Sewer and Water Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 14, 2025

VIA Video Conference

(Approved Version)

1. Call Meeting to Order

The Sewer and Water Utilities Committee meeting was called to order on Monday, July 14, 2025, at 3 PM by Denise Bhirdo, Chair.

2. Roll Call

A roll call was conducted, with the following members present: Chairperson Denise Bhirdo and members Nate Bell and Kurt Harff.

Staff present: Village Administrator Julie Schmelzer, Utilities Director Megan Barnes, Finance Director/Treasurer Vlad Gannik, Utilities Clerk Kara Kroll

Others: Laurel Harff

3. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion by Harff, seconded by Bell. All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes of the May 13, 2025 Meeting, as Published

During the review of the May 13, 2025 meeting minutes, Bhirdo asked a couple of questions. The first question pertained to the ArcGIS discussion in the wastewater treatment plant operations report. It was inquired whether zoning information for the plan commission could be added to the system as initially anticipated. Barnes confirmed that the county's zoning layer had been added, but trustee users did not currently have access. She suggested exploring the option of authorizing committee members as users with read-only access.

The second question addressed a typo in the wastewater treatment plant facilities study update. On line 5, it was pointed out that "EPA risk assessment" should replace "Rick assessment."

A motion was made to approve the minutes as amended per Bhirdo' s request.

Motion by Harff, seconded by Bhirdo. All in favor. Motion carried.

5. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

There were no members of the public present at the meeting, and Barnes confirmed that there was no correspondence to report.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Report

Barnes provided a brief overview of recent developments at the wastewater treatment plant. She reported that the parks maintenance facility sewer and water tap had been completed the previous week by DeNoble. The project was nearing completion, pending the installation of a water meter and testing of the fire protection system.

Barnes also mentioned a recent meeting with a representative from BCR Solid Solutions, a company that has supplied dryers to several Wisconsin municipalities. The representative offered to give a presentation on their dryer system at a future committee meeting, which Barnes suggested could be scheduled for the August meeting.

b. Conventional Water Rate Case

Barnes reported on the outcome of the standard rate case application submitted to the PSC website. The application did not meet the financial requirement test, resulting in the denial of a rate increase based on the simplified rate process.

Barnes recalled previous discussions with Amber from CLA, who had advised that after multiple attempts at a simplified rate case (SRC), a conventional rate case might be necessary. The PSC typically doesn't approve rate increases unless a conventional rate case has been conducted within the last 5 to 8 years, with the last one for Sister Bay being in 2018.

Amber estimated that a conventional rate case would cost approximately $4,000 to $8,000, depending on the complexity and time required. This process would involve more work from Barnes and Kroll, require a public hearing, and take longer to complete.

The committee discussed the timing of pursuing a conventional rate case. It was agreed that since the simplified rate study had already been conducted this year with no increase warranted, it would be preferable to wait until 2026 for the full rate study. Barnes noted that conducting a conventional rate case in a year with significant maintenance or infrastructure work could be beneficial, as these factors are considered in the rate determination.

c. Budget Discussion on 2026 Water, Wastewater and Sewer Collection Funds and Storm Sewer Portion of General Fund

The committee engaged in a detailed review of the proposed 2026 budget for water, wastewater, and sewer collection funds, as well as the storm sewer portion of the general fund. Barnes included staff reports along with proposed budget and CIP numbers in the meeting packet. Bhirdo asked several questions on various budget items and Barnes responded to the questions.

d. Facility Study Update

Barnes presented an update on the facility study, focusing on two main points: the potential location for reed beds and PFAS testing results.

Regarding the reed beds, Chad from McMahon had provided an aerial map showing a proposed location. The committee discussed alternative locations, considering factors such as proximity to existing infrastructure, elevation, and potential conflicts with other village plans. It was suggested that placing the reed beds within the wastewater treatment plant buffer zone might be more appropriate. Barnes agreed to seek clarification on whether the reed beds would extend the 500 feet buffer zone around the wastewater treatment plant and to explore alternative locations based on the committee's feedback.

On the topic of PFAS, Barnes reported on recent testing results. The latest sample showed a total of 37.5 part per billion of PFAS, which is significantly higher than the EPA's recommended limit of 1 part per billion for land-applied sludge. While this level is concerning, Barnes noted a decrease from the previous sample and suggested that residual contamination from previously accepted Going Garbage leachate might be a factor.

The committee discussed the implications of these results and potential next steps:

- Barnes proposed conducting another PFAS test before the end of the year to monitor any changes in levels.
- It was suggested to request PFAS testing from other facilities that might potentially bring their sludge to Sister Bay in the future.

- Barnes mentioned that the BCR representative who will be presenting on sludge dryers also offers PFAS destruction equipment and could provide more information on this technology.

7. Matters to be Placed on a Future Agenda or Referred to a Committee, Official, or Employee

None at this time.

The committee agreed to schedule the next meeting for August 12th at 3:00 PM to accommodate scheduling conflicts.

8. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Harff, seconded by Bell. All in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Kroll
Utilities Clerk