



VIRTUAL SEWER AND WATER UTILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 1:00 P.M.

This meeting will be conducted electronically via "Zoom" video conferencing software.

To access the meeting electronically, click:

<https://zoom.us/j/4439901723?pwd=yAVpi40M1OlqgNufcVUE8XWCUSkKaH.1&omn=97063638580>

Meeting ID: 443 990 1723 Passcode: 304078

To connect by phone: 1-301-715-8592 - Meeting ID 443 990 1723#

For additional information check: <http://www.sisterbaywi.gov>

AGENDA

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Approval of Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes of the August 12, 2025 Meeting, as Published
5. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public
6. Discussion/Action Items:
 - a) Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Report
 - b) Facility Study Presentation
7. Matters to be placed on a future agenda or referred to a committee, official, or employee
8. Adjournment

Public Notice

Questions regarding the nature of the Agenda items or more detail on the items listed can be directed to Megan Barnes, Utilities Director, at megan.barnes@sisterbaywi.gov. It is possible that members of and possibly a quorum of members of other governmental bodies may attend the meeting to gather information; no action will be taken by any governmental body other than the body specifically referred to above. Upon reasonable notice, a good faith effort will be made to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals through sign language interpreters or other auxiliary aid or accommodation at no cost to the individual. Due to the difficulty in finding interpreters, requests should be made as far in advance as possible, preferably a minimum of 48 hours. For additional information or to request this service, contact the Sister Bay Village Administration Office at 854-4118, (FAX) 854-9637, or by writing to the Village Administration Building, 2383 Maple Drive, PO Box 769, Sister Bay, WI 54234. Copies of reports and other supporting documentation are available for review at the Village Administration Building during operating hours (8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Monday – Thursday and 8 a.m.-12 p.m. Friday).

The Village of Sister Bay is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

POSTED DATE/SIGNATURE_____

Sewer and Water Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 12, 2025

VIA Video Conference

(Approval Pending)

1. Call Meeting to Order

The Sewer and Water Utilities Committee meeting was called to order on Tuesday, August 12, 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: Richard Burress, Trustee Louise Howson, and 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 July 14, 2025 Meeting, as Published

During the review of the July 14, 2025 meeting minutes, Bhirdo noted two corrections to the minutes:

1) On page 3, line 71, a clarification was needed regarding whether reed beds would extend the buffer zone.

2) On line 76, a correction was needed to change "landfill leachate" to "Going Garbage leachate."

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

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

5. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

No correspondence was received. Richard Burress addressed the committee, expressing concerns about the biosolids project. He asked whether the village was still evaluating and actively seeking solutions, and whether the project was intended to manage biosolids or seek new revenue streams, or both.

Burress expressed significant concern about PFAS (forever chemicals) contamination, noting he had been following contamination issues in Wisconsin communities for over three years. He emphasized the fragile nature of the community's water system and urged the village to "move slowly and to be certain that the contamination of our water is absolutely assured not to happen." He referenced communities throughout the state that cannot use their

36 drinking water and must bring in water, warning that contaminating the water table would
37 make all other municipal issues "pale in comparison."

38 Burress requested that if the village proceeds with this initiative, public hearings should be
39 held to allow for community discussion. He concluded by asking the committee to "seriously
40 consider our most precious resource, our water."

41 **6. Discussion/Action Items**

42 **a. Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Report**

43

44 Bhirdo questioned the internet issue cited on page 6 of the Director's Report and asked who
45 would have ordered work done at the plant. Barnes explained she did not order the work
46 and was surprised someone showed up to do work. Bell said he is the one who contacted
47 his friend, Tim Wright, at Bertram to tell him there was an internet problem at the
48 wastewater treatment plant and asked him to see that it got addressed. Bell stated he told
49 Wright, "There's a problem there. You do with that information what you want to, but there
50 is a problem there and you need to deal with it." He acknowledged that communication
51 from Bertram's side "was not fantastic" and that the issue "was not dealt with very well." In
52 regard to the Director's concerns about someone wanting access to the water tower, Bell
53 clarified that access to the water tower does indeed require the Utilities Department
54 permission and that there are no keys provided for independent access; any access requires
55 calling staff members. Chair Bhirdo inquired about the identity of the unnamed "higher up
56 individual" mentioned in the report that ordered the work. Bell confirmed it was him. Bell
57 emphasized that vendors should be contacted when issues arise. A discussion ensued about
58 proper chain of command, with Bhirdo suggesting issues should go through Megan, who
59 would contact Julie, who would then contact Bertram. Bell responded that he only stepped
60 in because "if the chain of command had worked, I wouldn't have stepped in there."

61

62 The committee discussed the Parks Maintenance Facility sewer service installation on
63 Autumn Court, where individuals drove through an active construction zone. Barnes
64 reported that multiple people, including a village official who identified themselves as a
65 trustee, insisted on accessing the closed road, causing significant delays and frustration.
66 Schmelzer provided additional details explaining a contractor reported, "It was a woman
67 who was a trustee that was trying to get to the dog park." The trustee reportedly didn't
68 want to park in the parking lot and walk across the sports complex, so "she had them open
69 the road for her so she could get to the dog park." Barnes described the frustrating two-day
70 experience where utility department employees spent their time "literally just chasing
71 people out of the active construction zone." People moved signs and barricades, drove on
72 the grass, and consistently argued that the road closure didn't apply to them. The
73 contractor, who was already reluctant to take the small project and had driven a long
74 distance, faced additional delays due to equipment issues and constant interruptions from
75 people demanding access. Schmelzer noted it was "embarrassing" because the village's
76 own people were delaying the project. Chair Bhirdo stated this was "unacceptable" and
77 suggested they might need a police presence for future road closures.

78

Bell inquired about SCADA connectivity issues. Barnes explained the system uses a wireless modem with a Verizon SIM card connecting through cell towers. The connection issues occur when cell towers become overloaded, particularly during summer when tourists carry multiple devices. Bell noted that as a cell communications network user, the village is "deprioritized" and placed at "the lowest tier of priority." Barnes indicated they're exploring options including switching to FirstNet (AT&T) cellular communications. Bell offered technical suggestions about IoT-based systems and more affordable connection options. He also questioned why the system routes from the water tower through the cellular network to Chicago and back, rather than using the existing 900-megahertz telemetry system with line-of-sight capabilities. Barnes acknowledged they're in the beginning stages of looking at changes to address these issues.

Louise Howson joined the meeting and interjected to clarify that she was not the female trustee who had demanded access to the dog park during the construction zone incident, stating "I just want to go on the record that it was not me."

Shortly after, Burress and Howson left the meeting.

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

Barnes presented the updated budget incorporating changes from the previous meeting, including updated sewer revenues and employee costs calculated by the Finance Director.

The committee conducted a detailed line-by-line review of the budget with the following key discussions and adjustments:

Page 12 - Water Fund:

- Internet costs: Discussion about switching to Spectrum in mid-November. Vlad confirmed costs would be between \$100-150 per month, with pricing locked in for 36 months.
- Firewall addition: \$5,000 budgeted for a SCADA-specific firewall. Barnes explained this would also address integrating Well 1 and the main lift station into the complete SCADA system.
- Wages Admin Allocation: No actuals shown for first six months because Vlad performs manual allocation at year-end due to Cassell system issues.
- Audit and Consulting: Increased from \$3,700 to \$7,000 based on increased CLA charges, HR consulting allocation, and Adam's time.
- Equipment gas and oil pumping: Kept at \$200 as generator filling occurs every other year.

Page 13:

- 117 • Computer hardware/software: Increased from \$7,500 to \$9,000 due to George's
118 100% rate increase (from \$90 to potentially \$180/hour) and Stantec's 5% increase.
- 119 • Tools and minor equipment - T&D: Reduced from \$2,500 to \$1,000 based on recent
120 purchases and historical spending.
- 121 • Miscellaneous system op supply - T&D: Reduced from \$1,000 to \$250 based on
122 minimal usage.
- 123 • Distribution maintenance storage: Maintained at \$5,000 for water tower inspection
124 this year and standpipe inspection next year.
- 125 • Distribution maintenance meters: Reduced from \$2,750 to \$1,500 while maintaining
126 contingency for problems.
- 127 • Water plant wells and storage: \$65,000 budgeted for Well 2 (\$35,000) and Well 3
128 (\$30,000) refurbishment, confirmed in CIP.

129 Discussion arose about consolidating small budget items into contingency funds. Vlad and
130 Barnes agreed to explore this while ensuring compliance with PSC regulations.

131 Page 15:

- 132 • Fixed charges/Insurance: Vlad confirmed property insurance is annual while liability,
133 vehicle equipment, and workers' compensation are quarterly. Workers'
134 compensation rates are complicated by combining park (highest risk) and
135 wastewater treatment (medium risk) classifications. Vlad is working with auditors to
136 potentially reclassify for cost savings.
- 137 • Liberty Grove utility district costs: Maintained at current levels with no major water-
138 side projects anticipated.

139 Page 17 - Wastewater Fund:

- 140 • Septic and holding revenues: Sister Bay budgeted at \$11,000 (25% increase over
141 2024 actuals). Other areas budgeted at \$5,000 with potential to reopen acceptance
142 next year depending on sludge disposal comfort levels. Liberty Grove confirmed back
143 to 100% participation.
- 144 • Employee costs: Vlad noted wages and overtime allocations need to be looked at
145 with Kara and Megan and spreadsheets will need to be updated. Julie pointed out
146 typos: "retirement" spelled as "retirment" and "HSA" as "HAS."

147 Page 18:

- 148 • Wages admin wastewater: Vlad explained allocation changes will occur at year-end
149 based on actual time calculations, noting Megan is "doing an amazing job covering
150 lots of work that Tasha did."

- 151 • Rubbish disposal: Reduced from \$7,000 to \$5,000 based on elimination of lower
152 building contents, reduction from three garbage cans to one smaller dumpster, and
153 elimination of dedicated screen dumpster.
- 154 • Audit and consulting: Increased from \$7,850 to \$13,000 for regular audit costs (no
155 rate study for wastewater).
- 156 • Engineering: \$50,000 maintained for grant writing related to potential dryer project
157 and small projects from facility study.

158 Page 19:

- 159 • Computer hardware/software: \$9,000 budgeted, with 2025 overage due to PLC
160 battery replacements (needed every two years). Bell offered to research lithium-ion
161 alternatives.
- 162 • Information technology: Increased from \$1,500 to \$2,500 for George's fee increases
163 and GIS subscription (\$500/user).

164 Page 20:

- 165 • Chemicals: Confirmed bulk purchase with two tankers per year, one received last
166 month. Barnes confirmed registration with Door County Emergency Management
167 through annual meetings with Jeff.

168 Page 23 - Collection Fund:

- 169 • Audit and consulting: Set at \$4,500 per Vlad's recommendation.
- 170 • Tools and minor equipment: Reduced from \$1,000 to \$500 based on historical
171 spending.
- 172 • Miscellaneous other supplies: Maintained at \$2,000 despite no current year
173 spending, as a safety measure.

174 Page 24:

- 175 • Sewer system maintenance: 2025 budget of \$310,000 included televising, main
176 relining, and contingency for parks building lateral (unused). 2026 budget of \$32,000
177 for sewer televising only.

178 Bell spoke of the value of consolidating small line items into contingency accounts for
179 readability and to benefit from the law of averages. Julie noted some detail was required by
180 the rate calculation template but might be reduced with the new rate calculation
181 methodology. Chair Bhirdo concluded the budget discussion by expressing frustration with
182 the lack of participation in reviewing or asking questions about the budget from other
183 committee members, stating "I'm really tired of it being the Denise show. We were all
184 elected to do a job, and I'd like all of us to do the job."

185

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

Barnes requested guidance on the September 9th meeting presentation by Chad Olson on the facility study. The committee agreed to:

- Conduct the presentation via Zoom rather than in-person
- Maintain the 7:45 AM meeting time
- Have only the facility study presentation in September
- Consider the BCR dryer presentation for October after time to "marinate" on the facility study

Bell suggested waiting to see the facility study results before committing to the dryer presentation. Schmelzer raised a strategic consideration about public participation during the facility study presentation. She noted that Sister Bay is receiving criticism from other communities for "thinking of ourselves" rather than immediately pursuing a regional facility. She explained the village needs to know what is needed at the plant first, and what steps can be taken to help reduce our costs, and then if a regional facility is needed. Schmelzer recommended the committee become fully educated on the study before engaging the public, warning that once people see it on the agenda, "we're going to get all these people that are negative towards Sister Bay for doing a study." She emphasized, "Education is key. We have to know what it's all about before we invite others into further comment on it... I think we have to think of ourselves first."

8. Adjournment

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Kara Kroll

Utilities Clerk



Village of Sister Bay
Sewer and Water Utilities Committee
Operations Report

Sewer and Water Utilities Committee Meeting
September 9, 2025

Capacity Report

See the attached report for June and July.

Well Permit Status Report

2025 well permit status; see enclosed information

Sludge Hauling

This year the WWTPs sludge produced has been hauled consistently with one load per week going to NEW Water in Green Bay. So far disposal costs at that facility have actually been more cost effective than Sturgeon Bay Utilities (SBU). However, only being able to get one load hauled out every week is not ideal. We were able to get nine loads of sludge hauled to SBU to gain more space in the sludge storage tank before the fall season.

Annual Sludge Testing

Annually the sludge produced at the WWTP needs to be sampled and tested for a large array of metals, Kjeldahl Nitrogen, ammonia, phosphorous, and percent solids. The annual sludge testing is sent to Northern Lake Services (NLS) for analysis. The sample was collected and sent to NLS and the results have been received back. The results will be reported to the DNR in the 2025 Sludge Biosolids Characteristics Report.

PLC Failures

The storm on August 9, 2025, caused the WWTP main buildings programmable logic controller (PLC) to go offline. The WWTP in total has three PLCs, one in each building located on the grounds. The outage meant that none of the equipment powered by the variable frequency drives (VFDs) in the main buildings electrical room could operate using their automatic programming, meaning everything had to be operated in hand by an operator. A technician from IPS came Monday morning to diagnose the equipment. They were able to get the PLC reset and reprogrammed but were not able to determine the cause of the malfunction. On August 21, 2025, the pretreatment buildings PLC also went offline for an unknown reason. Barnes was able to diagnose the equipment, and it was determined that the PLCs central processing unit had failed. IPS requested the unit be sent to them to see if they can investigate the cause.

Village of Sister Bay Utilities						
P.O. Box 91, Sister Bay, WI 54234						
Phones: Voice 920-854-2246 Fax 920-854-7602 Cell 920-421-0254						
Sister Bay, Liberty Grove Utility District, and Town of Liberty Grove						
Treatment Plant Capacities Calculations						
For:	June-2025					
	WWTP	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove
	Influent	Hauled	Sewered	Total Sister Bay Flow	Sewered	Hauled
Hydraulic Flow (mgd)	6.639	0.020	5.779	5.800	0.481	0.357
Water Sales Ratios			0.9231		0.0769	
	WWTP	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove
	Influent	Hauled	Sewered	Total Sister Bay Flow	Sewered	Hauled
SEWERED BOD lbs/day	20754		19158		1596	
HAULED BOD lbs/day	1405	76				1329
Total BOD lbs	22159			19234	1596	1329
	WWTP	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove
	Influent	Hauled	Sewered	Total Sister Bay Flow	Sewered	Hauled
SEWERED TSS lbs/day	13881		12814		1067	
HAULED TSS lbs/day	2031	110				1921
Total TSS lbs	15912			12924	1067	1921
	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove	
Purchased Flow Capacity in mgd	0.62			0.059	0.266	
Monthly Daily Average	0.193			0.016	0.012	
Percent of used Capacity	31.18%			27.20%	4.48%	
	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove	
Purchased BOD Capacity in lbs/day	905			105	1359	
Monthly Daily Average	641			53	44	
Percent of used Capacity	71%			50.67%	3.26%	
	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove	
Purchased TSS Capacity in lbs/day	1076			101	999	
Monthly Daily Average	431			36	64	
Percent of used Capacity	40.04%			35.23%	6.41%	

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Sister Bay, Liberty Grove Utility District, and Town of Liberty Grove						
Treatment Plant Capacities Calculations						
For:	July-2025					
	WWTP	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove
	Influent	Hauled	Sewered	Total Sister Bay Flow	Sewered	Hauled
Hydraulic Flow (mgd)	10.194	0.097	8.243	8.340	0.687	1.167
Water Sales Ratios			0.9231		0.0769	
	WWTP	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove
	Influent	Hauled	Sewered	Total Sister Bay Flow	Sewered	Hauled
SEWERED BOD lbs/day	46741		43147		3594	
HAULED BOD lbs/day	5615	444				5170
Total BOD lbs	52356			43591	3594	5170
	WWTP	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove
	Influent	Hauled	Sewered	Total Sister Bay Flow	Sewered	Hauled
SEWERED TSS lbs/day	41930		38706		3224	
HAULED TSS lbs/day	6499	498				6001
Total TSS lbs	48429			39203	3224	6001
	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove	
Purchased Flow Capacity in mgd	0.62			0.059	0.266	
Monthly Daily Average	0.269			0.022	0.038	
Percent of used Capacity	43.39%			37.55%	14.16%	
	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove	
Purchased BOD Capacity in lbs/day	905			105	1359	
Monthly Daily Average	1406			116	167	
Percent of used Capacity	155%			110.43%	12.27%	
	Sister Bay			LGSD #1	Liberty Grove	
Purchased TSS Capacity in lbs/day	1076			101	999	
Monthly Daily Average	1265			104	194	
Percent of used Capacity	117.53%			102.98%	19.38%	



MEMO

To: Sewer and Water Utilities Committee

From: Kara Kroll, Utilities Clerk

Subject: 2025 Well Testing & Permitting

Date: September 5, 2025

Wells inside the service area:

Written notifications were sent to well owners on May 1st, July 1st, and August 1st.

Total wells due for testing inside the service area = 29

Wells currently in compliance	23
Wells in the sampling process	5
Wells with no response	1
Wells abandoned (waiting for documents)	0
Wells with proof of abandonment	0
Wells waiting to be abandoned	0