

**MINUTES OF THE ALGOMA UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**1407 Flora Avenue**  
**December 16, 2020**

President Vlies called the meeting of the Algoma Utility Commission to order at 5:30 p.m. in compliance with the open meeting law.

Members present: Robert Vlies, Guy Haasch, Mary Kay Bennett, Wayne Schmidt and Lee Dachelet. Others present: Pete Haack and Nancy Johnson.

Members excused or absent: none.

Schmidt motioned, seconded by Haasch to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

Dachelet motioned, seconded by Haasch to approve the previous meeting minutes. Motion carried.

**Comments of Anyone Present:**

None.

**Old Business:**

a) No Planning Commission meeting in the last month.

**New Business:**

a) The utility received notification that there would not be an American Transmission Company (ATC) capital investment request for the first quarter of 2021. ATC has determined it requires up to \$25,000,000 in additional equity capital funding in the year 2021, to be requested in several future installments. The 2020 equity capital funding required up to \$35,000,000.

Haasch motioned, seconded by Bennett to approve payment of bills and payroll as presented. Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

Bennett motioned, seconded by Dachelet to approve the monthly financial reports as presented. Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

No discussion about the Concept Expectations/Goals. This topic will remain on the agenda for further review.

**Manager's Report:**

Manager's report was reviewed.

- Haack explained that the crew has been labeling secondary and primary sets of underground wires. This is a good proactive practice in order restore power outages in a more timely and safe fashion.

**Office Manager's Report:**

Office Manager's report was reviewed.

- Johnson encouraged customers to visit the utility website at [www.algomautilities.com](http://www.algomautilities.com) and sign up for the new MyAccount online portal.

At 5:56 p.m. Schmidt motioned, seconded by Haasch to go into closed session as provided by State Statute 19.85 (1) (c). Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

At 7:00 p.m. Schmidt motioned, seconded by Dachelet to resume to open session as provided by State Statute 19.85 (2). Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

Schmidt motioned, seconded by Dachelet to approve the 2021 compensation schedule. All employees will receive a 1.6% increase. Roll call vote: Schmidt, Bennett, Dachelet and Vlies voted yes. Haasch voted no. Motion carried.

Schmidt motioned, seconded by Haasch to adjourn. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

**The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.**

---

President

Director

Secretary

# ALGOMA UTILITIES

**To:** Algoma Utility Commission  
**From:** Pete Haack  
**Re:** Manager Report Dec. 10 2020

1. Christmas decorations were tested, 400+ bulbs were replaced in the garland and large decorations placed on our power poles and the 30' streetlight poles throughout town. The number of bulbs increases annually, and the about 30-year-old decorations are just that, about 30 years old. Once tested and repaired, the crew installs the decorations that need to be installed with a bucket truck. All city decorations are plugged in and turned on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. This year, the same as every year, there were a few outlets on Steele St. and 4<sup>th</sup> St. that needed replacing because they did not work. All work was completed, and the lights lit up just as scheduled.
2. Green Bay water Utility certified our large water meter test bench. With that accomplished, Christopher has been busy testing the 1 ½" up to 3" water meters that are due for testing within the year. Not all meters need to be tested at the same time interval. The DNR ok's the testing schedule and that is how meters are prioritized for testing.
3. The secondary wires were pulled into the newest Bell Harbour service entrance. The wires were terminated on each end, and one electric meter was installed for the newest construction project. There is also a valve at the end of the water lateral, so we are allowed to charge a construction water monthly fee.
4. One of the two homes, which have failing septic systems, has installed sewer and water to the house disconnecting their well and failing conventional septic system. We have a new meter installed at that location. Months ago, the other two homes have been sent a notice for a Compulsory Connection (city ordinance) to the water main within three years of the installation of water main running past their home and receiving a written notice from our Utility.
5. One new overhead secondary meter base and entrance has been installed to replace a very aged system at a Jefferson St. address.
6. GIS mapping for the water system continues. The crew is finding and repairing many curb stop boxes that were inaccessible. Anything from grown into the trunks of trees to being buried under concrete or bent over two feet underground.
7. The crew covered 70 feet of primary line with rubber hose to allow the construction crew to perform their work at the new addition to the Wiese Memorial shop.
8. The crew has been labeling secondary and primary sets of underground wires. A transformer can have anywhere from one to eight secondary underground services coming from them. Past line crews rarely labeled the circuits. This is a major problem when you have a power quality issue at a single home and there are several other sets of unlabeled wires coming from the transformer. This is a time saving and safety effort to allow quick identification of a problematic circuit without having to first diagnose which wires are involved in the problem.

9. The labeling project saved a future outage at the marina as one of the three cutouts was identified to have cracked porcelain while labeling the wires. All three porcelain cutouts were replaced with polymer cutouts.
10. AT&T transferred an underground riser conductor from an old pole to the newly installed pole on the North end of Church St., the crew was able to remove the old pole and fill the hole. Charter Spectrum remains on a few of our old poles that we are waiting for removal of their equipment so we can pull the poles.
11. The poles on 11<sup>th</sup> Rd. were all leaning heavily to the North in a very swampy ditch line. One by one the crew was able to vacuum excavate around the poles and straighten each while backfilling the void with 1" stone.
12. Parts were ordered, and Christopher installed them to repair a Reduced Pressure Zone (RPZ) valve at Well #1. The new pump appears to be running well.
13. Vince, from Advanced Safety Technology Inc. was in house for our annual refresher course in Bloodborne Pathogens, Dept. of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Injury and Illness Reporting, Permit-Required Confined Space Entry, Lock-out Tag-out procedures, Particulate Respirators, Electrical Safety and Traffic Control.
14. Parts counting has started for the Electric and Water year-end inventory. December is a good time for indoor counting, before the tree trimming startup in January.
15. We received three loads of softener salt, one 20 Ton load at each well within a week. It is not very often that the wells all run low at the same time, this is somewhat of a coincidence.
16. Algoma Motors informed us that the Dump Truck chassis has been delivered. Olson Truck and Trailer is contracted to transform it into a Dump Truck with a plow. There has been no date of completion mentioned.
17. New piston and cylinder were purchased for our Stihl Weed Eater. They will be installed by our crew in the near future.
18. With bills going out and late reminders being sent to customers and their landlords, the phones have started blowing up around here. These are not friendly phone calls and all three office ladies are putting up with name calling and verbal abuse, which angers me. When tax roll bills come out in the taxes, these confrontations get worse. I'm proud of the way all three handle these calls with patience and professionalism, but nobody deserves to be talked to that way. This wears on anybody after a while. Thank you, Mary, Bonnie and Nancy.
19. The crew was called out after hours for another power outage due to burned up underground secondary wires at Scenic Shores Motel. The outage was only for the original building. A temporary secondary was hung over the parking lot in order to restore power. The crew located the fault the next working day. This is the second such fault and about 3' from the first, which occurred months after the opening of the new building. This is a billable repair as the wire was damaged within the construction zone, one wire fault on each side of a new sidewalk and amongst the diggings of a buried stormwater removal system. The customer asked that the hole be left open so that he could show the issue to the contractor responsible for the digging.

# ALGOMA UTILITIES OFFICE REPORT

**To:** ALGOMA UTILITY COMMISSION & GENERAL MANAGER

**From:** OFFICE MANAGER

**Date:** 12/08/2020

**Re:** OFFICE REPORT FOR 11/10/2020 – 12/07/2020 ACTIVITIES

---

## **Billing Clerk:**

- Made updates to website.
  - Worked with WPPI on report for bill code and category counts.
  - Participated in discussions in resuming late fees and how to apply in Northstar.
  - Annual Electronic Radio Transmitter (ERT) to Visual process completed.
  - Processed paperwork for electric and water meter testing.
  - Updated and tested new water rates.
  - Completed 2020 Lien Processing.
  - Provided customer service and assisted in covering customer service duties, entering payments, deposits, etc.
- 

## **Utility Clerk:**

- November collections from State Debt Collection (SDC) was \$200.00.
- Updated vacant homes listing in preparation for the winter season. This will assist in identification of properties that may be suspect for winter freeze ups.
- Began testing in Northstar to assist in the determination of late payment fee reversal process, through the use of a RAW report WPPI created for another member. Continued testing will be completed as time permits.
- Researched cycle count in inventory to allow for counting of different inventory items at separate times. In theory the process will work, but a glitch was discovered that did not allow me to set up cycle count at this time.
- Prepared inventory count sheets for remaining electric and water department inventory items.
- Updated sales spreadsheet to better record customer solar generation.
- Updated payroll profiles with updated insurance rates. I was required to contact City Hall to update the 2021 flex contributions as TASC would not allow Algoma Utilities to make changes as we are in view only, not admin.

- Attended annual Bloodborne Pathogens training.
  - Attended WPP Year End Dynamics webinar training.
  - Due to vacancy in Customer Service Clerk position continued to complete the following items: Prepared the monthly past due notices and commercial disconnect notices using Northstar mail merge. The documents were uploaded on InfoSend for printing and mailing. Also prepared deposits, applied Energy Assistance payments, processed truck hours, miscellaneous A/R invoices/statements/applied finance charges, prepared and distributed monthly calendar, provided on-call hours to Sheriff's Department, and other various tasks.
- 

**Office Manager/Accountant:**

- Set up equipment, cash spreadsheets, timesheets and annual work orders for next year.
  - Reviewed employee goals and accomplishments.
  - Updated employee files with the annual health insurance selections, TASC deductions, voluntary vision, dental and AFLAC insurance program information.
  - Providing monthly data for U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reporting.
  - Completed and verified monthly project controller activity to work orders.
  - Managing private well renewal permits, updated spreadsheet and receipted completed forms and permit fees.
  - Reviewed insurance proposal for 2021 property, auto and liability policies.
  - Prepared multiple wage studies, cost scenarios and cost of service increases per Commissioners' requests.
  - Staff working with customers utilizing the new MyAccount system (replaced eCare online customer portal).
  - Attended annual blood borne pathogens training.
  - Participating in the WPPI Energy Microsoft Dynamics SL Replacement Working Group via teleconference.
  - Attended the WPPI Energy Microsoft Dynamics SL year end webinar training.
  - Participated in MEUW's virtual Customer Service Round Table and MEUW's COVID conference call.
  - Attended online finance and personnel meeting.
  - Assisted other WPPI, MEUW and WRWA utilities with questions and PSC issues.
  - Assisted with customer service and front desk coverage as needed.
- 
- 
-

• **COVID-19 issues:**

- Reviewed PSC codes and state statutes for updates and suspensions issued per the Governor's executive emergency order and the PSC's Investigation Order. Filed late fee reinstatement letter with PSC.
- Responded to P.S.C. , MEUW and WPPI data inquiries and completed surveys. Compiling COVID-19 costs and lost revenue statistics.
- Staff prepared for the continued postponement of the April 15<sup>th</sup> winter moratorium ending. Now it will not end until 2021! PSC held disconnection suspension on July 25<sup>th</sup> and has now postponed it yet again until April 15<sup>th</sup>. Reviewing business practice changes to be in compliance with the current PSC orders. Staff discussion and implementation regarding non PSC regulated collection tools.
- Participating in COVID related webinars and conference calls.

---

**Customer Service Clerk:** vacant position