

**MINUTES OF THE ALGOMA UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**1407 Flora Avenue**  
**January 20, 2021**

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 Dachelet to adopt the agenda. Motion carried.

Haasch motioned, seconded by Bennett 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) Cedar Corporation provided a Confirmation of Client Request for Services for the Authorization to Perform Professional Engineering Services for the 2021 Sixth Street Water Main Relay, Project No. 05278-0009. Haasch motioned, seconded by Bennett to approve the Confirmation of Client Request for Services between Cedar Corporation and Algoma Utilities, to perform Engineering Services for the Sixth Street Water Main Relay, Project No. 05278-0009, for an estimate not to exceed \$30,900. Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

Dachelet motioned, seconded by Schmidt to approve payment of bills and payroll 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.

- Comments were made on the water main break and the effects of water hammer.

**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.

**Agenda Items for Next Meeting:**

- Vlies requested that future meetings be held at City Hall to accommodate spacing due to COVID concerns.

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

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

**The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m.**

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President

Director

Secretary

# ALGOMA UTILITIES

**To:** Algoma Utility Commission

**From:** Pete Haack

**Re:** Manager Report Jan.14 2021

1. Upon returning from the holidays, the city's taller pole Christmas decorations were deenergized and taken down. They needed to be brought in the shop to dry out over night and then were brought to the storage building at Well #3 for summer storage along with all city street light decorations.
2. Covid 19 continues to hang around. A few of our employees have been through the quarantine protocol over the past month.
3. December's several days or even weeks of high wind didn't cause any problems for the electric dept., but there was an electrical weekend callout due to another broken porcelain cutout.
4. There was a Saturday callout for a watermain break at the corner of Jefferson and Sunset. The main was throttled down and the area barricaded for the weekend. There was an extra 800,000 gallons pumped each day. The 3 wells maintained the tower levels just fine. Monday morning Stoller dug and the crew repaired the hole in the pipe. A hole in a pipe is due to water hammer, which is the result of closing a running fire hydrant too fast, causing the abruptly stopped flow of water to reverberate hydraulic pressure back down the water main. The area of this break is a dead-end section of 6" cast iron main installed in 1965. Being a dead end, does not allow anywhere for the pressure to dissipate and the result is a fist size hole blown out the side of the pipe. This hole was about 6" from the repair sleeve of the last blow out in that pipe, two years ago. The section of pipe was cut out and a new piece of pipe was coupled to the existing. Both breaks were called in by the Fire Dept., which was using a hydrant in the area for both breaks. The same hydrant was used three days prior to the break, for a fire call, the Utility flushes all hydrants spring and fall every year. I do appreciate the Fire Dept. calling in the breaks, but this is the third such call in 5 years and I do not remember any such callouts in my first 15 years. I will be contacting Chief Ackerman with my concerns on education of hydrants.
5. The Public Works Dept. has been eliminating city owned problematic trees during the favorable weather. Utility has supplied a man and a truck for about 3 days of topping some of the more difficult trees to fell.
6. Standing water and ice was present in the curb apron on Third St. in front of the fire station and the driveway to the neighboring parking lot. The source of the water was an unused leaking water lateral running into the parking lot. Ten feet away was another unused lateral serving the same parking lot. One lateral was copper and one lead. The decision was made for the crew to dig both laterals at the main, shut off the corporation stops (valves), and sever the lateral lines to visually assure no leaks.
7. The entire staff should be commended on another fine year of keeping track of inventory. This year, the count had results of plus \$452.19 on \$150,010.49 of electric inventory or +.3014% and minus \$20.19 on \$46,208 of water inventory or -.0437%. These are amazing numbers considering the feet of wire or pipe and number of parts installed by our workers, some by contractors and parts and wire salvaged by the same people. This all requires communication, a paper trail, and data entry to keep track of from the workers right through the office. An accurate annual count is also very important when tracking inventory. Great job everybody!
8. Due to different factors for people missing work for extended periods over the last year, December's attendance was limited as most of us needed to cram remaining vacation before the end of the year. This is a testament of a true team atmosphere, where people would not use vacation throughout the year knowing the burden it would leave for the remaining employees, this was visible in both respective work groups. I am proud to be a part of that working atmosphere. Again, a big "Thank You" to all Utility employees for picking up the slack. The extra efforts to help out without complaints and

continue a seamless operation are greatly appreciated and well worth recognizing.

9. Annual preparation for tree trimming includes cleaning, washing and waxing trucks and inspecting and maintaining all tools and machinery used in the process. Waxing makes the removal of tree pitch that much easier at the end of the cutting season and is also a good practice for the maintenance of our vehicles. This year as is every year this work is done within and around the holidays depending on work load.
10. The crew has begun our annual line clearance tree trimming route on the North end of town, working South.

# ALGOMA UTILITIES OFFICE REPORT

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

**From:** OFFICE MANAGER

**Date:** 1/12/2021

**Re:** OFFICE REPORT FOR 12/08/2020 – 1/11/2021 ACTIVITIES

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**Billing Clerk:**

- Made updates to website.
  - Processed paperwork for water meter testing: Doing meter changeouts to show in Northstar, updating Access database with test year.
  - Set the 2021 billing calendar.
  - End of year deposit interest was processed.
  - Worked on second home reports for when letters will be mailed.
  - Provided customer service and assisted in covering customer service duties, entering payments, deposits, mailing service applications, etc.
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**Utility Clerk:**

- December collections from State Debt Collection (SDC) was \$200.00.
- Completed electric and water physical inventory count reconciliations. Both the electric and water variances were very low at .3014% and - .0437% respectively.
- Updated Dynamics inventory and work order forms to reflect most recent inventory items available for issue or salvage.
- Reconciled fourth quarter payroll.
- Calculated and reconciled W-2's.
- Updated payroll profiles to have correct pay and deductions as well as vacation hours for 2021.
- Conducted preliminary review of accounts payable documents in preparation of the 1099-Misc forms.

- Closed year 2020 1099 calendar year control and opened the year for 2021 accounts payable.
  - Reviewed end of year billing reports for inconsistencies.
  - Prepared tree trimming agreement for lineman.
  - 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.
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**Office Manager/Accountant:**

- Completed the year-end payroll review of reconciliation of W-2s, W-3, Wt-7, 941, SUTA , WI Retirement and WI Deferred Compensation (generated by Utility Clerk). Providing monthly data for U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reporting.
- Completed updating annual burden sheets, calculating rates for project controller and allocator. Updated employee files with annual information. Updated mileage rate form.
- Trued up tax equivalent to City: 2020 payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) are as follows: Electric = \$162,426 and Water = \$182,497 = Total of \$344,923 - recorded as accrual basis for utility purposes.
- 2020 Gratis projects for City = \$6,737.
- Updated Wachs system and finished hydrant and valve inventory - **no variances.**
- Reconciled laterals not in use and lead lateral counts to Foreman's list. Prepared water lateral and water main information for annual PSC report - **no variances.**
- Reconciled street light balances - **no variances.**
- Completed transformer inventory review (physical count to Access database) - **no variances.** Calculated installation costs for capitalization.
- Reconciled sales tax exemption forms to tax exempt customer billing list.
- Reconciled projects to budget. Reviewed work orders to estimates, reconciled actual costs to advances.
- Reconciled year-end vacation and earned benefit reserves.
- Created PSC year-end report files.
- Calculated annual pole attachment rental fees.
- Received 2021 sewer rate ordinance from City, updated files and rate sheet.

- Updated permanent meter removal letter, deduct meter cost letter and counter sales documents with 2021 rates.
- Calculated frozen meter replacement costs.
- Reconciled all bank account balances and year end interest balances. Renewed investments and updated collateral agreements.
- Reconciled annual purchased power to sales/use and water pumped to sales/use:  
 kWh purchased vs. sold; energy losses annual average = 4.4785%                      Gallons  
 pumped vs. sold; unaccounted losses annual average = 7.076%
- Managing private well renewal permits, updated spreadsheet and receipted completed forms and permit fees.
- Responded to PSC regarding customer complaint, that the PSC ruled as an unjustified complaint.
- Staff working with customers utilizing the new MyAccount system (replaced eCare online customer portal).
- Participating in the WPPI Energy Microsoft Dynamics SL Replacement Working Group via teleconference.
- 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.

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**Customer Service Clerk:** vacant position

