

In Attendance:

Mayor Steve Bierce, Alderman Jerry Wamser, Michael Kreiter, James Blackwood

Also In Attendance:

Director of Public Works M. Wagner, Chief Engineer-Utilities R. Wirtz, Chief Engineer-Streets & Development M. Gabbey, Utility Manager J. Mueller, Utility Assistant Manager R. Kincaid, Administrative Assistant H. Jacobs

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Bierce called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and called for everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comment - Please limit your comments to two minutes. If further time for discussion is needed, please contact your District Alderperson prior to the meeting.

No public comments were received.

3. Discussion and Action Regarding the Minutes

3.1 Discussion and possible action to adopt October 23, 2025 meeting minutes.

Motion was made and seconded (M. Kreiter, J. Wamser) to approve the October 23, 2025 meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Water and Sewer Division

4.1 Presentation, discussion, and possible action on the Water Supply Service Area Study.

Ben Wood and Sydney Morgan from Strand Engineering were present to deliver a detailed presentation on the Water Supply Service Area Study. Mr. Wood explained that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), under Natural Resources Code 854, requires this study for water utilities serving populations greater than 10,000. He noted that compliance with the study requirements must be completed by the end of this year. The purpose of the study was to satisfy DNR requirements, while also addressing the City's long-term concerns about the water supply.

Mr. Wood discussed the challenges posed by emerging PFAS regulations and the presence of radionuclides, which are impacting the City's shallow and deep wells,

respectively. He explained that pending PFAS regulations could effectively reduce approximately 40% of the City's existing well capacity. The presentation highlighted the significant financial investment (over \$50 million) that will be required over the next five years to address water quality and water quantity issues. Mr. Wood emphasized the importance of thoroughly evaluating all available alternatives before committing to any significant investments.

The study evaluated several water supply alternatives, including:

1. **Continued Use of Groundwater:** This option would require the development of eight new wells, contingent upon the availability of adequate and suitable sites. It would also necessitate the implementation of PFAS treatment, and potentially, future advanced treatment technologies to address emerging contaminants. The study noted that new or expanded water quality regulations affecting groundwater supplies are likely to occur approximately every 20 to 25 years.
2. **Various Surface Water Sources:** The study evaluated several local surface water options, including nearby quarries, the Fox River, and Pewaukee Lake. These sources were ultimately determined to be infeasible due to potential adverse impacts on local ecosystems, property ownership constraints, existing contamination concerns, and regulatory limitations.
3. **Lake Michigan Water via a Great Lakes Diversion through Waukesha Water Utility:** This alternative involves purchasing treated Lake Michigan water from the Waukesha Water Utility. It would require infrastructure modifications, including the construction of pump and metering stations, additional water storage facilities, and improvements to the existing water main system.
4. **Lake Michigan Water Directly from Milwaukee via Lisbon Road:** Added in response to public input, this option considers construction of a new transmission pipeline along Lisbon Road. It relies on Milwaukee Water Works' substantial water treatment improvements since the 1990s, including extended intake structures and the incorporation of ozonation into the treatment process.

Ms. Morgan provided an in-depth analysis of non-monetary factors associated with both groundwater and Lake Michigan water, focusing on criteria critical to the City's decision-making process. She identified four main categories of analysis: environmental impacts, long-term sustainability, public health requirements, and implementability. Environmental considerations included potential risks to aquifers and aquatic ecosystems. Lake Michigan water scored higher in this category due to its sustainable withdrawal and return system, which minimizes impacts on local ecosystems. Regarding long-term sustainability, Ms. Morgan explained that groundwater supplies are more vulnerable to drought conditions, whereas Lake Michigan water is largely resilient to such conditions, providing more reliability to meet future needs.

For public health, Lake Michigan water demonstrated a significant advantage given its capability to consistently meet increasingly strict water quality regulations with less intensive treatment required. This advantage is likely due in part to the robust

treatment processes already in place by Milwaukee Water Works. Implementability encompassed the complexity of operational and construction factors. Lake Michigan water again received a higher rating due in part to the relatively minimal facilities needed for its management, compared to the extensive land acquisition, well development, and specialized treatment systems necessary for continued reliance on groundwater. Based on the overall evaluation, Lake Michigan water emerged as the more favorable option, receiving a total score of 76 out of 100, compared to 55 out of 100 for groundwater.

Mr. Wood then presented the financial analysis, noting that the 50-year life-cycle costs of the evaluated alternatives were surprisingly similar. Continued reliance on groundwater was estimated at \$338 million, while Lake Michigan water supplied through Waukesha Water Utility was projected at \$329 million. Direct supply from Milwaukee carried an estimated cost of \$355 million. The most expensive scenario, estimated at \$382 million, would result from deferring the decision and transitioning to Lake Michigan water in 2050.

During the meeting, Mayor Bierce raised several key issues, including projected water demand, oversight by the Public Service Commission (PSC), and infrastructure-related expenses. He questioned the assumption that water usage would nearly double, noting that the city is largely developed. Ms. Morgan explained that the projections accounted for anticipated infill development as well as the inclusion of current private well users into the municipal system. Mr. Wood added that the estimates were based on standard water usage rates applied to remaining undeveloped areas in accordance with their land use plan.

Mayor Bierce also highlighted the significant difference between Waukesha's proposed wholesale rate of \$5.83 per thousand gallons and Milwaukee's current rate of \$1.62 per thousand gallons. Mr. Wood explained that Waukesha's higher rate reflects the inclusion of their debt service associated with its existing infrastructure. He noted that even after that debt is retired, Waukesha's rate would likely remain higher than Milwaukee's due to ongoing operational costs and depreciation factors established by the PSC. This prompted discussion regarding what constitutes a fair cost for purchasing wholesale water and the potential long-term financial implications for the City if pricing differences significantly influence water supply planning decisions.

Alderman Wamser expressed skepticism regarding the quality of Lake Michigan water and advocated for greater public engagement in the decision-making process. In response, Mr. Wood pointed to the significant improvements made by Milwaukee Water Works since the 1990s, including the implementation of ozonation and the extension of water intake locations to enhance water quality.

Discussion among committee members highlighted the importance of further evaluating return flow costs associated with wastewater treatment. Ms. Wagner noted that investment in additional wastewater treatment capacity would be necessary regardless of which water supply alternative is ultimately chosen.

Motion was made and seconded (S. Bierce, J. Wamser) to approve the water study and its recommendation to pursue Lake Michigan water option, either

through Waukesha or directly from Milwaukee, with the understanding that groundwater remains a potential alternative due to incomplete financial information. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Comment - Please limit your comments to two minutes. If further time for discussion is needed, please contact your District Alderperson prior to the meeting.

No public comments were received.

6. Adjournment

Motion was made and seconded (J. Wamser, M. Kreiter) to adjourn the meeting at 4:35 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Magdelene Wagner
Director of Public Works