

**MINUTES OF THE ALGOMA UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING**  
**1407 Flora Avenue**  
**October 21, 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, Scott Wiese 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) Planning Commission update: no meeting.

**New Business:**

a) Johnson reviewed the Public Service Commission (PSC) approved, customer qualifications and proper electric rate application procedures for non-residential customers.

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

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

No discussion about the Concept Expectations/Goals for the 2021 budget. This topic will remain on the agenda for further review.

The capital, operating and maintenance budgets were reviewed and discussed. Haasch motioned, seconded by Bennett to approve the capital budget as presented. Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

Haasch motioned, seconded by Dachelet to approve the operating budget as presented. Roll call vote: all yes. Motion carried.

**Manager's Report:**

Manager's report was reviewed.

- Haack discussed the new solar system installed at the Algoma High School.

**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.

No closed session.

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

**The next regular Commission meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 18<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 Oct. 15, 2020

1. Winter is quickly approaching, and the focus right now is preparing our water infrastructure for the coming winter season. We have many seasonal water meters out on the system, a few temporary deduct meters, a couple exterior mounted garden meters and all need to be rounded up and brought back to the shop before any consistent freezing weather should arrive.
2. The majority of work done by the crew this time of the year includes water infrastructure work. The crew has been busy exercising water main valves which was completed today around noon. Flushing hydrants, the first of three visits to each hydrant for winterizing, has been started. The next visit will entail pumping each hydrant barrel (standpipe) dry. The final visit measures the depth of water, if any, in each hydrant barrel. Once measured, the water is pumped out again and a calibrated amount of RV antifreeze is poured down the hydrant to coincide with the depth of ground water that enters through the drain hole. This antifreeze keeps the sitting water in the barrels from freezing solid.
3. There are two active construction sites in town right now. A home is being placed on Carrie Lynn Ave. and a four-unit condo being built at Belle Harbour on Lake St. These two sites will add 5 electric and 5 water meters to our total count of permanent meters. Any additional permanent metering is always good news for our utility. Because we are a somewhat seasonal community, and a few of these will be seasonal homes, one can see the importance of keeping our monthly meter fees current. The more seasonal metering we have, does not reduce the amount of upkeep and maintenance on infrastructure or the price of metering and billing, but it drastically reduces the usage rate in the offseason. The popularity of private distributed energy will contribute to those same principles. Monthly meter (service) fees are here to stay.
4. Our lead and copper samples for this year returned with favorable results. This is not a result of good or bad luck, our water operators monitor the phosphate dosage running with our well pumps in order to maintain a proper coating on the pipes. Not enough, results in the heavy metals leaching into the water from the uncoated piping and too much results in an excess of Disinfection Byproducts present in the water supply. Unfavorable results in either of these tests would be very costly to a small utility like ours. Costs include a lot of extra water sampling (outsourced) on a much more frequent schedule and aggressive scheduling to remedy the source of the issue. Another reason we can all appreciate the detail orientation of our water department.
5. Faith Technologies was here to perform our annual IR (Infra-Red) survey of our entire electric system. Chris drives our entire overhead system as the Faith employee is videoing the aerial lines for hot spots with a sophisticated IR camera. Within the route, all industrial sized pad mount transformers and switchgear are opened up to check for any internal hot spots within the connections. Hot spots are caused by poor or loose connections creating a higher amperage and extra heat. Equipment degradation is also identified with this process. I haven't received the report yet, but I believe one hot spot was identified within our system. For the amount of linework completed in town, that is a fantastic number. Attention to detail matters.
6. Chris has been collecting data for the GIS mapping system. He has a good start in the individual curb stops. At times we have another crew member finding and digging up the curb stops to streamline the mapping portion. This project is providing more work as some of the curb stops are found within tree roots or tree trunks, buried up to 30" below grade, under concrete or bent over making the valve inaccessible. Each issue needs to be remedied before moving on to the next. The last recorded sighting of each curb-stop in town was completed by "Frenchie" DeJardine, a Utility Employee back in 1975. A lot can change in 45 years, this is a great opportunity to expose all curb stops in order to identify and utilize all valves more efficiently in the case of an emergency shutoff due to an unstoppable leak in a home.

7. Utility Sales and Service sent a mechanic to perform annual chassis, aerial, and dielectric testing on each of our three line trucks and the Backyard Digger Derrick. The 1999 Digger Derrick truck has some repairs to complete in the near future.
8. Mike from the Rec. Dept. was using the 2002 dump truck to haul bark, and a spring shackle busted, the other side was in about the same shape. Algoma Motors replaced both shackles. The front tires were replaced on the 2006 GMC pickup.
9. Well #1 has been inactive a few weeks for a 10-year inspection and rehabilitation. Municipal Well and Pump pulls the submersible pump and motor along with 285 feet of column pipe, #4 submersible quadplex wire and two airlines. All apparatus is brought back to their shop for inspection. Being the second pull for this particular pump (20 years) and noting the condition of the column pipe (very pitted), this project will be a complete replacement. Parts were ordered and will be scheduled for installation upon availability.
10. The High School energized their new solar unit about a week ago. WPPI is lending us a \$1200.00 two-way AMR (Automatic Meter Reading) meter which is necessary for the possibility of the new solar unit generating more electricity than the school may be using at any given time. Excess generation will be pushed back to our grid and recorded through that two-way electric meter. Our new AMI (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) large power metering equipment should arrive in about 12 weeks. The initial order is for our 14 large power customers which are currently read around the clock, at WPPI Energy, through a dedicated phone line for each meter. Following that order, Charter Communications has requested their eleven booster meters, out on our poles, be switched to TOD (Time of Day) read electric meters as well. These eleven specialty meters were added to our AMI meter order as well.
11. I have met with Matt Stephan of Cedar Corp. for an initial walk through of the Sixth St. water main project for 2021. This project will be replacing 4" water main with 8" water main along with water laterals and hydrants from Fremont St. to Jefferson St. on 6<sup>th</sup> St.
12. The Electric Meter Test Bench was calibrated and certified along with our Standard Multimeter which we are required to certify annually. This work was performed by a WPPI meter tech and his equipment. This certification had previously been done by Chapman Metering who has since been purchased by Border States Electric. Pricing increased by 50% with that change of ownership.

# ALGOMA UTILITIES OFFICE REPORT

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

**From:** OFFICE MANAGER

**Date:** 10/12/2020

**Re:** OFFICE REPORT FOR 9/9/2020 – 10/11/2020 ACTIVITIES

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## **Billing Clerk:**

- Made various updates to website.
  - Participated in discussions regarding Solar Net Metering and AMI meters installed at large power customers. Worked with WPPI and member utility on setup of Solar Net Metering for large power customer.
  - Worked with office staff and WPPI staff on implementation of MyAccount and becoming familiar with the web portal and its capabilities.
  - Switched a Large Power CP-1 Customer to General Service rates due to demand decrease.
  - Began 2020 Lien Processing.
  - Provided customer service and assisted in covering customer service duties, entering payments, deposits, etc.
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## **Utility Clerk:**

- September collections from State Debt Collection (SDC) was \$200.00.
- Prepared billing information associated to each unit of apartment building for property owner.
- Reconciled third quarter payroll.
- Prepared and mailed lead and copper lead water testing results to affected customers.
- Prepared and mailed regulated object letters to ensure testing of objects to maintain Permit to Operate certification.
- Researched notification for a 1099Misc from 2019. No action was required.
- Prepared and verified energy assistance information for submission to Energy Services, to assist in their benefit determination. This was the first year using the Energy Assistance module in Northstar, therefore much time was required to obtain the necessary information in a useful format.
- Participated in WPPI on-line training for Solar Net Metering set up in Northstar.
- Conducted review of some processes for training purposes with the Office Manager.

- Prepared the monthly past due notices and commercial disconnect notices using Northstar mail merge. These documents were then uploaded to InfoSend for printing and mailing.
  - Prepared and distributed the monthly calendar to colleagues. Due to position vacancy, also prepared deposits, processed truck hours, miscellaneous A/R invoices, and other various tasks.
  - Provided customer service and front desk coverage as needed.
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**Office Manager/Accountant:**

- Exported and imported valve turning activity to Wachs valve turner handheld and saved to server.
- Filed unclaimed property report.
- Reviewed American Transmission Company (ATC) investment request, distributed memo. Updated ATC resolution for City Hall to include for Council approval of voluntary contribution offerings.
- Reviewed the 2021 Its Your Choice Health Insurance program information and shared with employees.
- Updated permanent meter removal spreadsheet to reflect 10/30/2020 water rates.
- Completed electric and water operating and maintenance and capital budgets.
- Received Public Service Commission (PSC) authorization to amortize water tower repainting costs.
- Providing monthly data for U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reporting.
- Managing private well renewal permits, updated spreadsheet and receipted completed forms and permit fees.
- Staff working with customers utilizing the new MyAccount system (replaced eCare online customer portal).
- Office worked with WPPI for the first Solar Net Metering installation for large power customer.
- Participating in the WPPI Energy Microsoft Dynamics SL Replacement Working Group via teleconference.
- Attended virtual Municipal Electric Utility of Wisconsin (MEUW) Accounting and Customer Service Seminar. Currently serving on the MEUW Accounting and Customer Service Committee.
- 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.

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• **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.
- Responded to P.S.C. , MEUW and WPPI data inquiries and completed surveys. Compiling COVID-19 costs and lost revenue statistics. Filed winter water disconnection plan.
- Staff prepares for the continued postponement of the April 15<sup>th</sup> winter moratorium ending. PSC held disconnection suspension on July 25<sup>th</sup> and has now postponed it again until November 1<sup>st</sup>. Reviewing business practice changes to be in compliance with the current PSC orders.
- Participating in webinars and conference calls, several times per week.

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**Customer Service Clerk:** vacant position