

Water & Sewer Commission Meeting January 26, 2026

The Independence Water & Sewer Commission met on Monday January 26, 2026, at the City Hall, 23688 Adams Street. The meeting was called to order at 6:15pm by Randy “Fritz” Conrad. In attendance, Craig Konter, Richard Warner, Tom Jensen, Jason Ekern, Water Superintendent Joe Galewski, Mayor Tom Kloss, City Attorney Rick Schaumberg, and Deputy Clerk Abby Bautch.

Proof of Giving Public Notice: Yes, public notice was properly posted.

Approval of Agenda: Motioned by Jason Ekern and Seconded by Tom Jensen. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Approval of Minutes –December 29, 2025: Motion by Tom Jensen to amend the December 29th, 2025 minutes to reflect Tom Jensen excusing himself during the meeting. Seconded by Randy Conrad. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Public Comments: Mayor Tom Kloss requested that all council members sign the meeting logbook before each meeting to ensure accurate attendance records for the City Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Old Business:

- A. Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering:** Water Superintendent Joe reported that there are no new updates at this time.

- B. Water Pipe Survey:** 143 surveys remain.

- C. G.B.T Pump:** The new G.B.T pump was installed on January 26, 2026, and is currently operational. Minor adjustments are still needed.

- D. Water & Sewer Truck:** Water Superintendent Joe reported that Osseo Ford’s 0% for 60 months financing offer is no longer available. He contacted additional dealerships, and none are currently offering special rates. Jordan at Universal indicated that the previously provided quotes have expired and will need to be updated. Joe will obtain revised pricing from dealerships and report back.

- E. Plant Checks Week/Weekend:** Water superintendent Joe would prefer that everything remain as currently structured.

- F. Water Rates:** Deputy Clerk Abby reported that, with the assistance from Lenice Pronschinske, the City submitted an application to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for an increase in the water rate. The PSC has approved the application, and the water rate will increase by 3%. A public notice has been submitted to the newspaper and will

run this week. The new rate will take effect 45 days after publication, with an implementation date of April 1st, 2026.

Tom Kloss requested that Deputy Clerk Abby review the issue with water bills not being delivered due to postal sorting machines rejecting the perforated bill cards. City Clerk Dawn and Deputy Clerk Abby are evaluating alternative mailing options to resolve the problem.

- G. Water & Sewer Payment to City:** Deputy Clerk Abby provided the minutes from the Water & Sewer Budget Meeting documenting the approved payment plan to reimburse the City. Jason Ekern will present the plan at the next City Council Meeting.

New Business:

- A. Auditors Report:** Deputy Clerk Abby sent the 2026 Water & Sewer Budget proposal to Auditor Matt at Baker Tilly for review. Matt responded with several questions for the Water & Sewer Commission. Deputy Clerk Abby will provide the Commission's response in her reply.
- B. Machinery & Equipment Fund:** Deputy Clerk Abby presented the proposed 2026 Machinery & Equipment Fund for both Water and Sewer. The Water & Sewer Commission directed the Deputy Clerk to consult with the auditors to determine whether the Water & Sewer accounts can be maintained separately from the City's General Fund.
- C. Water Service for 35194 & 35214 Diagonal Street:** Water Superintendent Joe reported that both properties are currently sharing a single water shutoff. Under the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin- Water Utility Operating Rules states that each property is required to have its own shutoff. City Attorney Rick will prepare a letter for the property owners outlining the violation and their options for compliance.
- D. Discussion on Delinquent Water Bills:** Deputy Clerk Abby reported that City Hall receives calls from customers requesting to make partial payments on their delinquent Water & Sewer Utility bills to avoid disconnection. This results in ongoing past-due balances that are never fully resolved. City Attorney Rick will review the Water & Sewer Ordinances to determine what options are available to address this issue.
- E. Water & Sewer After Hours Incident Report:** Jason Ekern reported that following the LEP meeting, a request was made to begin documenting all after-hours incidents. Water commissioner Fritz Conrad and Mayor Tom Kloss agreed that maintaining detailed records would help prevent misunderstandings and ensure accountability. The commission also recommended tracking incidents that occur during regular working hours in the same manner.

- F. **Water & Sewer Timecards:** Mayor Tom Kloss discussed transitioning to an electronic timekeeping system that would allow employees to clock in and out using a phone and/or computer. The proposal remains under review.

Superintendents Report:

- A. **Disconnect Update:** Water Superintendent Joe Hung 78 disconnect notices.
- B. **WRWA Conference:** Water Superintendent Joe Galewski requested approval to attend the WRWA Conference in Green Bay from March 25-27, 2026. He noted that the conference will provide required credits and opportunities to meet new vendors. A motion was made by Richard Warner to approve Joe's attendance at the conference. The motion was seconded by Tom Jensen. Roll call vote Ayes-5 Nays-0. Motion carried.
- C. **Wastewater Training:** Water Superintendent Joe reported that he enrolled Street Supervisor Eric Theisen in a Wastewater class training session to be held in Plover on February 22, 2026.

Commissioner Report: Nothing to report

Items for Next Agenda

- A. Water Service for 35194 & 35214 Diagonal Street
- B. Water & Sewer Bills
- C. Water & Sewer Truck
- D. Facility Plan Review with Davy Engineering
- E. Status update on Water Pipe Survey
- F. Disconnect Update
- G. Water Rates
- H. Water & Sewer Payment to City
- I. Auditor's Report
- J. Discussion on Delinquent Water Bills
- K. Water & Sewer Timecards
- L. Water & Sewer After Hours Incident Report
- M. Community Project Funding Request

Future Date for the next Meeting

February 23, 2026 @ 6:15pm

Closed Session: Motioned by Tom Jensen to go into closed session, second by Jason Ekern. Roll Call Vote- Ayes-5 Nays-0, Motioned carried.

Motioned by Jason Ekern to return into open session, second by Craig Konter. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Motion by Fritz Conrad, second by Jason Ekern, to have Mayor Tom Kloss speak with the school board president to inform them that the Water & Sewer Commission met with the City's engineer and is suspending the previously planned course of action with the school. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of acclamation to approve.

Adjournment at 8:37PM

Abby Bautch, Deputy City Clerk