sewer collections.
- l. Conclusion: Certifications targeted for May 29.

Valve Exercising Program

- m. ~50 valves exercised in November; paused during tower work. Resume next week (Tuesday target) with manual exercising. Inventory ~400 on paper; at least 6 unlisted; unknown additional valves may be found. Goal: all by July if possible; minimum 200 this summer. Create “does not operate” list; assess rental vs. purchase of exercising equipment.
- n. Conclusion: Resume manually next week; analyze throughput/cost to decide on equipment.

Bulk Water Station: Location, Funding, Operations, and Monitoring

- o. Current hydrant meter on Verburg serves industrial users. Proposed bulk station on Vineyard Drive by the water tower (utility property) with power/internet, 24/7 access, metered/prepay/PIN, auto-shutoff; reduces staff workload.
- p. Traffic: Explore a new entrance off Hwy 134 near Vineyard Drive; potential one-way conversion; coordinate with Bill and Hwy 134 project team.
- q. Revenue: Vendor cited ~\$6,500 last year; staff expects higher with contractor outreach and station operation; review current-year revenues and refine projections.
- r. Lead time: 8–10 weeks; desire to order ASAP; contractors like 1901 or Pertzborn for site work. Blattner Energy provided initial contribution; remaining costs are logistics/installation.
- s. Policy: \$40 hookup fee per visit plus per-1,000-gallon billing (rounded up) while tracking actual gallons. Bulk water users (e.g., pool fills) billed at residential rate per 1,000 gallons with no sewer charge (rate confirmation pending).
- t. Process Improvement: Current manual photo/text-to-Excel workflow is time-consuming/error-prone; propose button-based capture and USB transfer to Josie; move toward automated/streamlined tracking while maintaining hookup fees.
- u. Conclusion: Tentatively place station on Vineyard Drive; move toward ordering, finalize site/traffic plan, validate revenue model, and streamline tracking/billing.

Bid Threshold Update and Project Structuring

- v. Formal bid threshold increased from \$25,000 to \$50,000. Aim to structure the bulk water station as a gift with remaining costs as a project under \$50,000 per MSA guidance.
- w. Conclusion: Target total project cost under \$50,000.

Contractor Use Case and Regional Demand

- x. Regional examples show strong contractor demand for 24/7 dispensers; current solar project (Koshkonong/Blattner) using a meter and funding the bulk station.
- y. Conclusion: Regional demand supports the project; partner funding underpins it.

Project Phasing and Work Volume Increase

- z. Additional activity on two more fields; phase two slated for 2028, indicating sustained demand for services.
- aa. Conclusion: Expect continued/growing service demand.

bb. Staffing and Succession Planning (Jae's Retirement)

- cc. Jae expected to retire in June/summer. Vacancy will strain staff who rely on Jae for occasional water/sewer/stormwater operations. Recommendation to recruit immediately to minimize transition impacts.
- dd. Conclusion: Begin recruitment ASAP.

Chlorine Pump Reliability During Tower Downtime; Temporary Fluoride Shutdown

- ee. Chlorine pump ran well until tower offline; suspected airlock from fluctuating VFD operations and a failing check valve; only top check valve replaced; troubleshooting continues; diaphragm pump replacement not yet decided.
- ff. Fluoride dosing unplugged temporarily due to VFD fluctuations to avoid overdosing; monthly data will look unusual.
- gg. Conclusion: Continue troubleshooting chlorine pump; resume fluoride when tower is restored; document downtime and rationale.

Rockdale Wastewater Service Connection and Billing

- hh. Rockdale connected; monthly photo updates and physical log maintained. Josie set up account (half-month bill issued; connection fee billed). Current meter radios incompatible; exploring remote/real-time reads to monitor high flows and operations. Rockdale treated like other out-of-village larger connections (3" line).
- ii. Conclusion: Billing in place; pursue radio compatibility for remote monitoring.

Utility Clerk Stine reported the following to the committee:

Meter Replacement Progress and PSN Adoption

- jj. 88 meters changed to date; original annual goal 100; targeting 120. Appointments scheduled; residents receptive (no-cost replacements).
- kk. PSN accounts increased from 58 to 224; incentive program continues (gift cards donated/sponsored). Mailed cards reduced from 965 to 800, saving \$112.32/month since

February. Consider whether landlord mailings are necessary per agreements (Chris to advise).

- ll. Conclusion: Continue meter change-outs toward 120; maintain PSN growth and review landlord mailings policy.

Insights from WIAWWA Seminar (Regulatory and Infrastructure)

- mm. Topics: data center water vs. air cooling; large fire suppression lines; maintaining 0.2 chlorine residual at extremities; metering and cost allocation for dedicated infrastructure; anticipated PFAS/PFOA sampling target changes with grant/funding opportunities.
- nn. Conclusion: Monitor regulatory changes/funding; local operational impacts likely minimal but sampling lists may change.

Cross-Connection Program Readiness

- oo. HydroCorp received customer/address lists and is ready when implementation proceeds.

Gift Card Incentives for Sign-ups

- pp. Incentives (Marketplace, Keystone, family restaurant) target new PSN enrollments; clarify promotions accordingly.
- qq. Conclusion: Continue targeted incentives

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS – ACTION REQUIRED

MSA Updates on Well 2 and Well 3; Invoice Approval Process

- a. Well 2: Change order required upsized gas service line for larger generator; upsizing was budgeted; cost references unclear; work completed; some \$2,000 savings from a second change order. Debate on whether undersizing was a design flaw (NSA designer). Future agenda to address change order responsibility; hold specific invoice pending engineer approval.
- b. Well 3: ~\$5M project complete; closeout pending final paperwork/state sign-off; temporary construction loan to be reimbursed via lower-interest state loan.
- c. Invoice Process: Do not pay the referenced invoice until engineer approval; confirm engineer attendance next meeting to discuss.
- d. Conclusion: Defer payment; agendize Well 2 change order/design responsibility; finalize Well 3 closeout.

8. NEW BUSINESS – ACTION REQUIRED

Cambridge Proposal to COWC — Fixed Charge, Debt, and Replacement Funding

- a. Historic allocation 58% Cambridge/42% Town of Oakland. Position: stop charging for a loan that no longer exists; contribute to equipment replacement fund instead.
- b. Suggested replacement contribution: 2.5%–3% of facility appraised value (Cambridge favors 2.5%). Appraisal to be arranged by insurer; aim for market/appraised value (expected \$7.3M–\$12.5M).
- c. Contract interpretation: fixed charge includes debt and capital; historically misallocated, with ~\$890,000 accumulated that should have gone to equipment replacement. Proposal:

true up—fund replacement to DNR levels (currently ~ \$200,000–\$275,000 short), then refund remainder based on 58/42.

- d. Annual true-up requirement noted; practice appears to have retained excess without explicit returns.
- e. Infrastructure priorities: use refunds to line sewers to reduce I&I; Town of Oakland also has I&I issues per some comments. Preserve planning autonomy vs. “future expansion” reserve.
- f. Conclusion: Support basing fixed contributions on appraised value, properly allocate between debt and replacement, obtain updated appraisal and historical true-up figures, and plan to allocate/refund per contract/DNR guidance.

Status of Equipment Replacement Fund vs. Capital Improvements; Excess Cash and Funding Strategy

- g. Distinction reaffirmed between DNR-mandated replacement fund (short by ~\$275,000) and broader capital improvements (e.g., phosphorus filters ~\$2.5M, potential third basin at 80–85% capacity).
- h. Approximately \$800,000 in excess funds held; inclination to pursue return/true-up after topping up replacement fund.
- i. Clean Water Fund loans (≈2%) attractive vs. pre-funding; consider a 2.5% annual capital improvement set-aside while leveraging low-interest loans and avoiding undue burden on current ratepayers.
- j. Governance: COWC sets charges; village sets ratepayer charges; charge levels undecided; board composition includes an at-large tiebreaker (Gary Radman); political emphasis on rate reductions.
- k. Investment earnings now accruing (~\$100,000 interest) impact true-up.
- l. Audit proposed over a 20-year span to verify allocations and contractual compliance.
- m. Conclusion: Bring replacement fund to DNR target; evaluate 2.5% set-aside vs. borrowing; determine charge levels; pursue audit/compliance review and quantify excess/interest for true-up.

Contract Compliance, Rate-Setting Authority, and Fund Segregation

- n. Contract documentation incomplete (missing Exhibit C for capital improvement percentages). PSC oversight limited unless a complaint is filed.
- o. Misallocation noted: multiple replacement funds; capital improvement money appears commingled with bond repayment; interest accrued in bond fund; need to segregate “existing money” vs. “future rates.”
- p. Conclusion: Clarify/rectify fund structure; consider contract amendment/addendum to define missing Exhibit C.

Fixed Charge Cessation After Bond Payoff; Communication with COWC

- q. Bond payoff timing indicates fixed charges should cease starting with the June bill (covers May). Motion stated to stop paying fixed portion; later rescinded in favor of advocating removal of loan principal from invoices and deciding payment amounts at the next bill review. Desire to avoid unpaid invoice disputes; preference for verbal engagement to seek corrected invoices.
- r. Approach to capital improvements funding: hold capital funds locally under local oversight; COWC to invoice via true-up for prior-year capital needs once terms are clarified. Prepare written, high-level framework asserting local custody of capital improvement funds (omit specific percentages pending appraisal).
- s. Immediate uses for freed funds: track amounts equal to former fixed charge for sewer lining, new jetter, and valve exercising.

O&M Rate Increase and Financial Verification; Billing Corrections

- t. An O&M increase of 34% noted; board requests monthly financials and underlying documentation; confirm timing of last rate increase (2023 reference).
- u. A customer underbilled for 18 years due to incorrect meter size; only two years recoverable; may serve as context in negotiations.
- v. Bring responsible party to present detailed financials; recognize limits of back-billing.
- w. Conclusion: Advocate for removal of loan principal from invoices; prepare high-level proposal for next COWC meeting; locally track/direct freed funds to sewer needs.

Budget and Financial Reporting for Water, Sewer, and Stormwater

- x. Monthly budget-to-actual and quarterly balance sheets to be provided; detailed transaction lists available on request. Pooled checking/investments; utilities tracked separately. A/R noted (~\$80,000 example). Legacy chart-of-accounts headings identified for cleanup. YTD revenues exceed expenditures pending payables.
- y. Conclusion: Implement regular reporting and maintain detailed backups; clean up legacy account labels.

Cross-Connection Control Program (Residential) — Contract and SOW

- z. Residential-only proposal under review; commercial excluded. Term to be one year with no auto-renewal; consider two-year option with discount if favorable. Clarify whether \$80/hour data entry/development is included in \$13,687–\$13,720 or billed separately; cap of 120 inspections with \$114.06 per additional inspection. Remove public notice erroneously embedded in contract PDF; SOW needs renewal and accuracy. Outsourcing required for regulatory compliance by 2031 for older homes; primarily visual inspections; DNR provides deficiency criteria; non-compliance can lead to shutoff after warnings.
- aa. Conclusion: Decision postponed ~one month pending revised SOW and pricing clarity; pursue residential-only scope and potential multi-year discount.

9. QUESTIONS, STAFF REFERRALS, AND FUTURE AGENDA TOPICS:

Miscellaneous Charges and Contractual Arrangements

- a. \$4,000 miscellaneous water expense identified as Mark's Auto (multiple charges); shop provided gift cards in thanks.
- b. \$453 charge to Town of Oakland Sanitary relates to contractual mixed-use connections; expected.
- c. Public meeting notice added to PSN bills/mailed cards; inclusion of dollar amounts decided by village board; direct inquiries there.
- d. Conclusion: No further action on identified expenses/charges; governance communications clarified.

Meeting Attendance and Coordination

- e. Upcoming meeting at treatment plant on Whiskey Thief Way (updated address). Assign members to attend and represent the Water and Sewer Board (vs. private citizen) to ensure speaking rights; coordinate Fire/EMS event attendance.
- f. Conclusion: Attendance assignments made informally.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Struss and seconded by Hollenbeck. Motion carried
Meeting adjourned at 8:43pm.

Respectfully submitted by Josie Stine, Utility Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were approved by the Water & Sewer Committee on 06/16/2026.