

CITY OF HERMANTOWN

UTILITY COMMISSION

Thursday, March 20, 2025

5:30 PM Central

CITY STAFF: Paul Senst, Public Works Director; Trish Crego, Utility & Infrastructure Director.

VISITORS:

1. **ROLL CALL**

Bill Berg: Present

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Present

Doug Kerfeld: Present

Robert McLachlan: Present

Jim Samberg: Present

2. **MINUTES**

A. January 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes with correction. This motion, made by Doug Kerfeld and seconded by Robert McLachlan, Carried.

Bill Berg: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Doug Kerfeld: Yea

Robert McLachlan: Yea

Jim Samberg: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

3. **PUBLIC DISCUSSION** – *Trish shared that the City will not be providing a Zoom link for outside participants to join commission meetings unless requested. This decision came after the City Council meeting was “Zoom Bombed” on Monday March 17th with extremely inappropriate behavior. At this time, we will not be recording meetings via Zoom, but this may change in the future.*

4. **COMMUNICATIONS**

A. WLSSD Discharge Monitoring Report – *No comment*

B. Utility Billing Update – *No comment*

C.WLSSD - Year End Adjustment Letter - *Jim noted they owe us \$40,000 Jim asked why. David- 750gal/day they charge for that but we only use about 730 gal/day based on a percentage, so this is the refund which may change in the future*

D.Utility Commission Service – *Doug and Bill signed on again.*

5. **PRESENTATIONS**

Paul Senst - Water Testing-*Water Testing for Dept of Health. Testing changing as of April 1, We will now be doing the testing not Duluth. We will be hiring PACE 8 testing sites per month. We collect samples send it to them and they will provide them to the state. It will be around + \$12,000/yr.*

Eric Johnson - Community Development-*Comprehensive plan presentation pg 50, Land Use focused on the Adolph expansion of the urban service area because of the power company, railroad, major truck Route. MN Power owns 320 acres on 14 parcels in this area. Pg 80-81 Utilities expansion map, comments before April 15 (7:00pm) . Jim add UC to acknowledgments.*

David Bolf -City Engineer

Lift station on Lavaque/Thompson runs at about 20% but can do more and NCE is looking at options extending that 4 m miles of sewer. Showed the several water options for – third option with booster pump, a reservoir, and some pressure at Midway and 53 -12 miles of water. Doug asked would this be phased- David said yes. Build water boosters and regulators first, then tower, then sanitary. Jim asked why not Morris Thomas – David because we don't have the drop and it would not benefit the rest of the city. We also thought it would be good practice to have 2 days of water stored Andy asked about cost- David said probably \$100 million.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

7. **NEW BUSINESS**

Duluth Water Infrastructure Surcharge - Additional Option

Jim stated this is not going away. Rob stated that the small commercial businesses are going to take a hit and that may change interest with the city, for new businesses to come. Andy thinks that we will get much more negative feedback on this, with this option. Paul thinks explaining the variable will be very complicated for the clerk and other employees. Commission decided to keep the prior option of a flat \$7.50 per customer flat fee across the board.

8. **REPORTS**

A.Budget to Actual Expenditure Report – No Comment

B. Public Works Director Report - *Goal to have radios replaced by December 1 this year. Jim was wondering if there was someone trying to steal water out of the old fire station, no. Doug- meters in the basement is there a problem with that for replacing the radios? Paul, there is usually a wire to the exterior from the meter/ radio but new practice is to have the radio outside, for easier access. Found the break in the swamp off of Stebner. Used a sound investigator out of Lino Lakes to find the leak cost \$1300, but worth it. The same company does our water audit in June this year. Bill asked that at Midway and Hermantown Rd. take out the sandbags and pick them up. Paul and Trish will share this with NCE*

C. Utility & Infrastructure Director Report – *Application received from Jim Sweeny for the vacant Utility Commission seat.*

D. Water Loss Report - *No Comment*

E. WLSSD Monthly Flow - Rain Fall & Flow Report - *No Comment*

F. Comfort Systems Invoice - *No Comment*

G. New Connections Report - *No Comment*

9. **COMMISSION MEMBERS REPORT**

A. Jim Samberg - *None*

B. William Berg - *None*

C. Robert McLachlan - *None*

D. Doug Kerfeld - *None*

E. Councilor Andy Hjelle – *None*

10. **RECESS**

Motion to adjourn at 7:06pm. This motion, made by Robert McLachlan and seconded by Bill Berg, Carried.

Bill Berg: Yea

Councilor Andy Hjelle: Yea

Doug Kerfeld: Yea

Robert McLachlan: Yea

Jim Samberg: Yea

Yea: 5, Nay: 0

Minutes Prepared By:

Utility Billing Clerk