



City of Madison

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

Meeting Minutes - Approved WATER UTILITY BOARD

Tuesday, November 24, 2009

4:30 PM

119 E. Olin Ave., Rooms A & B

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Gregory Harrington called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m.

Present: 7 -

Lauren Cnare; Dan Melton; Gregory W. Harrington; Thomas Schlenker;
Bruce Mayer; Michael Schumacher and Madeline B. Gotkowitz

Excused: 1 -

George E. Meyer

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Schumacher, seconded by Gotkowitz, to Approve the Minutes of the October 27 and November 17 meetings. The motion passed by voice vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public registered to speak. See attached for comments submitted prior to the meeting via Ask Us, Tell Us.

16738

Public Comments Received via "Ask Us, Tell Us"

Attachments: [Public Comment via Ask Us Tell Us November 2009.pdf](#)

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

1. [14827](#) Steering Committee Report

Attachments: [Steering Team Report November 2009.pdf](#)

Steering Committee Member Joel Hughes reviewed the information on the attached report. Hughes was asked how things are. He said they are getting better. The new format for the monthly meetings, management addressing concerns more quickly, and potlucks are helping. He was asked what he considered the committee's greatest strengths or assets. He said they all seem to get along and are cycling into a new phase with new members who are bringing fresh ideas.

Hughes was asked what recommendations the Steering Committee made at the management meeting. Hughes said they recommended doing alternative work schedules again, including a one-month pilot at the Operations Center. He was asked if there were any employee survey results of interest to the Board. He said probably not. Feedback from participants and their supervisors was positive. Those who did not participate had more negative responses because they wanted to try it.

2. [14080](#) General Manager's Report

Attachments: [General Manager Report November 2009.pdf](#)
[Employee Recognitions November 2009.pdf](#)

General Manager Tom Heikkinen highlighted a few items on the attached report:

He invited the Board to attend the employee potluck on December 10.

The Utility recently received a number of nice compliments (see attached). The crews are doing a great job, and it is nice to see recognition from the public.

Saturday, July 24, 2010 is the date for a Water Utility picnic at Hoyt Park that will include employees, the Board, and families. This is a return to a past tradition.

The RFP for AMI/AMR was issued, and proposals are due December 18. This is not for the vendor of the system itself but for a consultant to provide project management services and assist in preparing the RFP for the system. He was asked if the company who receives the consultant contract could also be vendor. Customer Service Manager Ken Key said they have to be separate; there cannot be any connection between the professional services contractor and the vendor selected. He was asked if this was a Water Utility or City Purchasing policy. Key said it was City Purchasing, but this is also his preference.

3. [14085](#) Water Quality Monitoring Report

Attachments: [Water Quality Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed.

Dr. Schlenker asked Water Quality Manager Joseph Grande if any spot samples collected in the last ten years had fluoride levels above 2 or 4 ppm. Grande said there were none above 4 and two incidents above 2. One was at Well 28 in 2007, and the other was at Well 12 in the summer of 2008. At Well 28, the elevated fluoride was discovered when they took the tests. All of the samples taken in the distribution area were between 2 and 4; none were above 4. At Well 12, the elevated fluoride was in the reservoir but not the distribution system. The incident in 2007 led to the development of the Fluoride Over/Under Feed Standard Operating Procedure. DeMorett said the second incident, which was due to a valve failure, has led to a change in maintenance procedures; that valve is now replaced every year regardless of its condition. Grande said the day-to-day changes in fluoride are monitored closely, and there has been a great deal of effort to ensure it remains at the optimal level.

There was a brief discussion of how the Board should address fluoride. Key points included the following:

- Monitoring fluoride levels does not address citizen opposition to the very practice of fluoridation. When the issue is discussed, it is important to address those concerns.
- The Board had previously decided that they were not the authorities on the issue. For the most part, the Water Utility Board lacks the expertise to make public health decisions. This issue was referred to the Board of Health for their recommendation, and that will come back to the Board at a future meeting.

4. [14086](#) Water Supply Report

Attachments: [Water Supply Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed. Water Supply Manager Joe DeMorett said the FLUTe is installed. It has been purged twice and could be approaching institutional conditions. He was asked which parameters are used to determine this. DeMorett said conductivity and pH are tested in the field, and chloride and nitrates are tested in the lab. Once conditions are natural, a full round of analysis will be done.

He was asked about the condition of the old parts used as a replacement at Well 7. DeMorett said the old parts were in good condition. The alternative would be to have a machinist make the parts that are no longer available. He was asked what would happen to the reservoir at Well 7 if it is determined that a filter should be installed. Larson said according to the infrastructure management plan, that reservoir is the worst structure in the system. If a filter were installed, the reservoir would be torn down and rebuilt, so any repairs made now could be gone in the next 3-4 years. The cost for the repairs is approximately \$83,000, but the risk is too great to do nothing.

5. [14087](#) Operations Report

Attachments: [Operations Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed.

6. [14088](#) Staffing Report

Attachments: [Staffing Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed.

7. [14089](#) Customer Service Report

Attachments: [Customer Service Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed. Customer service manager Ken Key said the deadline for questions for the AMI/AMR RFP was the previous Tuesday. There were just a few, and he has not heard of further follow-ups.

He highlighted the additional information on his report regarding transfers to the tax roll. This was in response to questions from one of the board numbers. The numbers are good, especially considering the rate increase and current economy.

8. [14090](#) Public Information Report

Attachments: [Public Information Report November 2009.pdf](#)
[Draft Press Release- Rate Case Public Hearing 12-8-2009.pdf](#)
[Draft Rate Increase Questions and Answers 2009.pdf](#)

The attached documents were distributed. Public Information Officer Gail Gawenda was asked where the Question and Answer sheet would go. Gawenda said it would go on the website and be distributed to staff. Ald. Cnare suggested sending it to the alders as well.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial to have staff available to talk to neighborhood associations and groups. Gawenda said she would be available; she usually talks to groups about conservation-related subjects but could also be available for these topics. Heikkinen said one idea from the Public Participation class that is being considered, especially since Madison has more than 120 neighborhoods, is training teams of citizen volunteers who are interested in these issues to take messages to the neighborhood associations and also bring feedback in.

Gawenda was asked what the city's responsibility would be with the green plumbers and special awards plan. She said this is still in its preliminary stages, but the Utility had discussed recognizing customers who have made significant changes to decrease usage. Heikkinen said the Water Utility's role in the Green Plumbers certification, which is a separate program, is just to host it.

Gawenda was asked why the Utility was involved in publicity for the 2010 census. She said it is because they are a city agency, and the city is very eager to ensure everyone is counted. Key said that a short paragraph would be printed on the bill itself instead of doing an insert or stuffer.

9. [14122](#) Engineering Report

Attachments: [Engineering Report November 2009.pdf](#)

Principal Engineer Al Larson highlighted several items on the attached report.

Flushing is completed, and so is construction with the exception of Cannonball. Phase 1 of the Zone 6 to Zone 3 conversion was successful. There were 5 main breaks, and two of them were re-breaks. The second phase will probably be June 1.

There are two active Citizen Advisory Panels at different stages in the process. Zone 4 is evaluating alternatives and Zone 7 and 8 is establishing the project. They both have upcoming public hearings to be scheduled in December or January.

The Emergency Response field exercise was a success, and the Utility learned a lot. There were 15 participants in the field and 5-6 at the Water Utility, and it was completed in a couple of hours. He was asked if there were plans to do an exercise again. Larson said the Emergency Response Plan requires an annual exercise.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

10. [14092](#) Financial Report: Toilet Rebate Program

Attachments: [Toilet Rebate Program Financial Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed.

11. [14123](#) Fund Balance Report

Attachments: [Fund Balance Report November 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed. Bruce Mayer reviewed upcoming changes to the totals in the report. The Reserve account will decrease, and there may be Assessment Revolving Fund money that will come in. The Short-term Construction fund loan will be \$0 because of the bond sale. These changes will not appear on the November 30 report but will be on the December 31 report.

12. [14846](#) Comparative Income Statement

Attachments: [Comparative Income Statement 3rd Quarter 2009.pdf](#)

The attached report was distributed. Mayer said his discussion of this report with Finance/Accounting Manager Robin Piper was positive and encouraging. The last rate increase went into full effect on the October 1 bills. The Utility is in a good position and this could reduce future rate increases. Piper will be requesting smaller increases in January and in September to try to get in sync with the Public Service Commission's cycle. Schumacher cautioned against giving the public false hope about future rate increases. The Utility has debt payment and major infrastructure needs and with conservation, the increases are necessary. Heikkinen said it is a misperception that conservation costs. The price of water has to increase because costs are increasing for reasons unrelated to usage.

13. [15697](#) Other Financial Updates

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

14. [16364](#) Policy Regarding Unrestricted Operating Reserve

A motion was made by Schumacher, seconded by Cnare, to Refer to the January meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.

NEW BUSINESS

15. [16438](#) Authorizing the Mayor and the City Clerk to enter into an Electric Service Agreement for the Purchase of Backup Generation Service with Madison Gas & Electric Company, for a period of ten years to commence not later than December 31, 2009, at the rate of \$2.00 per KW per day for each of 9 unit wells.

A motion was made by Melton, seconded by Schumacher, to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER. The motion passed by voice vote.

16. [14501](#) Introduction of Future Agenda Items

The following future agenda items were previously suggested:

- Report on Well 8 Disinfection Pilot Study
- Board of Health Review of Fluoridation Policy
- Forecasting Future Rates to Support Capital Programs
- Collaboration with Dane County Water Utilities
- Discussion of Relationship with Municipalities that are Wholesale Customers
- Developing a Greenhouse Gas Emissions Strategy
- Education on Contaminant Transport

Harrington said it was originally thought that the report for the Well 8 disinfection study would be presented at this meeting, but Andy Jacques did not have it ready in time. It will be on the December agenda. The Board of Health will be reviewing fluoride at their 12/17 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Schumacher, seconded by Cnare, to Adjourn at 5:23 p.m. The motion passed by voice vote.