

NEGAUNEE-ISHPEMING WATER AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
March 19, 2025
WATER TREATMENT PLANT

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Negaunee-Ishpeming Water Authority was held on Wednesday, March 19, 2025 and was called to order at 4 p.m. by John Jackson.

MEMBERS PRESENT: James Bertucci, Paul Gravedoni, John Jackson and Tony McGrath

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kristen Mariuzza

OTHERS PRESENT: Kristy Basolo, Plan B Publishing
Jake Forchini, NIWA plant manager
Ryan Morgan, GEI

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Tony McGrath made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2025 regular meeting as presented and place them on file. James Bertucci seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

CLAIMS & ACCOUNTS:

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to approve the claims & accounts as presented and to pay the bills. James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- EGLE Drinking Water Lead Action Level Change—Jake Forchini said EGLE has changed the lead action level from 15 ppb to 12 ppb. None of the cities were even close to 12 ppb, so this doesn't change anything for NIWA.

Dave Kangas, Negaunee City Council member, arrived.

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to accept the letter from EGLE and place it on file. Tony McGrath seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

Jake Forchini said one of the processor controllers failed last month, which was a fluke. Other than that, the plant is running well. He is working on data to give to Anderson Tackman for the 2024 audit and updating the Risk & Resilience and Emergency Response Plans.

Negaunee mayor Craig Ilmonen arrived.

James Bertucci made a motion to approve the manger's report and place it on file. Paul Gravedoni seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Teal Lake Well Project Update—Jake Forchini said he met with Randy Scholz, new Ishpeming city manager, to get him up to speed on the well project. He noted that NIWA scored well on first phase of the grant they applied for to help with this project, and he said he should hear by April 12 if NIWA got it.

Ryan Morgan said Contract A is out to bid. There is a mandatory pre-bid meeting at 10 a.m. CST a week from today (March 26). He has had communication with one of the usual bidders, Municipal Well & Pump, and they plan to attend.

Ryan noted the well house has been designed and tweaked with input from the NIWA staff. Easements should be done, and a draft plan will be ready to go next week. The hope is the well will be installed by the end of May. They also will be performing a hydraulic test before the end of May. Topside work will happen over summer into fall. He noted they went with an 18-inch well with a 12-inch casing with gravel pack. The board discussed the details of the well, and design decisions on the transmission line to allow for future expansion if needed. The board asked about security and Ryan said everything will be tamper-proof.

Ryan said the goal is for the bid opening to happen on April 16; the next NIWA meeting might change due to the bid opening. Ryan and Jake will correspond to finalize the plan.

- Water Fluoridation Discussion—An informational packet was given to the board that Jake Forchini received. He noted that groups from both sides of this topic spoke at the Negaunee Council meeting on March 13. Negaunee has decided not to put this topic on a future agenda. Jake reached out to EGLE to get more information about NIWA's responsibilities; he said if a change were to take place, there would have to be a public vote on both council's sides. He noted that both Negaunee and Ishpeming would have to vote against fluoride for NIWA to change this due to the interlocal agreement. EGLE staff said they will start attending meetings to take notes and keep track of what is happening. Jake noted the Ishpeming City Council has a meeting at 6 p.m. tonight. Both parties are going to that meeting to speak their piece.

- 2024 Annual Operations Report—Jake Forchini went over the report with the board. He noted he had never listed NIWA's susceptibility score, but the rating was added this year. The state does those reports but has not updated NIWA's regularly. Jake notated (for the state) on Page 29 that these scores haven't been received. He also said he updated the graphs this year to make them more readable.

James Bertucci made a motion to accept the annual report and place it on file. Tony McGrath seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- Process Controller Replacement & Radio Discussion—Jeff Talsma of Talsma Controls got prices for replacement of a new processor card. The cards are technically out of date but can be

purchased for \$5,000. New updated cards (NIWA would need two) and upgraded software costs about \$27,000. Jeff would have to rebuild the program if the updating took place.

Jeff recommended to replace the old card to give NIWA about 10 years on the current system. Tony McGrath noted the current equipment was installed in 1993, so eventually they will have to replace the whole system. Jake said as far as updating, Jeff feels the more pressing topic is the radios at the tanks and meter pits, as those parts are not being manufactured anymore.

Tony McGrath made a motion to replace one card for \$5,000 and to request a proposal from Jeff Talsma for upgrades for PLCs and radios at the plant as separate proposals. Paul Gravedoni seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- Empire Inn & Waterpark Update—Jake Forchini said this project is just starting to get off the ground but wanted to put it on the board's radar. He said Jason Niemi bought property next to where Kwik Trip is going in on US-41 and is looking to put a waterpark there. Ishpeming DPW director Bill Anderson and the Ishpeming City Manager talked to Jake about this project. Jake is trying to get details to know if the water will be recirculated or not, which will affect NIWA. Kwik Trip already will add water usage with showers and a car wash, so Jake is watching this with regards to plant capacity. He said the bigger issue will be at the sewer plant, as they are more near capacity than NIWA. He noted this is for informational purposes only; no action is needed at this time.

- Process Area Bay Light Quotes—Jake Forchini presented two options from Frailing and a third from Icon Electric to replace lights in the plant. They are all for the same brand of lights. Jake looked into buying the bulbs and recommended replacing the ballasts (Option #1) using Frailing. Both bidders came into the plant and looked at the situation to make sure this could be done while protecting the water. John Jackson recommended checking with UPPCO for rebates. Jake noted these are the only remaining bulbs in the plant that haven't been updated to LEDs.

James Bertucci made a motion to award the contract to Frailing (Option #1), as the low bidder to replace the ballasts in full. Paul Gravedoni seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- NIWA/Cities Compensation Committee—TABLED

ADJOURNMENT:

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to adjourn at 4:47 p.m. James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Prepared by Kristy Basolo, recording secretary

Approved and respectfully submitted by James Bertucci Secretary/Treasurer