



UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, July 02, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Baxter City Hall, 13190 Memorywood Drive, Baxter, MN

"A Growing Community"

CALL TO ORDER

The regular 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, Jack Christofferson, Chairman Rock Yliniemi and Council Liaison Mark Cross.

Members Absent: Commissioner John Brenny.

Staff Present: Public Works Director/City Engineer Trevor Walter, Assistant City Engineer Trevor Thompson and Administrative Assistant Mary Haugen.

Other Present: SEH Consulting Engineer Neil Heinonen, WiDSETH President Tim Ramerth and WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Alex Bitter.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approve the Utilities Commission Minutes from June 4, 2025

MOTION by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to approve the Utilities Commission minutes from June 4, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

BUSINESS ITEMS

2. **Accept the Pedestrian Crosswalk Request - Mary Street and Cherrywood Drive Intersection with Inglewood Drive Memorandum**

SEH Consulting Engineer Heinonen explained that a request for an enhanced pedestrian crossing and signage at the intersection of Cherrywood Drive/Mary Street and Inglewood Drive was submitted to City staff by a resident on May 28, 2025. City staff requested that SEH review the request and provide comments for staff consideration.

Mr. Heinonen noted that Cherrywood Drive is slated for improvements in 2026 as part of the Mill & Overlay and Full Depth Reclamation Improvements Project. A multi-use trail is located on the west side of Inglewood Drive, beginning/ending at the Cherrywood Drive intersection and continuing south across Trunk Highway (TH) 210. There are no other dedicated pedestrian or bicycle facilities along this segment of Inglewood Drive.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter stated the City currently does not have specific criteria for when a pedestrian crossing should be implemented, although there is past precedent in adding crossings during construction projects. These projects include:

- 2014 Woida Road Improvements
- 2023 Knollwood Drive Improvements
- 2023 Clearwater Road Improvements

Mr. Heinonen stated that since the City of Baxter does not have its own criteria for warrants relating to pedestrian crossings, they sourced the MN Department of Transportation (MnDOT) guidance which states since there are fewer than 20 pedestrians during any hour period of the day, a marked crosswalk is not warranted.

There were three alternatives that could be implemented:

1. No-Build Alternative – No enhancements are provided for at this intersection.
2. Un-Marked Pedestrian Crossing Facility – No crossing enhancements are provided (e.g. striping, signage), however, other treatments may be considered such as curb ramps to support existing pedestrian volume without encouraging additional crossings at the location.
3. Enhanced Crosswalk Facility – If a crossing is still deemed necessary, MnDOT and FHWA guidance recommends the following treatments:
 - Marked Crosswalk
 - Pedestrian Curb Ramps
 - Crosswalk Signs
 - Advanced Crosswalk Warning Signs

Assistant City Engineer Thompson stated the City needs to draft its own pedestrian crossing policy since a traffic engineer will refer to the MnDOT guidance. The timing coincides with the Bike & Pedestrian Manual possibly being reviewed and changed to meet the City's current needs.

Commissioner Christofferson stated that signs were put on Cypress Drive crosswalk. Mr. Thompson stated that the crosswalk was signed correctly but additional signage was installed to assist pedestrians trying to cross the road. The signs are ground mounted and are installed every spring and removed in the fall.

Mr. Walter stated that City Council is looking at changing the ordinance on pavement width this fall, and staff is hoping to bring these ordinance and policy amendments forward in August or September.

MOTION by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to accept the Pedestrian Crosswalk Request - Mary Street/Cherrywood Drive Intersection with Inglewood Drive Memorandum and recommend staff come up with a policy on the type of pedestrian crossing. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Accept the Request for Stop Sign Placement Review – Intersection of Edgewood Drive with Novotny Road Memorandum

SEH Consulting Engineer Heinonen explained that a request was received to review the current stop sign configuration and pavement markings on Edgewood Drive at its intersection at Novotny Road on May 23, 2025. City staff requested that SEH review the request and provide comments for City Staff consideration.

Mr. Heinonen stated the existing STOP signs on Edgewood Drive, approaching the intersection from both the north and south, appear to be positioned partially around the curve and set back from the travel lane. The placement is due to the wide turning radii required to accommodate truck movements.

The northbound stop sign is located too far to the east, and the southbound stop sign is positioned too far to the west, relative to the intersection's curvature.

Mr. Heinonen reviewed options for potential improvements to the intersection which included repainting stop bars. Assistant City Engineer Thompson stated the City of Baxter no longer uses stop bars due to slippery surface and expense. Mr. Thompson noted the City will use stop bars only if warranted.

Commissioner Christofferson inquired if staff would be relocating the stop sign and Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter stated that he was correct. The memo also outlined the next steps if the relocation of the stop sign and the post reflector do not resolve the issue.

MOTION by Commissioner Christofferson, seconded by Commissioner Stenberg to accept the Request for Stop Sign Placement Review – Intersection of Edgewood Drive with Novotny Road Memorandum and approve the relocation of Existing Stop Signs. Motion carried unanimously.

4. 2024 South Forestview Improvements Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

5. Approve the RL Larson Excavating, Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 11 in the amount of \$10,023.33 for the 2024 South Forestview Area Improvements Project, Municipal Project No. 4138

SEH Consulting Engineer Heinonen reviewed the RL Larson Excavating, Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 11 in the amount of \$10,023.33 for the 2024 South Forestview Area Improvements Project. The payment includes turf restoration, topsoil, and watering items for turf maintenance.

The Contractor has earned \$5,981,298.12 to date, which represents approximately 97.5% of the contract value. The retainage is being held at 1.5 % of the contract value which results in a total payment of \$10,023.33.

Mr. Heinonen has no concerns with Partial Pay Estimate No. 11 and recommends approval.

MOTION by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to approve the RL Larson Excavating, Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 11 in the amount of \$10,023.33 for the 2024 South Forestview Area Improvements Project, Municipal Project No. 4138. Motion carried unanimously.

6. 2025 Water Supply Improvements Project Monthly Update - Wells 5 & 6

SEH Consulting Engineer Heinonen informed the commission that during construction of Well No. 6 the contractor encountered rock and granite while drilling.

7. Approve Pratt's Affordable Excavating Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 2 in the amount of \$395,976.52 for work completed on Contract B related to the 2025 Water Supply Improvements – Wells 5 & 6, Municipal Project No. 6011-45040

SEH Consulting Engineer Heinonen reviewed the Pratt's Affordable Excavating Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 2 in the amount of \$395,976.52 for the 2025 Water Supply Improvements – Wells 5 & 6 Contract B, Municipal Project No. 6011-45040.

The Contractor has earned \$525,407.41 for electrical construction within the Water Plant and exterior electrical improvements, installation of watermain piping and appurtenances, grading items, aggregate base construction, paving, and miscellaneous removals. The retainage is being held at 5% of the contract which results in a payment of \$395,976.52.

Mr. Heinonen has no concerns with Partial Pay Estimate No. 2 and recommends approval.

MOTION by Commissioner Christofferson, seconded by Commissioner Stenberg to approve Pratt's Affordable Excavating Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 2 in the amount of \$395,976.52 for the 2025 Water Supply Improvements – Wells 5 & 6 Contract B, Municipal Project No. 6011-45040. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Water Treatment Plant Emergency Generator Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS) Controller Upgrades

SEH Consulting Engineer Heinonen gave a brief update on the history on the generator and ATS Controller Switch. The original water treatment facility was constructed and commissioned in 2006/2007. At that time, an Eaton ATC-600 Automatic Transfer Switch (ATS) and controller were installed to facilitate automatic transfer between utility power and generator power. However, no upgrades or reprogramming of the existing ATS controller were performed during the subsequent installation of a new generator in 2018.

Plant operators have been doing test cycles and have consistently observed abnormal behavior during transitions between power sources—both at startup and shutdown. Specifically, intermittent low-voltage alarms have been triggered on one or more variable frequency drives (VFDs), resulting in faults that disrupt process operations and need to be reset. These faults are inconsistent in nature and appear randomly throughout the transfer sequence, indicating instability in power transfer timing and system coordination.

Mr. Heinonen stated that SEH is currently coordinating with Eaton and Ziegler CAT to procure formal quotes for the upgraded ATS controller. The proposal will encompass the supply and installation of the new controller, custom programming, and preventive maintenance activities, including inspection, cleaning, lubrication, and functional testing of the ATS and associated breakers.

Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter informed the commission that the upgrades to the ATS controller are not budgeted in the City's 2025 budget.

9. Lift Station No. 15 Reconstruction Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

10. Approve the CCS Contracting, Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 3 (Final) in the amount of \$3,000 for the Lift Station No. 15 Reconstruction Project

WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Bitter reviewed the CCS Contracting, Inc. Partial Pay Estimate (Final) No. 3 in the amount of \$3,000.00 for the Lift Station No. 15 Reconstruction Project.

The Contractor has earned \$109,910.96 to date which represents 100% of the revised contract value. This period there is a payment of \$3,000 for completion of punch list items and turf restoration.

The City budgeted \$236,500 for this project. Current expenditures and the final projected project cost is estimated at \$181,307.09 which is \$55,192.91 below budget.

Mr. Bitter has no concerns with the final pay estimate and recommends approval.

MOTION by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to approve the CCS Contracting, Inc. Partial Pay Estimate No. 3 (Final) in the amount of \$3,000 for the Lift Station No. 15 Reconstruction Project. Motion carried unanimously.

11. 2024 Mill & Overlay and Full Depth Reclamation Improvements Project Monthly Update

WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Bitter informed the commission there are only minimal items on the punch list to be completed. Turf establishment is really starting to come through and Knife River is pulling the erosion control measures.

Mr. Bitter reviewed the bituminous crown issues in the project area. Mr. Bitter stated that once all roads were reviewed 43% of the roads did not meet the MN Department of Transportation specifications, and he noted a Notice of Defective Work was submitted to Knife River – North Central in March.

During on-going discussions with Knife River to correct this situation; Knife River proposed a fix to redo all of the Mill & Overlay Project areas at a cost of \$170,000.00. This fix was declined since the plans and specifications clearly stated what needed to be done. No effort to install the 2% crown was made.

The commission held an extensive discussion on the crown issues and inquired why Knife River did not inform the City of Baxter of the defective workmanship product so it could have been rectified and addressed at that time. Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter expressed his concern over the formation of wheel rutting, which is the formation of ruts or depressions in the wheel paths of the road surface, which can be caused by insufficient drainage, excessive loading, weak pavement structure, etc.

Mr. Walter stated that if the City had been made aware of the crown issue and the estimated cost of an additional \$40,000.00 of bituminous mix to pave the road with the appropriate crown after knowing the mill was not at 2% according to the plans & specifications, the City could have approved the additional quantity instead the contractor paved 2-inches over the milled surface and neglected the crown issue.

Mr. Bitter stated that WiDSETH is continuing to work with Knife River – North Central on the solution for the lack of crown in certain areas. Direction was given by consensus of the commission of how to negotiate a possible settlement.

12. Approve the Knife River Corporation – North Central Partial Pay Estimate No. 9 in the amount of \$38,692.41 for the 2024 Mill & Overlay and Full Depth Reclamation Improvements Project, Municipal Project Number 4424

WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Bitter reviewed the Knife River – North Central Partial Pay Estimate No. 9 in the amount of \$38,692.41 for the 2024 Mill & Overlay and Full Depth Reclamation Improvements Project.

The Contractor has earned \$3,657,619.89 to date which represents 90.7% contract value. The total previous payments to the contractor totals \$3,518,086.50. The retainage is 2.5% of the revised contract value (\$100,840.98) which results in a total payment of \$38,692.41.

WiDSETH President Tim Ramerth recommended that a contingency be made on the payment that the Project Engineer Bitter review the contract for warranty work and make sure there is enough retainage to meet the contract requirements.

MOTION by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to approve the Knife River Corporation – North Central Partial Pay Estimate No. 9 in the amount of \$38,692.41 for the 2024 Mill & Overlay and Full Depth Reclamation Improvements Project, Municipal Project Number 4424 contingent on retainage based on the Mill & Overlay Crown issue. Motion carried unanimously.

13. 2025 Design Road & TH 371 Stormwater Improvements Project Monthly Update

WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Bitter informed the commission that four bids were received for the improvements; however, only two bids were read aloud. The two bids not read had errors, per MNDOT Rules, which required the bids to not be allowed to be read out loud.

JR Ferche is the apparent low bidding for this project. Documentation has been sent by Widseth and JR Ferche to the Office of Civil Right (OCR) for approval. The City cannot award the project until the OCR approves JR Ferche's documentation.

Mr. Bitter stated the goal would be to award the project at the July 15th City Council Meeting. Widseth will prepare the award documents for the July 15th City council meeting. If the OCR does not approve JR Ferche's documentation by July 15th, the agenda items will be pulled, and a special City Council meeting will be requested for once the OCR approval is received.

14. Approve the Widseth Proposal Construction Administration Services in the Not to Exceed Amount of \$440,444.00 for the 2025 Design Road & TH 371 Stormwater Improvements Project, Municipal Project No. 4135

WiDSETH Consulting Engineer Bitter reviewed the Widseth Proposal Construction Administration Services in the Not to Exceed Amount of \$440,444.00 for the 2025 Design Road & TH 371 Stormwater Improvements Project.

The proposed scope of services Include the following:

- Final Assessment Calculations and Hearing
- Construction Staking
- Labor Compliance
- Construction Administration
- Construction Observation
- Construction Materials Testing
- Post Construction Services

Assumptions and Exclusions:

In preparing this Proposal, Widseth relied on the following assumptions and exclusions:

- Environmental services (potential soil and groundwater contamination) are not required. If contaminated soils are encountered, Widseth will provide a contract amendment to address the issue.
- Construction Observation service fees are based on 20 weeks of construction in 2025. Construction Observation services above 1600 hours would be considered Additional Services.

Widseth proposes to perform the services described above on an hourly basis in the Not To Exceed amount of \$440,444.00.

MOTION by Commissioner Christofferson, seconded by Commissioner Stenberg to approve the Widseth Proposal Construction Administration Services in the Not to Exceed Amount of \$440,444.00 for the 2025 Design Road & TH 371 Stormwater Improvements Project, Municipal Project No. 4135. Motion carried unanimously.

15. Water Treatment Plant Filter Annual Evaluation Completed by Orthos

Public Works Director/City Engineer Walter stated that Orthos to complete a yearly evaluation of the underdrain system and to help review operations with staff.

There were no questions from the commission.

16. Approve Amending the Budget for the 2025 Street Crack Sealing Contract in the Not-to-exceed Amount of \$260,807.20

Assistant City Engineer Thompson reviewed the budget amendment for the 2025 Street Crack Sealing Contract.

The crack sealant contract and budget in the May 6th RCA used the historic average of 30-50% of the existing cracks requiring sealing. This past winter was very tough on the cracks, and the streets must have shifted more than normal, the actual percentage of cracks open were around 90-95%.

Mr. Walter explained the importance of keeping water out of the pavement and subgrade is too important to not finish crack sealing. If there were only a few roads that could not be crack sealed, the City could have prioritized based on future projects. The percent of cracks that were open requiring crack sealing was a surprise to staff and unfortunately the 46% cost increase this year has amplified the budget issues.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the propose budget adjustments to pay for the increased cost of the crack sealing.

MOTION by Commissioner Christofferson, seconded by Commissioner Stenberg to approve amending the budget for the 2025 Street Crack Sealing Contract in the not-to-exceed amount of \$260,807.20. Motion carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

17. 2023 Knollwood Drive Improvements Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

18. 2024 CSAH 77 Utility Improvements Project Monthly Update, Municipal Project No. 4118

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

19. 2025 Commercial Full Depth Reclamation Improvements Project Monthly Update, Municipal Project 4425

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

20. 2025 Micro Surfacing Project Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

21. 2025 PASER Ratings Project Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

22. 2025 Well 1 and Well 4 Pump and Motor Replacement Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

23. 2026 Clearwater Road, North Lynndale Area, & Brentwood Circle Street & Utility Improvements Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

24. 2026 Mill & Overlay, Full Depth Reclamation and Reconstruction Improvements Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

25. Eagle Drive Area Improvements Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

26. Evergreen Drive Improvements and Southeast Baxter Stormwater Overflow Improvements Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

27. Fats Oils and Greases Program Update Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

28. Holiday Station Store Contamination Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

29. Inglewood Drive to Garrett Lane Flood Overflow Control Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

30. Lift Station No. 13 Reconstruction Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

31. Lift Station No. 17 Reconstruction Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

32. Project Timber Wolf Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

33. Wastewater Treatment Plant Charges for May 2025

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

34. Whiskey Creek Planting Plans Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

35. Whiskey Creek Pedestrian Bridge Inspection Project Monthly Update

There was no new information or questions from the commission or the public.

ADJOURN

MOTION by Commissioner Stenberg, seconded by Commissioner Christofferson to adjourn the meeting at 7:15 p.m.
Motion unanimously approved.

Approved by:

Rock Yliniemi
Chair

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Haugen
Administrative Assistant