

STOUGHTON UTILITIES COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, September 20, 2021 – 5:30 p.m.

Stoughton, WI

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Location: Online Attendance: GoToMeeting ID 532-275-957

Members Present: Citizen Member David Erdman (Chair), Alderperson Ben Heili, Alderperson Regina Hirsch, Citizen Member John Kallas (Vice-Chair), Mayor Tim Swadley, Citizen Member Dustin Thoren, Alderperson Rachel Venegas

Excused: None

Absent: None

Others Present: Director of Finance & Comptroller Jamin Friedl, Stoughton Utilities Assistant Director Brian Hoops, Stoughton Utilities Director Jill Weiss

Call to Order: Chairperson Erdman called the regular Stoughton Utilities Committee Meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Utilities Committee Consent Agenda: Stoughton Utilities staff presented and discussed the Stoughton Utilities Committee consent agenda items.

Staff highlighted the updated Choose Renewable pricing that went into effect on September 1, and noted that Stoughton Utilities has increased their block purchases to offset 100% of the power purchased by the utility for all electric, water, and wastewater operations. The utility previously offset approximately 63% of its power, and with the new pricing the increase to 100% came with a cost savings of over \$1,400 per year.

Motion by Kallas, the motion seconded by Thoren, to approve the following consent agenda items as presented:

- a. Draft Minutes of the August 16, 2021 Regular Utilities Committee Meeting
- b. Stoughton Utilities August Payments Due List Report
- c. Stoughton Utilities July Financial Summary
- d. Stoughton Utilities July Statistical Report
- e. Stoughton Utilities August Activities Report
- f. Communications

The motion carried unanimously 6 to 0.

Status of the Utilities Committee recommendation(s) to the Stoughton Common Council: Stoughton Utilities staff presented and discussed the following items from the Stoughton Utilities Committee that were approved and/or placed on file by the Stoughton Common Council:

Consent Agenda:

1. Minutes of the July 26, 2021 Regular Utilities Committee Meeting
2. Stoughton Utilities July Payments Due List Report
3. Stoughton Utilities June Financial Summary
4. Stoughton Utilities June Statistical Report

Business:

1. Use of American Rescue Plan Act Funds Received by the City of Stoughton to Fund the Replacement of Privately-Owned Lead Service Lines (Private LSL) and Other Costs Associated with Private LSL Replacements Not Reimbursed by the DNR Grant

Discussion followed.

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Mayor Swadley joined the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Status Update: Lead Service Line Replacement Program: Stoughton Utilities staff presented and discussed recent efforts that have occurred as part of the ongoing 2021 citywide lead service line replacement project of public and privately-owned lead service lines. Staff informed the committee that lead service lines have been replaced at approximately at approximately 80% of the addresses with lead service lines. The goal remains to be 100% lead free as of the end of the year.

Staff informed the committee that the contractor has stated they are on pace for an October completion, ahead of the November 15 substantial completion and December 15 final completion deadlines. Staff will be submitting the final remaining addresses to the contractor this week, including the non-residential properties that were just approved for ARPA funding. Staff provided information on pending pay requests and grant reimbursement applications, ongoing restoration efforts, and restoration plans as we plan for the autumn and winter months. Discussion followed.

Updates regarding the ongoing construction project will be posted to stoughtonutilities.com/lead and stoughtonutilities.com/construction as they are made available by the contractor.

Funding of Private Lead Service Line Replacements Completed by Property Owners in 2019: Stoughton Utilities staff informed the committee that a request had been raised at the September 1, 2021 meeting of the Stoughton Committee of the Whole to have the Stoughton Utilities Committee explore the possibility of reimbursing property owners who replaced their privately-owned lead service line in 2019 and paid for the replacement out of pocket.

Staff reminded the committee that the section of the water service lateral from the curb stop valve located in the public right of way to the water meter located inside the dwelling is privately-owned, and the individual property owners are responsible for the costs associated with installation and maintenance. Staff also reminded the committee that as a regulated public utility, Stoughton Utilities is currently prohibited by the Wisconsin Public Service Commission from using funds collected through utility rates to perform work on private property. Further, the funding grant awarded by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources does not allow for the reimbursement of costs associated with private service line replacements that occurred prior to 2020 and that were not included in the grant application. Discussion followed.

The consensus of the committee was to not fund replacements that occurred prior to 2020, whether using utility or ARPA funding. The committee directed staff to provide a verbal report of the discussion and the committee's consensus to the Stoughton Finance Committee when the topic is included on their agenda.

Wastewater Treatment Facility and Sanitary Sewer Collection System 2020 Compliance Maintenance Annual Report (CMAR) – DNR Responses: Stoughton Utilities staff presented an update to our annual CMAR filing, which was approved by the Utilities Committee and Common Council in June. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has received and approved our filing, providing favorable comments, and no further action is needed until the 2021 CMAR filing to occur in June 2022. Discussion followed.

Stoughton Utilities Staffing: Stoughton Utilities staff presented the current organizational chart and discussed recent recruitment and hiring efforts, including the onboarding of a Journeyman Lineman and two Apprentice Lineworkers in the Electric System Division, and a recently accepted offer of employment to another Journeyman Lineman. Also discussed was the status of the Utilities Finance Director vacancy and ongoing recruitment and advertising for the position. Staff also informed the committee that strategic planning efforts continue, and staff is looking at retention and recruitment strategies, organizational restructuring, updates to current position

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descriptions, and the staffing needs of the utility moving forward. Staff discussed preliminary budgetary figures that are planned to be presented to the committee in October as part of the 2022 Stoughton Utilities operating budget.

Citizen Member John Kallas left the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Utilities Committee Future Agenda Items: Stoughton Utilities staff informed the committee that upcoming meeting topics include updates on the status of the lead service line replacement program, the 2022 Stoughton Utilities operating budget, the 2022-26 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and potential modifications to the ordinance related to the mandatory replacement of lead service lines and how customers are noticed and costs are recovered. Alderperson Venegas requested an item to discuss the promotion of the Choose Renewable program. Mayor Swadley discussed the new Sustainability Committee and presentations being made by city departments. Discussion followed.

Adjournment: Being no further business before the committee, the Chair adjourned the regular Stoughton Utilities Committee Meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Brian R. Hoops

Stoughton Utilities Assistant Director