



CITY OF MERRILL

WATER & SEWAGE DISPOSAL COMMITTEE

MINUTES • WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2020

Regular Meeting

City Hall Council Chambers

5:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Alderman Osness called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Steve Osness	Aldersperson - Fourth District	Present	
Mike Rick	Aldersperson - Sixth District	Present	
Mark Weix	Aldersperson - Seventh District	Remote	

Attending in the City Hall Common Council Chambers: City Administrator Dave Johnson and Public Works Director/City Engineer Rod Akey.

Attending virtually: Mayor Derek Woellner (arr. 5:04), Utility Operations Manager Gabe Steinagel, Finance Director Kathy Unertl, Information Technology Manager Dustin Brown, City Attorney Tom Hayden (arr. 5:01), Alderman Steve Sabatke, Alderman Steve Hass and City Clerk Bill Heideman.

II. Preliminary Items

1. September Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

Utility Operations Manager Steinagel answered a question on the vouchers.

Motion (Rick/Osness) to approve the September and October vouchers.

RESULT: APPROVED

2. October Vouchers

The vouchers were in the meeting packet.

See previous motion.

III. Agenda Items for Consideration

1. Discussion on water rate increase

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey reported that the most recent water rate increase was three years ago. Recent Rate of Return findings by the Public Service Commission (PSC) recommend a \$287,000 increase. This would require a 36% rate increase.

The options of a 3% or a 6% increase were discussed.

Finance Director Unertl noted that the last increase was 2.5%.

No action was taken at this time. This issue will continue to be discussed as more information is obtained.

2. Consider contracting with Trilogy, LLC for water utility rate assistance

Information was in the meeting packet.

Finance Director Unertl reported on the proposed project by Trilogy Consulting LLC, and the associated contract. The hourly rate would be \$110, and the total cost of the project is not to exceed \$2,200.

Motion (Weix/Rick) to approve the contract.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 1/12/2021 6:00 PM
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3. Consideration of 2021 Water & Sewage Service Charges

A report detailing the proposed charge amounts for 2021 was in the meeting packet.

Utility Operations Manager Steinagel noted that the increase (approximately 3%) is only for specialized services that may be requested or necessary. It is not an increase in general water and sewer rates and would not result in an increase to a standard water bill.

Motion (Rick/Weix) to approve the charges as presented.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 1/12/2021 6:00 PM
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4. Discussion on merging City Water & Sewer Committee with Board of Public Works Committee

The possibility of combining the Water and Sewage Disposal Committee with the Board of Public Works was discussed at an earlier meeting.

Motion (Osness/Rick) to merge the Water and Sewage Disposal Committee into the Board of Public Works. One member of the current Water and Sewage Committee would become a member of the Board of Public Works. Financial policies and accounts related to the two committees would remain the same.

Motion (Osness/Rick) to refer to the next Water and Sewage Disposal Committee.

RESULT:	REFERRED TO NEXT MEETING	Next: 1/27/2021 5:00 PM
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5. Discussion on HWY G & new industrial park

Public Works Director/City Engineer Akey suggested the possibility of creating a new Tax Increment District (TID) in the area. For planning purposes, it could be included in the 2022 budget.

Motion (Weix/Rick) to investigate the possibility of created TID #13, for inclusion in the 2022 budget.

RESULT:	CARRIED
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6. Review & approval of Resolution authorizing participation in WISWARN mutual aid & assistance program

The proposed resolution was in the meeting packet.

Utility Operations Manager Steinagel reported that WIWARN has been existence for several years. It is an intrastate program for mutual aid and assistance for water and wastewater systems.

There is no charge for being a party to the WIWARN Mutual Aid and Assistance Agreement.

Motion (Rick/Weix) to approve the resolution.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 1/12/2021 6:00 PM
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7. Discussion on adding fluoride to referendum for April elections or next earliest election

Alderman Osness had placed this item on the agenda. He noted that consideration of the potential removal of fluoride from the City water system was discussed at previous meetings.

Motion (Osness/Rick) to prepare a referendum question on the potential removal of fluoride from City water, and include the question as part of the next election possible, in accordance with deadlines specified in Wisconsin State Statutes. A public hearing on this issue would also be scheduled as part of the process.

RESULT:	APPROVED & SENT TO COUNCIL	Next: 1/12/2021 6:00 PM
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IV. Monthly Report

1. Operations Report

The report was in the meeting packet.

Utility Operations Manager Steinagel reviewed the report.

V. Public Comment Period

None.

VI. Establish date, time and location of next meeting

Wednesday, January 27th, 2021 at 5:00 P.M.

VII. Adjournment

Motion (Weix/Osness) to adjourn. Carried. Adjourned at 5:37 P.M.