



# City of Madison

City of Madison  
Madison, WI 53703  
www.cityofmadison.com

## Meeting Minutes - Approved SUSTAINABLE MADISON COMMITTEE

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Monday, January 26, 2015

4:30 PM

215 Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Room 300 (Madison Municipal Building)

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### CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Meeting was called to order following verification that the Meeting was properly noticed and a quorum was present.

#### Others present:

Robin Piper, Water Utility  
Jeanne Hoffman  
Karl van Lith

**Present:** 11 - David Ahrens; John M. Conowall; Rajan V. Shukla; Lance E. Green; Jesse J. Shields; Zachary T. Schuster; Anya M. Firszt; Richard A. Heinemann; Michael J. Vickerman; Bradley Campbell and Sophia S. Rogers

**Absent:** 1 - Hans J. Hinke

**Excused:** 6 - John M. Robinson; Sam J. Breidenbach; Richard J. Pearson; Jeannette E. LeZaks; David P. Rhode and Chelsea Chandler

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Ahrens, seconded by Conowall, to Approve the Minutes. The motion passed by voice vote/other.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Mitchell Brey – 1105 Droster Road, Madison, WI 53716**

Wants the Committee to actively fight the rate case. Impacts equity and energy. We have not heard about community conversations. Three provisions we are asked of MGE. 1) 3rd party facilitator 2) All Stakeholders views 3) Plan that meets city's sustainability plan.

**Don Ferber – 4700 Allis Ave, Madison, WI 53716**

I am very concerned about what happened last year regarding MGE. I am concerned – that this year – it will get even worst. People that are at risk will have a harder time making ends meet. Businesses will have a harder time getting started. Google went to IA because of wind. Businesses locate where the community is forward-thinking. I am concerned about what MGE will do this year. The city used \$60K in the effort last year but it didn't work out. The City has a bully pulpit and we should it.

**Robert Owen – 1311 Middleton Street, Middleton WI 53562**

I have the same concerned about MGE. Consider municipalization - but also through State Statues.

Vickerman passed out the State Statues.

**DISCLOSURES AND RECUSALS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. [36911](#) Presentation by Water Utility on smart meters, water conservation and new rates.

1. 36911 Presentation by Water Utility on smart meters, water conservation and new rates.

Robin Piper Customer Service Manager of the Madison Water Utility (WU) addressed the Committee and answered questions.

Piper – Project H2O, the smart metering deployment project was initiated in July 2012 and completed in September of 2013. In total, 68,430 smart meters were installed, 10% of which were actually meter change outs and 90% or which were retrofits of electronics to existing meters. Four Hundred, fifty-three (453) households opted to not have electronic meters installed in their homes and pay the WU, \$7.78 a month, to have the meters read by a service worker. Fifty-four households have not had anything done.

The new electronic metering allows for daily readings of water use and is integral in allowing the WU to bill monthly and to begin the process of applying for conservation billing rates from the state Public Service Commission (PSC). The new metering system collects more data points daily and has an ability to detect abnormal use (100 gallons /hour over a 24 hr period) that could indicate a water leak or open faucet. The WU contacts customers proactively when these abnormalities are detected. New meter data management software is available and allows customers to access their water use on-line through the Customer Connect website. Monthly billing began in September of 2013 and conservation rates will be part of the next PSC rate increase request.

Green – How has the meter data software been marketed to people? Other communities use promotional methods or pilot projects to spread the word? Is MWU doing something like this?

Piper – The WU is looking at next steps and the water conservation team will be looking at the data—assessing its accuracy and completeness first and then coming up with a communication plan to spread the work on Customer Connect. The meter deployment company didn't leave behind enough packets that explained the system but the WU will put together a plan to increase use of this system.

#### Water conservation

Piper – indicated that the WU will continue to fund the toilet rebate program. This has been in existence for 6 years and over 12,000 toilets have been exchanged out. It is estimated that changing the toilets out has saved 289 million gallons of water annually. This is a small amount given the 10.1 billion gallons the WU pumps annually, but it is a good start.

The WU is an enterprise agency which generates operational and capital fund dollars from bonds and water charges. The WU sends a Municipal Services Bill that contains, water, storm water and landfill remediation charges on it. The water portion of the bill is about 30%. The current electronic payment project will allow for electronic payment of the bill sometime in 2016.

Campbell – can the billing statement offer comparisons of my use to a neighbors use?

Piper – No. Wisconsin, Act 25 requires privacy of data and comparisons are not allowed and even if they were, they would be difficult to do.

Vickerman – did the October rate increase cover the cost of the new smart meters? And what was the cost of the new system?

Piper – The project was budgeted for \$14 million and came in under budget. Costs were part of the previous rate structure and because of how WU uses bonds to fund projects, the smart metering and infrastructure upgrades will be part of rate structures for the next 20 years.

Piper – explained the rate structure process for WU and offered a handout highlighting the October rate filing. The PSC is still reviewing the proposal and the rate design is still in the works. WU is using a consultant to help them through the process. The current structure has 4 different rates depending on the type of entity using the water—residential, commercial, industrial and public authority. The Water Utility Board (WUB) proposed increasing the base rate for all users, not just residential and for looking at having a common base rate to start. The base rate would help pay for infrastructure fixed costs. Volume charges would differ for each type of entity.

Hoffman – What's in the base charge for water? Why isn't sewer going up as quickly?

Piper – Base charge covers fixed costs. Sewer charges are set by the Common Council not the PSC and there is more difficulty educating people on transportation costs verses treatment costs. Piper worked through the volume differs found on the document for water use.

Vickerman – There are no seasonal rates, right?

Piper – Right, no seasonal rates, although water usage goes up in summer, the rate is the same all year long.

Hoffman – why is the Public Authority getting such a high proposed increase?

Piper – Public Authority entities like the City, UW, Dane County and others have real spikes in use and operate often on only a Monday-Friday basis. Their impact is usually on peak capacity needs, therefore WU wants a higher rate.

The PSC may not implement all the rate changes at once and historically phased changes in over time. The Madison WU usually sets a progressive example for the state with its rate cases.

Green – WU had a regressive rate and this case is a big improvement. Putting all entity types with the same base rate is a good idea. Setting up a conservation rate would be the most ideal way to improve conservation. Is it happening in other parts of the state?

Piper – No other Wisconsin water utility proposes these types of rate cases. The PSC is struggling with progressive rate structures and will need to

continue to do so.

Campbell – it would be helpful to use common language around the data points. It looks like our wholesale charge subsidizes other communities that MWU supplies.

Piper – neighboring communities (Fitchburg, Maple Bluff, Shorewood Hills and Monona) all go through wholesale meters. They add their own distribution costs to their customer statements. This usually adds 25-30% more to the statements in those communities.

The PSC website will have all the supporting documents for the rate case under docket number # 32118

Conowall – can you explain the other community rates again? Is it an equitable cost of services distribution?

Piper – explains process and that it is equitable and part of the fee structure.

Piper demonstrated the Customer Care website and the Customer Connect feature that allows individuals to see their water usage on a daily, monthly and yearly basis. Customer Care has about 21,000 users and Customer Connect has about 2500. Notifications can be set up by customer and the software and multiple daily readings have proven to be very important for leak detection and improvement. Vickerman shared a person story about using the software to determine he had a leaking toilet that was using hundreds of gallons extra. Green felt the software and website were a giant tool for helping water conservation efforts.

## OLD BUSINESS

2. [36158](#)

Sustainable Madison Committee Working Groups  
a. Task: ID necessary support for work objectives

The sub-committees broke up into groups to discuss their projects.

**Planning and Design**

**Campbell** – The three areas that we will focus on are under the Plan Commission.

Need to see what the Plan Commission is doing to regarding these issues.

**Conowall** – will focus on local food

**Campbell** – will focus on sustainable building and design.

Land use is both and we will share that focus. How can we get them (Plan Commission) to look at the sustainability plan more.

**Van Lith** – next month we can have someone from planning come and talk about the comprehensive plan update.

**Green** – influence the process. There seems to be a limit about how much sustainability can go into plans. On another note – we need more community gardens.

**Van Lith** – we can also have the Madison Food Council and Community Gardens come and talk at the future.

**Natural Systems**

**Air Quality** – is being dealt with through Carbon and Energy and Transportation

**Ground Water and Drinking Water Quality**

**Green** – There is an issue with road salt. We could look at doing more when we redo streets for storm water and trees. We can look at grey water systems too and look into the Building Code verses cost issue.

The SMC will need to figure out if we want to make comment on the fee structure and we will need to find out timing for comments for the PSC rate structure.

**George Dreckmann** Wednesday at 7:30am at Goodman Center regarding organic collection.

**Emerald Ash Bore** – we could look into non-toxic way to save our trees. Urban Forestry Council needs to come to a future meeting to talk about Emerald Ash Bore plan.

**Transportation**

**Rogers** - BRT resolution is going to Council and SMC should go to the meeting to talk in support of the resolution.

**Sophia Rogers** moved that three members of the SMC go to council and represent SMC to voice approval of BRT.

**Firszt** – seconded the Motion  
Unanimously approved.

**Carbon and Energy**

Heinemann - Mentioned the resolution and passed it out. We need the common council to approve the resolution to ask the SMC to plan for community discussion. These discussions can be to talk about municipalization and the public rights of way statues. The idea would be to enter into an agreement with MGE with some teeth – that talks about how MGE and the City can work together on sustainability goals.

We have energy goals and equity goals. We need to see where MGE is willing to engage the City. The resolution would ask the SMC to develop a work plan and have meetings, and then provide a recommendation to the council.

Conowall – would there be costs?

Heinemann – we would get the space for free, speakers for free.

Heinemann moved that SMC forward the resolution to council for sponsorship and introduction to the next council meeting

Conowall seconded

Unanimously approved

3. [36159](#) La Follette Capstone - opportunity to inform Working Groups

**Attachments:** [Sustainable Madison Capstone Project 12.8.2014.docx](#)  
[LaGro CRSC Best Practices final.pdf](#)

Referred to next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Campbell, seconded by Green, to Adjourn at 6:32 PM.  
The motion passed by voice vote/other.