



# SPECIAL UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 23, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Baxter City Hall, 13190 Memorywood Drive, Baxter, MN

*"A Growing Community"*

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## CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Baxter Utilities Commission was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Rock Yliniemi.

## ROLL CALL

**Members Present:** Commissioner Douglas Stenberg, John Brenny, Jack Christofferson, Chairman Rock Yliniemi and Council Liaison Mark Cross.

**Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Present:** City Administrator Brad Chapulis, Public Works Director/City Engineer Trevor Walter, Parks & Trails Supervisor Alex Hondl, Sanitary Sewer & Water Lead Scott Shelito, Streets & Storm Lead Chuck Anderson and Public Works Administrative Assistant Mary Haugen.

**Other Present:** WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Alex Bitter and Architect Mike Angland.

## CONSENT AGENDA

### 1. Approve the Utilities Commission Minutes from April 2, 2025

**MOTION** by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to approve the Utilities Commission minutes from April 2, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

## BUSINESS ITEMS

### 2. Approve Crack Sealing Quote

Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter informed the commission that one quote was received by the deadline and one quote was received after the deadline had passed.

Assistant City Engineer Thompson consulted with the City Attorney, and it was recommended to requote the 2025 Crack Sealing Project. Mr. Walter recommended to take the bids straight to City Council for approval at the May 6th meeting so the project can be completed by the end of May.

**MOTION** by Commissioner Christofferson, seconded by Commissioner Stenberg to approve taking the 2025 Crack Sealing Quotes directly to City. Motion carried unanimously.

### 3. Review 20-Year Public Works Facility – Assessment & Budgetary Cost Estimate

Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter stated the meeting was an opportunity to discuss the report and visually see how the report relates to the current facility. WiDSETH Architect Mike Angland stated the purpose of this report is to aid City Staff in assessing the challenge of how to effectively serve the public from an aging and undersized facility. The information for the report was information

gathered from field observations, review of existing plans, and information provided by key staff and personnel.

Parks & Trails Supervisor Hondl gave a brief update on a field trip to Orono to tour the current operations of the City of Orono Public Works facility. Mr. Angland, Mr. Hondl and former Streets & Utilities Supervisor Brian Berent had an opportunity to visit with staff since they had recently undergone a feasibility study that resulted in the construction of their new facility.

Mr. Angland inquired if the commission had any questions or concerns with the report. Commissioner Christofferson noted the following items:

- Page 81 – Public Works Design Report: Population Projection und the County section has a missing headline located directly under Percentage increase over year 2025.
- Page 83 – Key Insights: 2022 FTE Study for Streets & Utilities uses anagram which should be spelled out for the first time. “FTE” stands for Full Time Employee.

Chairman Yliniemi stated that on page 15 the Watermain linear feet is incorrect.

Council Liaison Cross state that ADA was noted that it did not meet the standard for compliance and questioned what triggered this. Mr. Walter explained the City’s ADA Transition Plan requires compliance as part of the 2018 Federal Grant requirements.

The commission reviewed the handout that Mr. Bitter presented. Council Liaison Cross noted the +/- on the handout appeared to be incomplete and needed to be finished. Mr. Bitter agreed and noted these will be corrected in the final hand out.

The tour of the facility started at 6:00 p.m.

### **WATER TREATMENT PLANT TOUR**

**Control Room (Climate Controlled):** Sanitary Sewer & Water Lead Shelito started the tour in the operations room where five operators share desk space. Due to the amount of personnel and testing that is done the need for a center island is being recommended along with an additional desk and computer for the lead operator.

Commissioner Christofferson inquired if the upgraded SCADA system allows personnel to operate the lift stations. Mr. Shelito stated that the lift stations can be viewed; however, lift station work requires staff to be on-site to swiftly handle any emergencies.

Mr. Shelito noted there are three climate control rooms in the water treatment plant which assist in the prevention of damage to stored items due to the corrosiveness of the chlorine. The control room has two cabinets which are filled with necessary items to keep the plant operating in case of an emergency; it was noted that additional storage space is needed.

Mr. Chapulis noted that storage is critical since there is lag time on getting the necessary supplies. Mr. Shelito noted that the plant is aging, and staff is having to adapt as parts are requiring longer lead times.

**High Service Pump Room/VFD Room (Climate Controlled):** Mr. Shelito stated that tools, critical equipment and replacement cells for the chloride tanks are stored in this room. Mr. Brenny inquired if there is a backup for all items or is more room needed. Mr. Shelito state there is a back up for all known

items. Mr. Walter stated that more storage area is necessary as a 3-foot separation around electrical boxes is required.

**Chemical Feed Room/Brine Room:** Mr. Shelito explained the usage of the room and noted the garage doors are deteriorating due to the corrosive nature of brine production.

**Aerator Room:** Mr. Shelito explained the usage of the room and noted that an additional air exchanger (MAU) is needed once again due to the corrosive nature of the chlorine. The commission held a discussion on iron removal and the need for backwashing to assist with the removal.

**Filter Room:** Mr. Shelito stated that the pedestals had been replaced, and powder coated. The installation of the air exchanger has made a noticeable difference which is helping to slow any deterioration.

**Pipe Gallery:** Mr. Shelito explained the usage of the room and the different stages of the processed drinking water before reaching the next stage of treatment. Commissioner Christofferson inquired if the addition is north. Mr. Walter stated it may not be necessary to double the plant volume but how can we get the filters to work more effectively with iron removal which may include a clarifier before the detention basin.

#### **PUBLIC WORKS FACILITY TOUR**

**Lobby area & Breakroom:** Parks & Trails Supervisor Hondl provided an update on the need for additional space due to fluctuating staff during peak seasons. Training programs and staff meetings are also conducted in this space which can lead to disruption of staff lunches. There is also a computer setup on one of the breakroom tables that is shared by the Streets & Storm Lead and Parks & Trails staff.

Council Liaison Cross inquired on the amount of training that is being held at the facility. Mr. Hondl stated about a 1/3 as the City is using other locations or having to do multiple training courses.

A multi-use copier has been recently set up in the lobby area for easier access and less disruption to the administrative assistant's office. A ring doorbell has been installed for staff to see who is at the door as there is no one in the lobby area.

**Women's Bathroom:** Mr. Hondl stated the women's bathroom has enough lockers and bathroom stalls at this time.

**Men's Bathroom:** Mr. Hondl stated there are not enough lockers in the men's bathroom for regular and seasonal staff to have access to one.

**Administrative Assistant Office:** Mr. Hondl explained this room was originally planned for a unisex bathroom; however, it was used as a storage room for many years before it was an office. There is a request for an additional half-time administrative assistant to work with parks and engineering so additional office space will be needed.

**Garage Area/Supervisors Offices:** Streets & Storm Lead Chuck Anderson and Mr. Hondl explained some of the operational challenges within this area. The supervisors' offices are extremely small and do not allow much space for meeting with staff members. Meetings are often held outside of the office by the vehicles which can be interrupted multiple times vehicles starting and leaving the facility.

Additional cabinets and lockers are needed; however, no wall space is available for such items.

Mr. Anderson stated that every parking space is full and additional vehicles/mowers/equipment are being parked in cold storage, the water towers or the boneyard. He also noted that the garage is not wide enough to work on vehicles and for traffic to pass by.

Mr. Shelito mentioned the undersized water meter work area where additional space is needed for parts and equipment. Mr. Hondl, Mr. Shelito and Mr. Anderson noted the mezzanine area has limitations on access and half of the space is useless as the equipment does not reach that far back.

Mr. Shelito did mention that items being stored at the water towers have to be monitored due to the corrosive nature of the water treatment chemicals.

The commission discussed the bituminous pavement concerns and noted it will need to be milled and overlaid along with re-striping.

**Police Impound Lot:** The commission viewed the impound lot and noted that several “Towards Zero Deaths” trailers are being stored in the lot and many of the impounded vehicles have been removed.

**Boneyard:** Mr. Hondl stated the area is used to store equipment due to space limitations. The stockpiles have been moved to the city center area to allow for construction of Wells No. 5 and No. 6.

**Cold Storage Building:** Mr. Hondl and Mr. Anderson explained the challenges of trying to maintain a 20-foot drive lane through the building. They discussed the need for easy access to supplies and to have the vehicles ready and loaded to drive out in response to emergencies. Parking in the cold storage area allows staff to optimize parking capabilities.

**Salt/Sand Storage Building:** The commission discussed the need to repair areas on the salt/sand storage building.

The outdoor part of the tour concluded, and the commission and staff returned to the Public Works Facility. Chairman Yliniemi inquired if there were any further comments on the report. There were no further comments.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Council Liaison Cross stated he wanted to point out that this report was merely a list of potential needs and is to be used as reference material/guide for the Capital Improvement Plan. It is a good exercise for the future, and it is daunting.

City Administrator Chapulis stated it is a “breathing” document and references the need to prioritize. Mr. Walter stated the report identifies immediate, medium and long-term needs and is given an estimated time line in the Capital Improvements Plan that allows items to be moved as necessary.

#### **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

None.

#### **ADJOURN**

**MOTION** by Commissioner Brenny, seconded by Commissioner Stenberg to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m.  
Motion unanimously approved.

Approved by:

Respectfully submitted:

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Rock Yliniemi  
Chair

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Mary Haugen  
Administrative Assistant