

Sewer and Water Utilities Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 14, 2026 at 1:00 P.M.
Sister Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant- 2124 Autumn Court
and Video Conference
(Approved Version)

1. Call Meeting to Order

Chairperson Nate Bell called the Sewer and Water Utilities meeting to order on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, at 1:00 PM.

2. Roll Call

A roll call was conducted, with the following members present: Chairperson Nate Bell and member Steven Bacsi

Staff present: Utilities Director Megan Barnes, Village Administrator Ben Andrews, Utilities Clerk Kara Kroll

Others: Walter Nawrot

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bell, second by Bacsi to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

4. Approval of Minutes of the March 10, 2026 Meeting, As Published

Motion by Bell, second by Bacsi to approve the minutes of the March 10, 2026 meeting as presented. Motion carried – all ayes.

5. Comments, Correspondence and Concerns from the Public

Utilities Clerk Kara Kroll noted one item of correspondence had been received from a member of the public (Walter Nalrot). Utilities Director Megan Barnes indicated the letter had been attached to Agenda Item 6e (Leak Credit Policy Discussion), as it was most directly relevant to that topic.

6. Discussion/Action Items

a. Sludge Tank Aeration System Repair

Director Barnes reported that after delays caused by ice in the tank, staff were finally able to visually assess the damage to the sludge tank aeration system and obtain photographs. Those materials were forwarded to August and Winter, the original contractor who installed the system, who returned a repair quotation. Director Barnes noted the quote was higher than anticipated but requested approval to proceed, as the storage tank needs to be operational before winter to ensure the ability to haul sludge if an ice shelf forms again.

The repair cost would be drawn from the utility's replacement fund. Chair Bell confirmed with Director Barnes that this fund is built into existing utility rates and that this expenditure would not

necessarily necessitate a rate increase. Director Barnes noted that while other contractors had been contacted for competing quotes, none had responded, likely due to the specialized nature of the work—requiring large crane equipment and knowledge of specific elevations and pressures. The aeration system was originally installed in 2004, representing approximately 22 years of service life.

Motion to recommend approval of the Sludge Tank Aeration System Repair to the Village Board was made by Chair Bell and seconded by Bacsí. The motion carried – all ayes..

b. Disconnection Policy Discussion

Director Barnes provided context for the suite of policies presented under Items 6b through 6e, noting that most are required to align with the provisions of PSC 185 (Wisconsin Administrative Code for water utilities). Utilities Clerk Kara Kroll and Administrator Ben Andrews led the work on the Disconnection, Deferred Payment, and Tax Certification policies, while Director Barnes developed the Leak Credit policy.

Director Barnes noted the disconnection policy is standard and aligns with all regulatory requirements.

Motion to recommend the Disconnection Policy to the Village Board was made by Chair Bell and seconded by Bacsí. The motion carried – all ayes.

c. Deferred Payment Agreement Policy Discussion

Director Barnes noted the Deferred Payment Agreement Policy similarly aligns with PSC 185 requirements. Administrator Andrews confirmed this assessment.

Motion to recommend the Deferred Payment Agreement Policy to the Village Board was made by Chair Bell and seconded by Bacsí. The motion carried – all ayes.

d. Tax Roll Policy Discussion

Kroll explained that the Tax Roll Policy governs the process for certifying unpaid utility balances to the county tax roll. Under the policy, outstanding charges must be compiled by September 30th, notices sent on October 15th, a penalty applied on November 1st, and the list submitted to the county on November 15th. Kroll noted that while the policy establishes a formal process, it is rarely invoked in practice—most residents pay before the matter reaches tax roll certification.

Motion to recommend the Tax Roll Policy to the Village Board was made by Chair Bell and seconded by Bacsí. The motion carried – all ayes.

e. Leak Credit Policy Discussion

Director Barnes presented a draft Leak Credit Policy, noting this is the first time the village has sought to establish a formal written policy for sewer leak adjustments. The policy was developed by referencing similar policies from other Wisconsin municipalities including Cottage Grove, Palmyra, and Schofield, and is intended to provide a consistent framework for staff when evaluating leak credit requests.

Key provisions of the draft include: crediting eligible customers back to their average typical usage; applying a tiered occurrence system (100% of excess usage credited on a first occurrence, 75% on a second occurrence within a year, with further reductions thereafter); requiring that any credits exceeding \$1,000 be approved by the Finance Committee; and vesting initial discretion with the Utilities Director, with appeal to the committee.

Committee Member Bacsí raised the question of how to verify whether a spike in water usage was truly accidental, noting that without verification it could be subject to abuse. Director Barnes and Kroll noted the policy's tiered structure inherently discourages repeated claims. Kroll further noted that credits only apply to the sewer portion—customers are always charged the full amount for water consumed regardless—which limits the financial incentive to misuse the policy. Director Barnes

added she attempts to verify claims by cross-referencing inflow and outflow data at the treatment plant, though this can be complicated by seasonal factors such as heavy rainfall causing groundwater infiltration.

Discussion also touched on the public correspondence received from Walter Nalrot, whose leak claim arose during a heavy snowfall followed by rapid snow melting and heavy rainfall, making independent verification difficult. Administrator Andrews clarified that because sewer rates are not regulated by the PSC, the village is not legally required to have a formal policy before rendering decisions but noted that having a policy in place would ensure consistency going forward.

The committee expressed general comfort with the policy as drafted and agreed it serves as a sound living document that can be revised if circumstances warrant.

Motion to recommend the Leak Credit Policy to the Village Board was made by Chair Bell and seconded by Bacsí. The motion carried – all ayes.

e. i 2373 Parkview Dr: Water/Sewer Billing Dispute

This item was addressed in the context of the Leak Credit Policy discussion above. Administrator Andrews confirmed that, as sewer rates are unregulated by the PSC, the Utilities Director retains discretion to administratively resolve the billing dispute in line with the guidelines discussed. No separate formal action was taken on this item.

f. Rate Discussion – Sewer

Director Barnes initiated a discussion on sewer rate review, noting that the village is required by its utilities code to conduct an annual review of user rates. She indicated that due to an ongoing PSC proceeding related to prior sewer rates, rate activity had essentially been placed on hold, including a rate increase that was planned but never implemented.

Director Barnes recommended that the village once again contract an outside firm to conduct the rate study, rather than relying on the format used previously, and suggested issuing a more comprehensive Request for Proposals (RFP). She acknowledged the need to be cautious given the pending proceeding. Administrator Andrews agreed with seeking an independent specialist and emphasized that whatever the selected firm recommends, the village should follow their recommendation without deviation, to ensure the credibility of the process.

The committee discussed ways to attract more respondents than the two received in the prior RFP cycle. Suggestions included posting on the Quest CDN procurement platform, developing a more thorough RFP, and building pre-submission question-and-answer opportunities to reduce ambiguity for prospective bidders.

Chair Bell raised the idea of exploring seasonal or tiered sewer rate structures to reflect the disproportionate burden placed on village infrastructure during peak tourism months. Director Barnes noted this may be feasible on the sewer side and cited the significant difference in flows between winter (as low as 0.2 MGD) and peak summer periods (approaching 0.4–0.5 MGD on busy weekends), against a rated capacity of 0.7 MGD. The committee agreed this concept should be explored as part of the forthcoming rate study.

Director Barnes noted that rather than scheduling a special committee meeting solely for the sewer RFP, it could be combined with the Water Rate Study RFP discussion (Item 6h). The committee reached consensus to proceed with developing a combined RFP and to schedule a special meeting for committee review prior to posting.

g. Water Rate Study RFP

Director Barnes reported that the last conventional water rate study was conducted in 2017, with rates becoming effective in 2018. She noted that the PSC typically recommends a new conventional rate study approximately every eight years, and that annual simplified rate increase applications had been unsuccessful in the interim. Director Barnes presented a draft RFP for a new water rate study.

The proposed timeline calls for the RFP to be released December 1, 2026, with proposals due January 1, 2027, allowing for committee review at the January utilities meeting. A conventional water rate study takes approximately 200 days to compile, with a target submission to the PSC by June 2027, designating 2027 as the test year—which Director Barnes noted is advantageous given several planned capital projects on the water side.

Administrator Andrews noted that both accounting and engineering firms are qualified to conduct rate studies, and that the choice of firm type may depend on whether future capital upgrades or purely financial sustainability is the primary driver. Director Barnes indicated financial stability is the main driver but noted the potential for growth associated with proposed development along Highway 57.

The committee reached consensus to combine the sewer and water rate study RFPs and schedule a special meeting to review the combined RFP document before it is posted. The committee agreed to make every effort to broaden outreach to potential respondents.

h. Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Report

Director Barnes provided the following operational updates:

WPDES Permit Renewal: The permit renewal application was submitted to the DNR on July 2, ahead of the July 6 deadline. Director Barnes noted that the DNR currently does not have a permit drafter on staff, creating uncertainty about the timeline for the permit draft and sanitary survey. She flagged that the reissued permit may impose additional limitations on pollutant discharge, potentially requiring new compliance steps.

PFAS Testing Requirement: The facility is now covered under a general permit for biosolids PFAS testing, which will be an annual requirement going forward due to the village's contribution of sludge to another facility (New Water in Green Bay).

Ferric Addition SOP: As part of the permit renewal, Director Barnes developed and received DNR approval for a Chemical Phosphorus Removal System Standard Operating Procedure governing the facility's ferric chloride dosing process. Any future changes to the ferric addition system must now be submitted in writing to the DNR.

2025 CMAR Submission: The annual Compliance Maintenance Annual Report was submitted to the DNR. A CMOM overview discussion with DNR staff is anticipated later in the year.

DATCP Lab Evaluation: A biennial water lab evaluation by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection is scheduled for the following Monday.

Pretreatment Building: A persistent shorting issue with the fine screen equipment that had been causing electrical damage was identified and resolved. Operations in the pretreatment building have improved significantly as a result.

Sludge Hauling: New Water in Green Bay is temporarily reducing its intake due to incinerator and digester maintenance, returning to full operations at the end of September.

4th of July Flows: Flows on the July 4th weekend were lower than in prior years, reaching approximately 0.4 MGD on the peak day compared to 0.5 MGD the previous year. Director Barnes noted that the Friday before the holiday was actually the busiest flow day of the weekend, and that flows dropped notably by Sunday as visitors departed early.

SCADA Connectivity: Director Barnes reported that the remote access difficulties experienced during peak periods in prior years had not recurred this season.

Director Barnes also noted, as a follow-up to the rate discussion, that the village does not currently have a fee schedule charge for ammonia testing conducted in-house, which should be added to the unsewered wastewater rate schedule at the next opportunity. This item was referred to a future utilities committee agenda.

Regarding the regional biosolids dryer project, Director Barnes indicated that following an initial meeting with neighboring communities, no further correspondence had been received. Administrator Andrews suggested that formal written communication at the elected official level rather than staff-to-staff—might be more effective in initiating a response and securing inclusion in their board deliberations, given the closing window for the project timeline. The committee agreed this approach was worth pursuing.

7. Matters to be placed on a future agenda or referred to a committee, official, or employee

The following items were identified for future action:

- Ammonia testing fee to be added to the utility fee schedule, referred to the next utilities committee meeting.
- Combined Sewer and Water Rate Study RFP to be drafted and brought back to the committee at a special meeting prior to posting.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Bell, second by Bacsí to adjourn at 2:01 PM. Motion carried – all ayes.

The next meeting of the Sewer and Water Committee will be conducted at 1:00 P.M. on Tuesday October 13, 2026 at the Sister Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant - 2124 Autumn Court and via Video Conference.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kara Kroll
Utilities Clerk