

# NORTHWEST OTTAWA WATER SYSTEM

## Administrative Committee Minutes

November 17, 2021

A regular administrative committee meeting of the Northwest Ottawa Water System was called to order by Christine Burns at 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, November 17, 2021 in the Council Chambers at Grand Haven City Hall.

Present: Craig Bessinger (City of Ferrysburg), Pat Staskiewicz (Ottawa County), John Nash (Spring Lake Township), and Derek Gajdos (City of Grand Haven), Christine Burns (Village of Spring Lake), Alando Chappell (Grand Haven Township), Bill Cargo (Grand Haven Township)

Absent: Gordon Gallagher (Spring Lake Township)

Also present: Eric Law (City of Grand Haven), Amy Bessinger (City of Grand Haven)

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A motion by Staskiewicz, supported by Bessinger to accept the minutes for the August 18, 2021 NOWS Committee Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

### **Manager's Report, August, September, October '21** – By Law

Law provided the Managers report with the following highlights presented.

Significant and meaningful rainfall has continued through the summer months and as a result August pumpage numbers were comp to LY. YTD pumpage is at 97% to LY with September and October both up over LY. Individual unit pumpage has GHCT the only unit above LY numbers YTD with allocations largely remaining the same if not leaning away from the COGH and more towards the townships. The fiscal year is tracking with Revenue at 43% and expenditures 26%. Cash position sits at \$186,031 and the Replacement Fund with Money Market sits at \$508,956. Replacement Fund has been added to the accounts bar graph. Production cost comp to LY is tracking higher due to the increase in chemical cost driven largely by the increased cost of chlorine. High grade caustic soda a key element in the production of sodium hypochlorite remains in short supply and is driving the price up on chlorine. Law indicates no relief in sight and will most likely lead to a budget line item adjustment for bulk chemical. Trending charts reflects impacts of a wet start to the summer with KWH/MG slightly elevated and chemical usage down slightly. Water quality was reported as being very good from the source as all performance indicators are inline. Third quarter DBP results show all communities remain in compliance. TOC trending was highlighted as trending down and attributed to continued high quality source water. PFAS sampling results continue to provide favorable results and the system remains well within compliance.

Bill Cargo – Asked if lake levels affect the amount of intake maintenance required. Law – No schedule changes should be anticipated because of fluctuating lake levels and added more influence is from runoff conditions in the Grand River.

Pat Staskiewicz – Asked about the chemical vs pumpage divergence on the usage trend during the Spring. Law - attributed this to spring runoff and poorer raw water conditions during April.

Craig Bessinger – Asked if there was significance in what day PFAS samples are taken. Law – Nothing regulatory drives the specific day a sample is taken. The target is the third week of each month but this sometimes has been interrupted by sample supply shortages from EGLE.

**Projects:**

**Agenda Item 1: NOWS Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Financial Audit Draft Review** – By Peter Haefner (Vredeveld Haefner LLC)

Haefner gave a summary of the audit and gave an overall clean opinion of Nows financial statements, in all material respects. Bill Cargo asked if OPEB liabilities had been listed as previously requested. Haefner responded that he believed they had been disclosed in the audit report that they are being paid by the City. Cargo explained the importance of having this reported and how it impacts payments to Nows and SA and pointed out that this has been included in the past. Cargo requested an email that details the OPEB liability for both Nows and SA for FY 2020-21. Haefner agreed to provide information for OPEB / Pension in email. Amy Bessinger pointed out that individual employee information was not available but could provide overall department data. This was agreed to by Haefner, Cargo and A. Bessinger. Cargo requested that future audit reports come with the OPEB data as previously requested for both Nows and SA as has been done in the past. A motion by Craig Bessinger, supported by Staskewicz to accept the Nows Fiscal Year 2020-21 Financial Audit Draft Review. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**Agenda Item 2: Unit Refund Totals** – By Amy Bessinger

Unit refund totally approx. \$18K will be paid out to individual units by December 2021 and the amount is predicated on percent flow allocation as stated within the contract.

**Agenda Item 3: Approval of Proposed 2022 Nows Committee Dates** – By Eric Law

A motion by Cargo supported by C. Bessinger to accept the proposed 2022 Nows Committee Meeting Dates. The motion was unanimously approved by voice vote.

**Agenda Item 4: Fishbeck / Prein & Newhoff Reliability Study Draft Copies Review** – By Eric Law

Law and Staskewicz highlighted areas within the Fishbeck report that paired the engineers 20-year forecasting to items of more immediate concern for the committee's consideration. Data gathered is indicating plant capacity is restricted by the intake structures which have been reevaluated by Fishbeck and the opinion not challenged by P&N (the original engineer). Recent summer events (2019) involving pump can recharge rates have the Fishbeck concerned that the design spec of 14 MGD per intake is not attainable when water temperature is below 50 Fahrenheit. The density of the water at this temperature makes it difficult to travel through the intake structures. Cargo asked for clarification on why the capacity is restricted relevant to one or both intakes in operation and if this issue is being pushed by regulation from EGLE. Law confirmed that the issue with recharge slowing is during heavy demand and while both intakes are operational while experiencing temperature inversions. Law confirmed that management is taking a proactive approach and EGLE is not involved at this point. Because of the multiple challenges adding another intake or expanding the existing intakes presents, Fishbeck believes it's in Nows best interest to get started early with preliminary planning. Cargo provided a Segway to the 5<sup>th</sup> agenda item of water usage increases as population growth continues in

the region by highlighting some of the growth on the horizon for GHCT and how it is important to be proactive with planning for and preparing for this growth. John Nash agreed and commented on the importance of community outreach and education. Law & Staskewicz encouraged committee members to review each Reliability Study and bring questions/additions/concerns forward in upcoming meetings. Independent work sessions with the engineers and the unit managers was recommended by Staskewicz. No action is requested of the committee at this time.

**Agenda Item 5:** NOWS Water Efficiency Plan Draft Copy Review – By Eric Law

Law discussed the use of other peer developed plans as well as AWWA materials to develop the current draft copy and highlighted intention and concepts starting with deliberate terminology in naming the plan and the single point of emphasis being deliberate as well. Morning peak hourly flows is the single focal point issue and described the challenges of capturing the public's interest in this concept. Nash pointed to other communities that are putting in ordinances to curtail water usage and if these conversations are taking place within our communities. Staskewicz explained these other communities are challenged with ground water shortage. Cargo wanted to emphasize that restricting development for our community should not be part of the solution due in part because our system is not limited at the source and our problem can be solved with investment in expansion. Committee members acknowledged that how irrigation is used needs to be addressed. Law acknowledged that heightened community awareness was a key component to curbing irrigation behaviors and described the meeting he and Burns attended with a local marketing team as being very productive. Burns and Law emphasized the importance of a well-planned systematic approach that has to be multifaceted and sustainable for years to get meaningful gains reduction of outdoor usage and how a professional marketing campaign well be important to that goal. Staskewicz agreed that investment in marketing will be important. Burns emphasized the importance of being proactive now if we expect results much further down the road. Cargo agreed that a professional approach is warranted. Law requested that the Plan in its current development and review and scrutinize the selective actions to be taken and provide feedback and further discussion. Cargo has concerns about the optics of tiered or peak usage charges and doesn't support this methodology. The group all agreed that blocked tier pricing is a last measure. Law highlighted using scheduled watering ordinances as being a probable approach. Nash suggested all members do research on measures that can be taken and come equipped to provide feedback. Healthy brainstorming took place with All committee members adding more ideas and energy. Staskewicz suggested partnering with Ottawa County as they are working similar issues. Bessinger asked about timelines and Burns and Law wanted to have something to vote on by the next meeting.

**Adjournment:** 11:00 a.m. – Submitted by Eric Law