

**VILLAGE OF COTTAGE GROVE UTILITY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 18, 2020**

- 1. Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Charlie Rogers at 5:01 p.m. This meeting was held online via Zoom.
- 2. Determine that a quorum is present, and that the agenda was properly posted.** Roll call was taken, and it was determined that a quorum was present, and that the agenda had been properly posted. Commission members present were: Charlie Rogers (chair), Mike Hackel, Heidi Murphy, Jon Russell and Joanna Williams. Staff present were: Administrator Matt Giese, Public Works Director JJ Larson, Village Engineer Kevin Lord, and Utility Clerk Kristen Krause. Also present were Jeff Brochtrup, Todd Gebert and Bill Walker of the Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) and 3 members of the public.
- 3. Public Appearances – Public’s opportunity to speak to Commission Members about any item that is not a specific agenda item.** Mike Payne, of 245 Knollview Drive, Janesville, WI, was present and spoke on behalf of his parents, Susan and Richard Payne, of 4235 Vilas Road, Cottage Grove, WI, who were also present. Mr. Payne voiced his concern over an agenda item that was acted on at the October 1, 2020 Utility Commission meeting as well as the recent utility extension along Vilas Road. His concerns stemmed from a lack of communication about the utility extension project and that his parents’ home was not taken into consideration for future connection to the utility services. He had reached out to JJ Larson in October after his parents’ mailbox was removed and placed in their yard. Mr. Payne felt that his parents should have been given the same opportunity as the other two homes that had wyes and risers placed for future connection. Mr. Payne was also told that there would be the possibility to connect directly to the sewer manhole located in front of the driveway, although he felt that this presented issues in finding a contractor that would be willing/able to do this.
- 4. Presentation on Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District rate setting.**

Jeff Brochtrup of MMSD was present to explain how the rates are set for municipalities. He gave an overview of the district’s billing parameters and rate setting methodology, went over the trends for the district, the budget and parameter loading and more specifically, the Village’s loading and how it plays into the estimated costs for MMSD in 2021. When MMSD sets rates, they take the budgeted service charges in \$ and divide by the estimated loads (billable units in lbs.). What gets billed to their customers is figured by multiplying the rate by the actual load from the customer. Seven parameters are used in the billing process: volume, CBOD, suspended solids, nitrogen, phosphorus, equivalent meters and actual customers. Brochtrup explained that the most impactful issue for Cottage Grove this year was the actual load. He compared loads coming from the district as a whole and compared them to the loads coming specifically from Cottage Grove. Cottage Grove showed a large increase in volume of loads for CBOD, solids, nitrogen and phosphorus in 2020. The Village’s share of districts loads went up overall. The other issues that affected the rates this year were the required service charge increase of 5.2% for the district as a whole and a significant decrease in flows and loadings from the district as a whole in 2020 after Covid-19 hit. Cottage Grove had an estimated increase of 19.8% for 2020 and an estimated increase of 24.4.% for 2021. Most of the 24.4% is going to be a catch up.

Todd Gebert, who is responsible for the quarterly billing, also added that the estimated service charge increase for 2021 was largely due to the increase of pollutants in Cottage Grove’s loads. He explained that MMSD does its sampling from the Vilas Road Lift Station, which provides for really good samples. In the

January samples, Gebert noted that the loadings were twice what they normally are over the last five years. After seeing these results, MMSD immediately went back and re-sampled for an additional four or five days and continued to see the same data. At the second quarter sampling, the pollutants still tested high, but not quite as high as the first quarter's and MMSD did an additional three days of sampling to confirm. Third quarter sampling showed that the pollutants came down a little more and no additional testing was done. In October, the fourth quarter data so far is showing loads back down to the five-year averages. Gebert agreed with Brochtrup that this increase in pollutants is not related to population growth, but rather a point source by either an industrial or commercial entity.

Village Administrator Matt Giese asked Brochtrup and Gebert if the increase in rates, due to the pollutant loads caused by an industrial or commercial entity, would be passed on to those types of customers only and not the entire customer base. Brochtrup and Gebert indicated that they were not able to locate the exact point source of the pollutant loads and therefore could not allocate them to a particular customer. Larson explained that industrial water customers are already allocated differently based on their meters. Giese asked if Larson can do some more investigation into this when meeting with Baker Tilly. Giese also asked Brochtrup and Gebert if they have any recommendations on how to find the source that is driving these pollutant loads up. Gebert suggested doing more sampling upstream but noted that it will be challenging since Cottage Grove doesn't have a baseline to compare to. He also stated that Larson reached out to him regarding assisting with this sampling, but due to Covid-19, Gebert's staff is currently struggling to keep up with their own workload and would not be able to help at this time. Larson said that he will put some funds into the budget next year for some sampling so that the Village can create a baseline.

5. Old Business

a. Update on Well #3 maintenance.

Municipal Well is behind schedule due to another project but will be out to work on Well #3 starting next Monday, November 23. While Well #3 is down for maintenance, Well #2 will be the only supply in the low zone.

b. Update on water and sewer extension along Vilas Road.

The water and sewer extension along Vilas Road is complete aside from a few punch list items. Lord is waiting for final numbers from the contractor.

c. Update on lead and copper testing.

Larson reported that the Village is now finished with the lead and copper testing for the year and we are in compliance. Best practice warranted offering a couple of residents additional testing. The next round of required lead and copper testing will occur in three years and Larson is hopeful that the approved sites from this year will still be on the list at that time.

d. Update on sustainability programs (rain barrel/compost bins/etc.).

Murphy reported that the budget was approved, giving the go ahead for sustainable programs to commence in 2021. Larson and Murphy will meet to discuss the logistics and then reach out to vendors to initiate the programs.

6. New Business

a. Presentation of CMAR response from DNR.

The Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR) was submitted to the DNR and returned with all positive remarks. Larson reported that the Village is in good shape regarding its wastewater collection and maintenance requirements.

b. Water and sewer budget update.

Larson explained that Baker Tilly is still working through some numbers and that the budget will be presented next month. At this time, Larson commented that while the water side of the budget is looking good, the sewer side will require a sewer rate study.

7. Engineer's Report.

Vilas Road Sewer and Water – Project is complete. MSA will develop a punch list for the Contractor to complete and work on final payment. A change order will be completed as rock was encountered between two soil borings on the project along with a change in construction techniques and existing force main that was found and removed.

Sanitary System Flows – MSA discussed options with Larson on providing further analysis on the inflow and infiltration and provided a cost estimate for the 2021 budget.

Glacial Drumlin Path/Clark Street – MSA has completed preliminary plans for the grant eligible project and will be having a meeting with the Bike/Ped Committee for a final review and recommendation. MSA and staff have had further conversations with the property owners to the west of Vilas Road and currently are awaiting an agreement to be prepared and executed between the Village and the property owner to complete the design of the additional Village improvements along Clark and Grove Streets.

MGSD Utility Extension – The public watermain has been completed for the project.

Development Reviews – MSA is reviewing developments looking to continue. Cottage Grove Commons Phase 2 still consists of relaying a section off sanitary sewer due to the roadway configuration. Westlawn 5th Addition and Quarry Ridge Estates Phase B have started to submit information looking to start a new phase. Each project would extend utilities and a single street for new residential lots. Still waiting to hear a start date for the utilities at the Atwell Suites hotel.

8. Director's Report

Budget Update

Proposed budgets have been submitted to Baker Tilly for analysis. As of this writing, a Simplified Rate Case is adequate for the Water Utility. The Sewer Utility may recommend a rate study.

Vilas Water/Sewer Extension

The paving and striping of the roadway were completed last week.

Well 3 Maintenance

Municipal Well & Pump was scheduled to begin work this week, but have been delayed and will start next Monday, November 23.

Wellhouse meter testing

Due to the pandemic, testing was put on hold. Larson has still been in touch with the Contractor and is hopeful that the work will get done yet this year.

AMI Cost Reporting

Still finalizing the numbers of the total project cost for the PSC.

Lead & Copper testing

The lead and copper testing is complete and the DNR certification has been sent in. Our system remains in compliance.

Additional Sewer Televising

Staff is working to clean and coordinate additional televising with the Contractor.

Additional Utility position

Larson is working on a position description for Commission consideration. Broadly, the position would work under the Director and primarily handle Digger's Hotline tickets and Right-of-Way permitting/coordination/follow-up. There is a host of other water/sewer responsibilities that would be additional duties.

9. **Approve vouchers for payment.** Motion by Rogers, seconded by Hackel, to approve payment of the vouchers in the amount of \$240,451.34. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of 5-0-0.
10. **Approve the minutes of the October 14, 2020 meeting.** Motion by Hackel, seconded by Williams, to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2020 meeting as presented. Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote of 5-0-0.
11. **Set next meeting date.** The next meeting of the Utility Commission will be held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
12. **Future agenda items.**
 - Budget
 - Vilas Road property extension
13. **Adjournment.** Motion by Rogers, seconded by Hackel, to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 p.m. Motion approved by unanimous voice vote, 5-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by Kristen Krause, Utility Clerk

Approved on: ____ / ____ / ____

These minutes represent the general subject matter discussed in this meeting but do not reflect a verbatim discussion of the subjects and conversations that took place.