

**MINUTES OF THE NEENAH WATER WORKS COMMISSION
AND
STORM WATER CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**
Regular Meeting – August 19, 2024
Hauser Room – City Hall

Present: President Schmeichel; Commissioners: Lang, Bauman, Hemes, and Steiner (via phone); and Director Mach

Also Present: Water Treatment Manager Gorges, Water Distribution Tech I Goldschmidt, Plant Operator Dahn, Plant Operator Flom, Public Works Engineer Kummerow, Human Resources Director Fairchild, Water Distribution Tech II Reader, Water Distribution Manager Jens, and Deputy Director of Finance Kahl.

President Schmeichel called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Approve Regular Meeting Minutes for July 15, 2024 – Following discussion, **M.S.C. Bauman/Lang to approve the July 15, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes.** Commissioners Lang, Schmeichel, Bauman, and Steiner voting aye. Commissioner Hemes abstaining.

Approve the Invoices for July 2024 – Commissioners asked about the meter reading charges from Badger Meter, Inc. Director Mach noted that these will be present until all Badger endpoints have been retired from the system.

Following discussion, **M.S.C. Schmeichel/Hemes to approve the July 2024 invoices.** All voting aye.

Appearances – None.

Old Business/New Business

Storm Water Report – Public Works Engineer Kummerow presented the Storm Water Report for Commission consideration. Highlights of the report include an updated report on the Douglas Park Pond. One additional benefit of this pond will be the improvement in flooding mitigation on S. Commercial Street. The Contractor, installing the pumps at Harrison Pond, continues to encounter problems with the pumps. Replacement parts are ordered.

Following discussion, **M.S.C. Hemes/Bauman to accept and place on file the Storm Water Report.** All voting aye.

Financial Report – Deputy Director of Finance Kahl and Director Mach presented the Six-month Financial Report for 2024. Commissioners asked about the annual fluctuations in the Property Tax Expense. Deputy Director Kahl explained that the tax payments are estimated until the end of the year when the actual expense is calculated.

Following discussion, **M.S.C. Schmeichel/Lang to accept and place on file the 2024 Six-month Financial Report.** All voting aye.

Salary Plan Update – Human Resources Director Fairchild provided an update to the Commission. She and Director Mach met to discuss a point scoring system for positions and was able to evaluate one position at that time. Additional positions will be evaluated in the future. Director Mach sent her a spreadsheet listing certifications and experience for each employee. Director Fairchild informed the Commission that Carlson-Dettmann offers a point factor training program that details how they score positions, and she has signed up for the September 25th class. Furthermore, she noted that the goal of a scoring system is to provide

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consistency between positions. The market study provided by Carlson-Dettmann was completed in 2022 with a recommendation to have a review every three to five years. Next year is the three-year mark and the earliest in which a salary study can be completed.

Several Utility employees attended the meeting and wished to speak on their behalf. The employees were disappointed that Commissioners chose to stick with the 25-step plan instead of moving to the 9-step plan. Some of the employees were upset that their pay was capped. An employee developed an alternate plan which was handed out to Commissioners.

There was no intended motion for this informational-only item and thus the Commission called for an end to the discussion as a point of order.

Following discussion, **No action required.**

Benchmark Report – Director Mach presented the Benchmark Report for 2023. Notable items from this report include a decrease in main breaks year over year, decrease in overall debt, and an increase in net rate base.

Following discussion, **M.S.C. Hemes/Bauman to accept and place on file the 2023 Benchmark Report.** All voting aye.

Award Contract 3-24W Removal and Disposal of Lime Sludge – Director Mach presented a memo detailing the bid received for removal and disposal of lime sludge. He was surprised by the large number of plan holders, but lack of interest in bidding. Per the Approval Authority Process, this award was recommended by the Board of Public Works with final consideration by the Waterworks Commission.

Following discussion, **M.S.C. Lang/Hemes to award Contract 3-24W Removal and Disposal of Lime Sludge to Kartechner Brothers, LLC of Waupun, WI for \$20.95 per cubic yard for a total bid of \$396,164.50.** All voting aye.

Director's Report –

1. Water Loss Report – Water loss has trended up slightly.
2. The following items were approved at the July 17, 2024 Board of Public Works meeting:
 - Pay Request No. 4, Contract 1-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main, and Street Construction, on Belmont Avenue, Belmont Court, Cedar Street and Stevens Street, to David Tenor Corporation, in the amount of \$51,918.45 for Water on Belmont Ave. and \$205,607.60 for Water on Water on Stevens St.
 - Pay Request No. 3, Contract 2-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main, and Street Construction, on E. Doty Avenue, to Kruczek Construction, Inc., in the amount of \$52,267.10 for Water on E. Doty Ave.
 - Pay Request No. 4, Contract 3-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main, and Street Construction, on Bayview Road, Quarry Lane, and Reed Street, to Don Hietpas & Sons, in the amount of \$2,868.05 for Water on Bayview Rd., \$51,120.54 for Water on Quarry Ln., and \$17,530.25 for Water on Reed St.
 - Pay Request No.1, Contract 5-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main, and Street Construction, on North Street, to David Tenor Corporation, in the amount of \$112,275.27.

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3. The following items were approved at the August 15, 2024 Board of Public Works meeting:
- Pay Request No. 5, Contract 1-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main, and Street Construction, on Belmont Avenue, Belmont Court, Cedar Street, and Stevens Street, to David Tenor Corporation, in the amount of \$4,721.31 for Water on Stevens St.
 - Pay Request No. 4, Contract 2-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main and Street Construction, on E. Doty Avenue, to Kruczek Construction, in the amount of \$178,548.70 for Water on E. Doty Ave.
 - Pay Request No. 5, Contract 3-24, Sanitary and Storm Sewer, Water Main and Street Construction, on Bayview Road, Commercial Street, Quarry Lane, and Reed Street, to Don Hietpas & Sons, in the amount of \$13,586.52 for Water on Quarry Ln. and \$65,413.20 for Water for the Commercial St. crossings.
 - Pay Request No. 7, Contract 2-23W West Side Booster Station Building Construction, to RJM Construction, LLC., in the amount of \$25,484.95.
4. Booster Station update – Contract A is substantially complete. Sabel is ready to start on Contract B.
5. AMI update – Approximately 1,300 endpoints have been installed.
6. Solar installation update – The array continues to function well.
7. The next regular Waterworks Commission meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 16, 2024.

Following discussion, **M.S.C. Schmeichel/Bauman to accept and place on file the Director's Report.** All voting aye.

Any Other Business That May Legally Come Before the Commission – None.

Adjournment – **M.S.C. Hemes/Lang to adjourn at 5:31 p.m.** All voting aye.

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony L. Mach
Director, Neenah Water Utility

Salary Plan for current employees and new hires 2024

Utility Tech I

New hires start at 75% Base pay = \$27.27

6 months/or previous experience 77.5% = \$27.95 Meets or exceeds requirements. Has CDL and is able to be able to handle on call weekends.

1st yr/ or previous experience 80% = \$28.65 Meets or exceeds requirements. Has come in on many emergency calls over the course of the first year. Reliability is important. Starts to operate tractor with no issues.

2nd yr/ or previous experience 82.5% = \$29.37 Meets or exceeds requirements. Is continuing to respond to emergency work and is becoming familiar with all aspects of the water utility. Tractor operation is very fluid.

3rd yr/ or previous experience 85% = \$30.10 Meet or exceeds requirements. Very well rounded in all water utility work that we do. Operating tractor is no problem and has shown the ability to handle situations alone in the department and make decisions on their own. Is ready to take on all responsibilities in the distribution of the water utility.

4th yr/87.5% = \$30.85

5th yr/90% = \$31.62

6th yr/ 92.5% = \$32.41

7th yr/ 95%= \$33.22

8th yr/ 97.5%= \$34.05

9th yr/ 100%= \$34.90

Lead Inspector = \$36.65

Wages will go up with Cola every year and employees will not be capped on performance raise. We can't give 1.5% Cola raise and then say they are going to just receive a bonus. That limits the employee from ever increasing his or her pension which would cost an individual tens of thousands in lost wages on his or her retirement. Compounded interest would make all employees look elsewhere.

Most good applicants should fall between years 4 thru 9. Steps 1-3 are for entry level candidates who need to learn on the job.

Employer would have the option to start a new employee at any of these set pay ranges based on experience and ability when hiring.

There is 1 employee making \$30.57 who has 9 years of experience who would need to get bumped up to \$34.90 to make this current plan work. The reason for the bump is he is below the 100% base pay for a utility worker who has gone through the 6 years of apprentice type work. Currently based on the guys in the department and 1 who is leaving the plan really is almost in place already. The only problem is we

are not giving our new hires the ability to get up to a desired wage in our utility type of work. We need to give the tools to the management and the ability to go after more qualified individuals in our line of work or at least show them that after 5 years of experience the wages go up to lure some more qualified individuals into our line of work. We can't hire at \$27.50 and expect to get qualified people by giving them 2% raises. We will continue to fall behind and within the next 10 years will not be able to safely do the repairs on our utilities due to the inexperience of the new hires. We also need to look at giving double time back on Sundays. Call time back to 3 hours on emergency work. Also, all work after 300 is time and half. Other utilities in the area did not take that away when Act 10 was implemented. These are some small things that were taken away from the workers that truly doesn't cost the utility very much per year. Probably less than \$2,500. This would help offset just a little of all the things that have increased on our end with insurance and other out of pocket costs. Yes, we need be conservative, but we do make money in this utility and therefore it's only fair to give back on some of the things we had taken away in this department. The local water utilities in the fox valley did not take these things away. Overtime was a big part of my job when I started today's overtime is very minimal due to the relay work on our water systems in the last 10 years. For example, my first year 5 years working here I averaged almost \$6,000 in overtime throughout the year before our weekend stipend that went into effect after 2014. That may of have helped offset that by about \$2,000 but I also carry the phone and need to report within an hour. Too me that was extra work brought on by the utilities. So, paying us to be responsible for calls only made since. With everything that I have brought to the table tonight I feel a 10% increase across the top pay scale and employees that are 6 years or less would be placed in wage scale based off management placement with their experience to date. In conclusion the utilities over the last 14 years have saved hundreds of thousands of dollars do to being understaffed and paying less then full value to the newer and existing employees. The city is to blame for using the tools there were given since Act 10 to lower wages on new hires and make us older employees feel very undervalued. The scale that I've presented cost little money to the utility but puts us back on a path to where we can compete with our other serving utilities.

Utility Tech II/Foreman

New hires start at \$36.22/ or more based on experience.

This document was based on wages of the current utility personal. This salary plan would increase based on wages increases the city gives yearly.

Rate= \$40.14

Employee Foreman Age 46

2024	\$37.31	
2025	\$38.43	
2026	\$39.58	
2027	\$40.27	
2028	\$42.00	
2029	\$43.26	
2030	\$44.56	Cap starts
2031	\$45.90	\$45.23
2032	\$47.28	\$45.91
2033	\$48.70	\$46.61
2034	\$50.16	\$47.31
2035	\$51.66	\$48.02
2036	\$53.21	\$48.75
2037	\$54.81	\$49.50
2038	\$56.45	\$50.25
2039	\$58.15	\$51.01
2040	\$59.89	\$51.78

Loss of \$76,256 in 16 years also!!

\$10,000 Bonus for 10 years after cap.

\$8.11 wage difference not receiving 1.5%.

Avg. Salary at retirement \$106,100

With cap of 1.5% in place

\$5000 pension per month

Av. Salary at retirement \$120,963

With no cap in place 1.5% raise

Employee Distribution Age 46**Cap Starts No Cap**

\$36.55
\$37.10 \$37.66
\$37.66 \$38.79
\$38.22 \$39.95
\$38.79 \$41.15
\$39.37 \$42.38
\$39.36 \$43.65
\$40.56 \$44.96
\$41.17 \$46.30
\$41.78 \$47.69
\$42.40 \$49.12
\$43.03 \$50.59
\$43.68 \$52.11
\$44.34 \$53.67
\$45.02 \$55.28
\$45.72 \$56.94
\$46.49 \$58.65

Loss of \$167,530 total in 16 years also!!!

\$58.65 no cap by 2040

\$16,000 Bonus for 16 years after cap.

\$12.00 wage difference not receiving 1.5%

Average salary at retirement \$102.040

With cap of 1.5% in place.

\$4800 pension per month

Av. Salary at retirement \$126,935

With no cap in place 1.5% raise

\$5,647 pension per month

\$5,923 pension per month

In Conclusion Foreman would lose \$76,256 of income because of the cap which would also lower is pension per month by over \$647 a month for another loss of \$155,280+over 20 years of retirement. The operator would lose \$167,530 of income because of the cap being hit as of today and lower is pension by \$1,123 which would have him lose another \$269,520+ over 20 years of retirement. Total loss of \$231,536 for foreman and \$437,050 for operator.