

To: Chairman Arnett and members of the Public Works Commission April 14, 2026
From: Peter Hartz – Water Systems Manager

Re: Water Systems agenda items for April 14, 2026, Public Works Commission meeting

Water Systems:

Review and take action – Wastewater Department, approve one year extension for active non-irrigated farmland / agricultural lease for the wastewater utility owned property: 140 acres.

Background: The original lease was agreed upon between the city and farmer for crop land under production for a 4 – year term, which expires April 30, 2026. This lease is the larger of the two separate agricultural leases and includes all the land on the west side of the railroad tracks adjoining the water quality trade wetlands and prairie, which includes approximately 140 tillable acres of the total 169.36 acres owned by the wastewater utility between the WWTP complex and Milford St.

This land is part of the wastewater utilities compliance plan with water quality trading to be used for meeting the wastewater discharge permit limits in the Rock River by taking land out of agricultural production and returning to natural vegetative and wetland conditions. This land is also enrolled in the wastewater biosolids application program with the WDNR so the wastewater department does have this property in our WPDES permit, we maintain control over the fertilizer application to the fields so as not to exceed crop nutrient uptake rates when organic solids are applied.

Budget Goal: Aligns with division specific water quality permit required best management practices

Fiscal impact: This is revenue for Wastewater Utility Fund #2, \$225/acre x 140 acres = \$31,500.

Recommendation: It is my recommendation to extend this lease agreement with Dettmann Dairy LLC., who is also the renter for the wastewater land on the east side of the railroad tracks. After review with the city attorney we agreed it is in the best interest for the city and the farmer to extend the lease for one-year and have all the wastewater utility-owned agricultural land included in one new lease, which will be brought back to the Public Works Commission next year in April once we near the expiration of the east side land lease; April 30, 2027.

Because the land is part of the wastewater treatment works and City Code grants the Public Works Commission entire charge and management of the utility, including supervision over its grounds, leasing that land for agricultural use is an operational function of the utility and therefore falls under Commission authority.

Sincerely,
Peter Hartz
Water Systems Manger