

NEGAUNEE-ISHPEMING WATER AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING
May 21, 2025
WATER TREATMENT PLANT

CALL TO ORDER:

A regular meeting of the Negaunee-Ishpeming Water Authority was held on Wednesday, May 21, 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 April 16, 2025, regular meeting as presented and place them on file. James Bertucci seconded it, and the motion passed unanimously.

CLAIMS & ACCOUNTS:

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

CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

Jake Forchini said there was an increase in flows from both cities in the last month. The increase in Negaunee is due to the irrigation system in their parks and a few leaks. Other updates include that the staff is working on an emergency response plan, Homeland Security collected I-9s and NIWA got a clean bill of health and Jeff Talsma provided an update regarding the radios.

Jeff ended up buying the new Phoenix contact system to try it out and is using NIWA as a trial run. He assessed range at the other sites and got better readings than the old system; the system operates better even on a lower signal distance setting. Jeff is preparing a formal quote for the new system, which will not be cheap. If replaced, the City of Negaunee is interested in buying the old radio system for spares as they use the same radios NIWA currently does.

Jake also noted that all U.P. AT&T phone lines were bought by Peninsula Fiber as AT&T is no longer doing business in the U.P. as of around March of next year. This will affect the plant.

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to accept the manager's report as presented and place it on file. Tony McGrath seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

- Teal Lake Well Project Update—Ryan Morgan from GEI said he has been in communication with the contractors to get costs down for this project; he was surprised to find out that start up might not be until middle of winter.

Tony McGrath asked about the well driller part of the proposed, which offers a subcontractor but at a change-order price. The board was against paying more to go that route. Ryan said Dan Wiitala could help save on one mobilization if he did the screen drawing. The board talked about other cost-saving measures and the timeline for the project. One option would be to change the pump type to Grundfos to speed up the timeline as they are available more quickly. Jake noted there already are Grundfos parts in NIWA's system.

Ryan said there is an October start date at this point. Municipal Well & Pump initially gave a completion date of November 1 and now is coming back asking for an extension before even starting the project. For the safety of the well, the board decided not to allow a subcontractor and to go with Grundfos. Ryan recommended an extension to Dec. 1.

EGLE has given permission to proceed. Has been supportive of the permitting process and getting things underway. The final design portion (Contract B) is happening right now but is not completed. The board asked other questions about the process and progress of the project.

Tony McGrath made a motion to extend the substantial completion of Well #12 to December 1, 2025. James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- 2024 Audit—Jake said the letter was received from the auditors and they did not find anything unusual.

Paul Gravedoni authorized the signature of representation from Anderson Tackman on the audit; James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

Tony McGrath made a motion to approve the audit as presented and place it on file. James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- Johnson Controls MAU #2 Quote & Discussion—Jake Forchini explained that the thermostat for mass air handling unit (had issues four years ago) needs to be replaced as the screen is unreadable again. He found a replacement thermostat three years ago but cannot find another unit to fit the system. Absolute Air has a retrofit unit, but it will take nine hours of labor to install it. The quote provided shows a max cost as plans are not being shared for retrofit kit by the manufacturer, so the installer is not sure what they are getting into. A retrofit is \$11,000 and a brand-new unit would be \$25,000 to \$35,000.

Jake is leaning toward a new unit, as there have been a lot of issues with the current system over the years. The board discussed the options.

Tony McGrath made a motion to table the MAU #2 upgrade until next month; James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- 2026 Preliminary Budget Discussion—Jake Forchini started next year's budget, raising the rates 20 cents and leaving the surcharge the same. The board talked about trimming fat and keeping costs as low as possible but still being realistic about flow rates and upcoming maintenance. The budget does not need to be approved this month, just preliminary discussions. Tony McGrath asked for the three-year water sales graph for both cities for next month's discussion.

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to table the budget discussion until next month; Tony McGrath seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

- Lindberg & Sons, Inc. Waste Rock Proposed Site—Lindberg's requested to dump waste rock/soil from a construction project on NIWA property. Jake Forchini discussed this with them, as well as two plumes (Elaine's and the Road Commission areas). He was extremely specific that they can't fill in with that contamination soil due to the wellhead protection area. Jake suggested restricting the access area they are proposing and sees it as a benefit to use some of it to fix the roads to some of the wells. The board asked for the agreement to specify the area, which was a change from proposed, and put that permission expires after September 2026.

John Jackson made a motion to approve the contract, changing the access area as highlighted by Jake Forchini, specifying the type of fill that is acceptable and adding an end date to the agreement of September 2026. James Bertucci seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- NIWA/Cities Compensation Committee—TABLED

ADJOURNMENT:

Paul Gravedoni made a motion to adjourn at 5:07 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