

MINUTES –

Hull WATER COMMITTEE

Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

TOWN OF HULL MUNICIPAL BUILDING

4550 Wojcik Memorial DR., Stevens Point, WI 54482



1) **Call to order:** The meeting of the **Hull Water Committee** was called to order on Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. by Chairperson John Holdridge at the Hull Municipal Building, 4550 Wojcik Memorial Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54482.

Present: Chair: John Holdridge, Committee Members: Dave Pederson, Bill DeVita, Karen Hannon, Ken Ramage, Madge Bishop, Matt Johnson, Ben Kollock, Mike Bohlman and Water Committee Secretary: Patty Amman, and Advisor Bill Omernick.

Others: Tim Zimmerman

2) **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE HULL WATER COMMITTEE MEETING OF MARCH 26, 2019.**

JH reviewed highlights/comments from the March 26th Hull Water Committee meeting minutes.

A motion was made by Ken Ramage to approve the minutes of the March 26, 2019 Hull Water Committee meeting. Motion was seconded by Madge Bishop. Motion passed.

3) **CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE COMMITTEE ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS MAY DO SO AT THIS TIME. CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS AGENDA ITEMS CAN DO SO WHEN THE AGENDA ITEM IS UNDER DISCUSSION. None.**

4) **COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, OPINIONS, SUGGESTIONS – CHAIRPERSON AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS.**

- Hull's Fall Newsletter will be mailed out around mid-October and will include information on what the Town can do/provide for Hull citizens during emergency situations/storms, etc. Ken R. suggested that information be a permanent component of the Hull website.
- Town of Hull has formed a new ATV/UTV Task Force Group with 11 members. Looking to set up first meeting around mid-October depending upon members calendars.
- Information on a presentation on private wells and water quality issues by Kevin Masarik made on University Place was shared. This would be good to use for educational purposes for both the Committee as well as local citizens.
- Bill Omernick will do the Hull monitoring well samples late Oct. or early Nov.
- JH will put before the Hull Board the need to look at communication in the Town.
- Looking at budget for next year for the well monitoring system.
- Hull has around 30 French drains throughout the town to help drain water off roads and intersections that tend to flood either with heavy rains or during snowmelt situations. The drains go down deep enough to be past the frost area (four or 5 feet) so water can percolate into

the soil instead of standing on the roadway. Comments were made regarding chloride issues affecting the groundwater and the Town will watch that.

- Some updated information on the status of County Supervisor Mike Splinter who spoke well on the lack of concern for private wells recently at the County meeting regarding wellhead protection.

- Katrina Shankland is Vice-Chair of the State Task Force on Water, which has one more public hearing to go in the Madison area. Then they want to put together bi-partisan proposed legislation regarding water issues. WisEye recorded the sessions that can be watched via Internet. The sessions included invited speakers and then an opportunity for the public to comment.

- A copy of a recent resolution was shared with Committee members on the Support for Central Sands Groundwater County Collaborative (CSGCC) promoting safe and good groundwater. It is supported by all the Counties in the Central Sands area of the State. They are requesting State funding for their initiatives. Tim Z. said the resolution ideas originated from the GCAC group, which passed it on to the County Board who passes resolutions. After the Portage County Board passed it, it went down to the County Board Association where it passed 100%, which was quite unusual. Tim gave a lot of credit to the GCAC group and Jen McNelly for putting the wording together on the resolution. JH felt that might generate some funding for the water related items listed in the resolution.

- Tim Z. said the State DNR is trying to change ordinances for CAFOs. This is being fought by the Dairy Business Association who felt it may put farmers out of business if they are required to have greater setbacks or have to relocate their CAFOs. The CAFO in Saratoga had to buy a farmer out and provided clean drinking water for the homeowner for a while but then stopped doing that. But it was not advertised that they stopped providing clean drinking water to households. Two of the board members on the DBA are from Monsanto. Tim said more information can be found on the Internet through the periodical called The Milkweed. There are two farms near Amherst that were thinking about going to CAFOs but have not yet done so.

- JH said in speaking with Jen McNelly, Jen said it is better to have manure spread on fields than to put pure fertilizer as the manure is more organic, takes longer to decompose, doesn't go into the groundwater as fast, is taken up by the plants more gradually, and is easier on the land than artificial type fertilizers. Tim said if you have a farm without any cows, what you will put on your field is fertilizer.

- Information was shared from the WI Water Data Viewer on the status of a hi-cap well application from Somers for an area north of Emerald Forest/Stroik subdivisions. The 2014 application was approved but the hi-cap well has not yet been installed. It is unknown if there is an expiration date for the request. Jen McNelly is researching that question further to see if the applicant would need to renew the request or what else might need to be done. JH has a call in to Nick Somers to check what they intend to do with the land or well. No call back yet from Somers.

- WI Governor has declared it the year of Clean Water. Ken R. felt there were opportunities to work with that. Maybe share with the media things Hull is doing on their Water Committee.

- Karen Hannon spoke about the County's recent proposed wellhead protection ordinance hearing that she attended. One of the proposals was to require homeowners that need to put in a new or replacement septic system, to spend an additional \$6,000 on top of the regular cost, in order to install a nitrate filtration system to the septic system. Dave P. thought the latest news was that was not in the new ordinance. JH thought Barry Jacowski was not in support of that proposed requirement. Mike Splinter was not in support of it either. JH felt that would be withdrawn. KH spoke about how 90% of nitrates come from ag sources and

only 9% from households but yet it was proposed that the burden of costs for possible nitrate reduction was going onto the homeowners. At the hearing, KH asked what percentage of nitrates would be coming out of a 2-person household and she could not get an answer from them. She felt it would be minimal compared to what farmers put on their fields in terms of fertilizer. KH suggested at the hearing that fertilizer might have a special tax put on it. KH felt many citizens that attended that hearing were upset about the possibility of additional costs added to septic systems and that is why they attended. JH felt Jen McNelly ran a very balanced meeting and conducted it in a professional manner. Tim Z. felt the high turnout at the meeting was due to the individual postcards sent to everyone indicating the County might change what wellhead protection zone area they are in and how that might affect their homes.

- Dave P. recently travelled to NW Wis./St. Croix Water Shed area where they are fighting to keep out CAFO's and large hog farms that want to come to that area from Iowa where they have polluted that water. The soil in NW Wisconsin is much like our area, sandy and porous.
- JH wants to have a Town ordinance that states nobody can install anything in the Town's right-of-way without the Town's permission. The Town controls the road right-of-way along with control of the Town parks.
- JH would like to invite Rep. VanderMeer and Senator Testin to a Hull Board meeting and then invite the Hull Water Committee members to that meeting as well. JH has a call in to Senator Testin's Chief of Staff, Jim Emerson.
- Matt J. asked that the Town Board keep pushing for communication in Town as these topics about water are hot topics now and public opinion is important. We need to share baseline data, what our plans are.

5) UPDATED DATA FROM THE SPRING 2019 WATER TESTS FOR HULL MONITORING WELLS AND CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS IN EMERALD FOREST/STROIK SUBDIVISIONS.

- A colored updated matrix including the recent spring water testing was shared and explained to the Committee.
- Bill Omernick commented that the groundwater in the Hull monitoring wells he tested this spring was up around 2 feet higher than last year. Bill DeVita agreed that groundwater was up many places in Wisconsin.
- Matt J. asked if we see higher nitrate levels in the water when the groundwater level is up and Bill D. said it depends upon where you are located. Usually it would not affect an area that is not near a CAFO or ag area.
- Bill D. asked KH about their issues with high nitrates in their private well and KH said they put in a new well. They found an area on their property to put in a shallower well, around 40 feet, where they were out of the direct flow of the nearby farmyard and nitrates. Their nitrate levels went from 60-70 ppm to now down to around 18 ppm which can be reduced with reverse osmosis. KH said their groundwater level over time has generally dropped. They felt most likely due to nearby hi-cap wells.
- Madge B. indicated their groundwater level is down as well and they live in that same general area. Their water level is down from where it had been many years ago so it may have been a gradual drop over time.
- The matrix has one more test series for this year in the fall.
- If JH finds that Somer's are not going to do anything with their land nearby to the Stroik/Emerald Forest subdivisions, then Hull might back off to testing our monitoring wells only once a year starting next year.
- JH also felt any future/new monitoring wells should be installed in Hull's right-of-way or Hull parks. JH had asked Kevin Masarik if there would be any difference between having

monitoring wells in the right-of-way or household wells for testing and Kevin felt there would not be any significant difference. But with Hull right-of-way monitoring wells, Hull can also check for groundwater depth (groundwater elevation/quantity), which cannot be done in private wells.

A motion was made by Bill DeVita to accept the updated reports on the Hull monitoring wells and citizen volunteer testing data. Motion was seconded by Dave Pederson. Motion passed.

6) NITRATE DATA FROM 2 LICENSED DAYCARE FACILITIES IN HULL.

- There is nitrate data on two licensed daycare facilities in Hull. Each of these are required to have their water tested once a year and have agreed to share that nitrate data with the Town of Hull. Although there may be other daycares in Hull, they are either not licensed or may be just over the border in the City and on municipal water.
- One of the daycare facilities had spiked nitrate levels for part of one year and that was due to a neighboring property that tore up the septic system and caused a temporary spike in nitrate levels nearby. It settled down within a half year or so back to normal levels.
- Ben K. asked Bill D. if capping a well would have any effect on the nitrate levels and Bill said it would not affect that.
- This is another data source for the Town to help track nitrate levels in additional areas of the Town and it does not cost the Town anything for that data.

A motion was made by Mike Bohlman to accept this report. Motion was seconded by Madge Bishop. Motion passed.

7) UPDATED HULL MAP WITH MONITORING WELLS, PRIVATE WELLS BY 1-MILE GRID SQUARES.

- A map of Hull was shared/explained showing one-square mile grid squares overlaid on the Town. The map included small blue dots showing private well density throughout the Town as well as existing monitoring wells Hull either has data for, or can get data on. This map was put together for the Town by the County (GIS and Jen McNelly).
- This map shows the density of homes/private wells in any given area of Hull with the small blue dots clustered in various squares of the grid.
- JH said the Town will tap into the use of the existing Town monitoring wells, TNC's, City monitoring wells, etc. for data collection in addition to any new monitoring wells the Town may install over the next few years.
- West of I-39 there are not many private wells as compared to other parts of the Town.

A motion was made by Dave Pederson to accept the presentation of this map. Motion was seconded by Madge Bishop. Motion passed.

8) DRAFT OF PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY OF MONITORING GROUNDWATER QUALITY/QUANTITY IN THE TOWN OF HULL.

This item was not taken up due to lack of available information to share at this time.

9) GROUNDWATER RESEARCH PROJECTS IN HULL – DATE, AGENCY (AUTHOR), TOPICS, FINDINGS. (R)

- JH would like to get ahold of these various research project papers, know what is in them, when they were done, who did them. Maybe have an executive summary for each one along with the date, author, etc.
- JH said the Town willing lets groups like the University come in and do studies within the Town. But it sometimes happens that other entities will pick and choose data from these completed studies and may use it against the Town. Selective data use results in only half the story.
- Bill D. explained it was found shallow wells in the Town may have evidence of pharmaceuticals and artificial sweeteners, but less nitrate levels. Whereas some of the deeper wells had nitrogen due to ag influence. BD said the pharmaceuticals are very low levels and there are no set standards for them, unlike nitrate. Bill D. pointed out the City municipal wells have chlorine and ozone they use to purify any of the municipal water which would kill off any bacterial or viruses, if there were any in the water. Also, the municipal wells get their water from deeper sources, not shallow.
- Bill D. also explained most of what they found during this study were artificial sweeteners in groundwater samples instead of pharmaceuticals and artificial sweeteners are not harmful. They were just used as indicators of where water was coming from.
- Questions about why the County was updating the wellhead protection ordinance. Bill D. pointed out the ordinance had not been updated since the 1990's and since then, some new municipal wells have been installed in Stevens Point, Junction City and Amherst. Those all needed wellhead protection plans.
- JH said he will send something formally to Bill D. requesting the information on these various academic studies on the quality/quantity of water in the Town of Hull. Bill D. said all of their reports are also available on their website (UWSP).
- Bill D. said he thought there was a very old study about the radio-nuclei and granite formation beneath the Town of Hull. Tracing from Fairview Village west toward Marshfield. That was when Fleet Farm moved their building to their existing site. They had problems with radioactive water and ultimately went on to municipal water.

10) JEN MCNELLY MEMO (DATED 9-18-19) AND UPDATED MAP OF GROUNDWATER MONITORING WELLS IN HULL (DISCUSSION ONLY) (R)

- These are new maps just put together by Jen McNelly for the Town. The memo Jen had with the maps explain what the two maps show and how they can be used to determine density of home locations in the Town along with where suggested monitoring wells should be located based on the need to monitor water in various area of the Town.
- The first map shows within each grid square (one square mile) the number of private homes/private wells in each square. Total number of private wells in Hull is 2,374.
- The second map shows some of the squares grouped together with a number assigned to each grouping indicating the suggested number of monitoring wells for that group of squares. This is based on the density of private wells in a given area. The suggested amount is usually 1, 2, 3 or 4 monitoring wells depending upon the density of private wells in the area. Where you see three or four monitoring wells suggested, it is because there are many homes in that area.
- JH said he gives a lot of credit to Jen M. and the GIS Dept. for putting these maps together.

- Jen M. memo suggested around 30 monitoring wells spread throughout the Town would give good groundwater data coverage. JH said since some monitoring wells are already in existence in various areas, the number of newly installed monitoring wells would be somewhat less than 30. Maybe more like 15 new ones.
- JH said if the Town road crew installed a monitoring well, the materials would cost around \$600 each. He suggests those would go in over a period of two years, 7 in 2020 and 8 in 2021.
- The cost for test results on each monitoring well from the lab is \$55, which is the cost of the standard homeowner's package from WEAL.
- Karen H. asked if there were any State funds or grants available for putting in monitoring wells. JH asked that of Jen McNelly and Jen is looking into it. One possible source might be the Central Wisconsin Community Foundation, which helps fund various projects in our area.
- Karen H. said with it being the Year of Clean Water, there might be funds available because of that.
- JH said there are possibilities out there and we will go after them. He felt Hull might be one of the only towns in Wisconsin that is doing this kind of groundwater monitoring as it is usually done by a county. Sauk County just started a new project.
- JH will try to get Jen McNelly to come to the next Hull Water Committee meeting on December 10th.
- It was suggested it would be good to have Nancy VanderMeer come to the Town as well.
- JH felt it was important to get monitoring wells in our larger subdivisions like Hwy. 10 East, Jurgella areas.
- Once baseline data is collected, the next step would be to look at groundwater trends the data shows. Is it getting better or worse?

11) NEXT HULL WATER COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2019 AT 5:30 P.M.

12) Adjournment. *A motion was made by Ken Ramage to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Ben Kollock. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Amman
Water Committee Secretary
Town of Hull, Portage County