

MINUTES –

## Hull WATER COMMITTEE

Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

TOWN OF HULL MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
4550 Wojcik Memorial DR., Stevens Point, WI 54482



Hull  
WATER  
Committee

1) **Call to order:** The meeting of the **Hull Water Committee** was called to order on Tuesday, Nov. 27, 2018 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, Ken Ramage, Madge Bishop, Matt Johnson, Ben Kollock, Mike Bohlman and Water Committee Secretary: Patty Amman, and Advisor Bill Omernick.

Excused: Karen Hannon

2) **Approval of minutes of the Hull Water Committee meeting of September 25, 2018.** One change was noted for the minutes by Dave Pederson. A typo on page 4 under #7, the word ‘loan’ to be changed to ‘load’ in the last sentence of that paragraph. *A motion was made by Dave Pederson to approve the Sept. 25, 2018 Hull Water Committee meeting minutes with the one correction as noted. Motion was seconded by Ken Ramage. 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.**  
- JH gave an update and overview of the status of the Kluck proposed development which recently came back before the Hull Plan Commission. The Hull Plan Commission tabled the item at their 11/13/18 meeting pending further information. At this time, it is somewhat in limbo awaiting some definition from the City of Stevens Point. Some possibility of the City purchasing some of the land that Kyle Kluck now owns but the details are uncertain at this time. The City proposed the Kluck subdivision have smaller lots (3/4 acre) with private septic and wells providing the City can acquire the northern section of the Kluck proposed development. Some of the Plan Commission members preferred going back to the larger 2-acre lots as originally proposed. Discussion among Water Committee members about the possible smaller, closer lots and should the Water Committee weigh in on what is happening with that. Dave P. said if Hull could get an iron-clad agreement with the City that sewer would come in without any annexation and without it costing anything to Town of Hull citizens, that would be worth considering. JH wants to maintain the sovereignty of the Town of Hull sustaining Hull as a government entity. The City wants to extend municipal water/sewer further down Torun Road to the north. Bill D. asked if the proposed ¾ acre lot scenario would be presented to the Hull public and JH said yes, it would go back through the process of being presented to the public, the Hull Plan Commission, Town Board, County and City. Bill D. felt if the City bought the land for groundwater protection and let the land sit, undeveloped, that could be a good thing for the groundwater. JH felt the City would be unlikely to purchase that amount of land and just let it sit

undeveloped. The City would have a difficult time justifying that to their taxpayers. It would make sense from a resource protection standpoint. Bill D. mentioned how New York City had purchased land north of NYC in the Catskills to provide a long-term quality water source for NYC.

- JH asked how fast does water move through the sands and Bill D. said it moves around 1-3 feet per day in our sandy soils. JH said our current testing for this year showed very low nitrate levels in the areas of the 4 new monitoring wells.

- JH said a new Hull Committee called the Hull Road Committee is being established and has a roster of 9 members who have agreed to serve on it. It includes some Hull citizens who walk, run, bike so that interest is represented.

- JH talked about surveying the public and the need to ask the right questions for future surveys.

- JH was approached by Senator Testin at a recent WTA local chapter meeting. Senator Testin suggested getting Hull involved in writing legislation on water issues. JH will follow up and Karen Hannon has indicated she is very interested in that. Ben K. looks forward to that as well. Madge B. said it would be important to contact Patrick Testin's office regarding this suggestion between now and January regarding conservation. JH thought he might put in on a December Hull Board agenda item. JH felt we should be in contact with Nancy Vandermeer as well. Ben K. said the Water Committee could discuss current water legislation and let the legislators know the Committee's ideas or support on various water legislation bills. JH said it is important to hold the people you elect accountable whether it's for state positions for town board members as a part of representative democracy.

- Ben K. asked if Hull currently has any kind of social gathering or holiday gathering for all the Hull Committee/Commission members as a whole group. JH said Hull does not but that it is a good idea and maybe he could discuss that with the Town Board in appreciation for their participation. Ben felt it would be a good opportunity for intermingling of the groups on a social level and meet the different citizens who participate in the different Hull groups. JH said those Hull citizens that participate in the various Hull Committees/Commissions often attend City and County meetings as well that relate to their group.

- Dave P. shared with the Water Committee a publication called Wisconsin Land Use Megatrends which includes maps and data on water and land issues.

- JH said nitrate and water issues are basically a public health issue. Madge B. said New Hope was trying to present their water issues as public health issues too.

- Bill D. spoke about Nelsonville having all their 80 private wells tested as part of a grant project through the public health department to survey those wells. Nitrate levels have been rising in the village wells and they are trying to find out why.

- JH asked, once you find out about a potential problem, what can you do about it. Bill D. said you change your activities and wait 50 years for the water/land to show up the results of those changed activities.

- PA handed out a brochure from the WI DNR which is the DNR's current brochure on Nitrates in Drinking Water. It includes information on health risks, how and when to test for nitrates, etc. The brochure is located in the Hull Municipal Building lobby brochure rack for Hull citizens who wants to pick up a copy.

- Mike B. asked if we could do another push of information before the end of the year on how we can be good stewards of groundwater in our own neighborhoods. Watch the salt (on driveways) this winter, etc. Mike said one of the initial reasons we were surveying people on how best to communicate with them was because we wanted to share information on how to be good stewards of groundwater.

## **5) Notes of Water Steering Group meeting of Oct. 31, 2018.**

- The Water Steering Group discussed what is suggested Hull do in 2019 for water testing. JH said there is good information in the notes and encouraged Water Committee members to read it over.

It had been suggested going to testing of twice a year for 2019 for the established Hull monitoring wells and the citizen volunteers of Stroik/Emerald Forest subdivisions.

**6) Water Testing in 2019 –**

**a. Stroik/Emerald Forest (5 volunteer citizen wells)**

- Patty A. said the last of the water tests for 2018 for this citizen group will be done in early December and a letter will be going out soon to the 5 citizen volunteers to take their water sample again, the 4<sup>th</sup> test for this year.
- The spreadsheet is updated as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> round of tests in September 2018 and the spreadsheet was shared with the Water Committee. After the 4<sup>th</sup> test, to be done in December, the spreadsheet will show the seasonal variation for 2018.

**b. Hull Monitoring Wells (4 wells)**

- Bill Omernick said he just completed testing/sampling the water in the 4 Hull monitoring wells this past Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. That is the last of the 4 tests for those wells this year. Bill O. found that all 4 of the wells were up about 5” to 7” in terms of water levels for this round of testing. The new equipment is working perfectly.

**c. Should future testing be quarterly, bi-annual or annual, or spring and fall?**

- JH talked about how we have now collected baseline water data for these areas. Now we need to figure out how to spread that kind of testing throughout Hull with more concentration in the urban areas.
- Discussion about the merits of testing 4 times per year versus 2 times a year. It was generally agreed that with new wells, to test 4 times the first year to establish baseline data and determine seasonal variation, then go to twice a year testing, spring and fall for subsequent years.
- On the 4 Hull monitoring wells, the water tests this year did not show a lot of variation through the 4 seasons.
- Discussion of costs of various tests. To test for just nitrate and chloride would save about \$8 per test. Around \$144 total savings over the year. Hull is already getting a lower price on the Homeowner’s Package test since no bacteria is being tested for and since it is a town project.
- JH felt the most important indicator of the water test is the nitrate levels. The other indicators are helpful. Chloride can indicate influence from road salt or possibly from a home water softener system. Bill D. said there is an aesthetics standard for chloride and at 200 ppm you will begin to taste it.
- Ben K. asked when water tests show 10 ppm for nitrate or higher for a Hull private well, are nearby homeowners notified? Bill D. indicated the information is private to the homeowner and it’s up to the homeowner if they choose to notify their neighbors. In the case of Karen Hannon, she has been informing her neighbors of their nitrate level situation.
- Madge B. asked about additional items in water from a public health standpoint that might be tested for such as pharmaceuticals. Bill D. said the lab has a list of about 15 pharmaceuticals and personal care products they can test for including indicators like artificial sweeteners. Some of these items are to indicate where the water may be coming from (human or agriculture sources). These are not necessarily health issues in themselves. They are just used for indicators of water sources. Bill D. they are just scratching the surface of all the myriad of compounds that could be found in wells. JH said this topic is still in it’s infancy. Ben K. mentioned a study he read about fruit trees growing near a drainage field and the trees would pick up traces of medications that would show up in the fruit itself. JH will be attending a County Solid Waste meeting tomorrow and will bring up what we do with pills, for example.

Madge asked about the relevance of research for areas sometimes referred to as cancer hotspots or clusters. Bill D. said there is so much that goes into what makes cancer form and there can be a lot of different elements and aspects that can go into that. We don't even know how much medication is dispensed within the County. We know that after the City's wastewater treatment plant takes out biological material, there are still trace amounts of pharmaceuticals that get discharged into the Wisconsin River.

- JH said any new monitoring wells that Hull puts in should be installed in Hull's right-of-way or Hull parks.
- Bill Omernick purchased for Hull the same kind of water sampling equipment that he was getting on loan from Pete Arntsen. Bill O. said the new equipment is working great.
- Bill D. asked the group how they felt about, if there would be a quick and non-expensive test to find out if their well water was being impacted by their neighbor's septic system outflow (plume). Would they want to know that information? Some indicated they would like to know. Bill D. emphasized that some of the compounds are not necessarily harmful to anyone as they are at such low concentrations. JH thought that was a great secondary question and the potential resolution to that. Right now, Hull is trying to get basic information across the whole town to identify basic water quality. The question of 'causation' is important but could get very involved and possibly controversial. Kyle Kluck had mentioned that he was not as concerned about nitrate since he said that it is found all over Portage County, but his concern was more with pharmaceuticals.
- JH would like to see testing of high-density urban areas and what the level of nitrate is in those areas. The tough questions come up after you've collected and looked at the water sample data. JH said we ought to be looking for some resolution to questions that are raised.
- Ben K. asked if there are any models of certain size farms where you can measure and predict homes within a certain distance downstream are at a higher risk of high nitrate levels. Bill D. said there are a lot of models out there and something could be developed. He said when Well #11 was designed, a model was created to show the groundwater would be sourced through that old river channel and it would right below the Town of Hull. Private wells and septic systems tap into that same aquifer channel. That's why Stevens Point is this 'city of wonderful water' because you've got this huge underground sand aquifer that was an old river channel.
- Ben asked about if spring/fall tests would catch the influence of farm activity and Bill D. said the fall test might.

*A motion was made by Dave Pederson to go to twice a year water testing (in 2019) of the Hull 4 monitoring wells and the Stroik/Emerald Forest volunteer citizen wells and to do those tests in the spring and fall and if any new monitoring wells are installed in 2019, to test just those new wells 4 times the first year to establish baseline data. Motion was seconded by Bill DeVita. Motion passed.*

- Matt J. asked if something might show up from indicators other than nitrate and chloride and Bill D. said yes, the other indicators in the Homeowner's Package could be useful in helping to show other potential problems that might be happening with the groundwater and help point to a possible cause.
- Dave P. felt it was important to continue using the standard Homeowner's Package (less bacteria) for water sampling/testing and revisit this decision sometime in the future.

*A motion was made by Matt Johnson to continue using the standard Homeowner's Package test (in 2019) for the Hull 4 monitoring wells and the Stroik/Emerald Forest volunteer citizen wells (9 wells total). Motion was seconded by Mike Bohlman. Motion passed.*

**7) Transient Non-Community Wells, some details and explanations.**

- Lindsay Benaszkeski, Sanitarian for Portage County supplied (e-mailed) answers to questions Hull asked about TNC's and those were shared with the group along with specific test information from Jordan Bar and a matrix (created by Patty A.) showing the approximately 5 or 6 locations in Hull that are TNC's and their nitrate levels over the past 5 years.
- JH said this is another data resource we can use since yearly water testing of these sites is required by the state. Tests are for bacteria and nitrate.
- JH wants to get a commitment from the City that they will continue to provide Hull with water data information on the City's 9 monitoring wells that are in or near the Town of Hull.
- Ben K. brought up a concern that although homeowners can have their water tested on a voluntary basis, if there is a home that is in a high-risk area for high nitrate, that homeowner might have children and not know to test for nitrate in their water. They might not realize their children are at risk. Ben asked if there should be an effort to educate homeowners, especially with mothers and children to let them know they might want to get their water checked if they live in a higher risk area. Bill D. said that is usually recommended at the pediatrician's office for anyone with young children.
- JH asked about caregivers and Bill D. said caregivers are required to have their water tested also as part of their licensing process.
- Madge B. asked Bill D. if the lab had seen any increase in water test requests since the County did their own water test project. Bill D. said there has been an increase state-wide but he was not sure about Portage County one way or the other.
- Ben K. asked if there were any statistics on blue-baby syndrome or issues related to high nitrate and how prevalent that might be in certain areas, Portage County. Bill D. said that might be a questions for Lindsay B. (County Sanitarian). JH favors disclosure of that kind of information but he does not favor targeting someone. But rather, in general to the population, here's what you need to be on the lookout for and these are the associated dangers and risks.
- Matt J. said that might be a secondary goal and part of the influence on the legislators because such a large percentage of people in Wisconsin are on private wells, yet there is nothing out there to assist homeowners in the protection of their private wells.
- The question came up what the percentage of private wells are in Wisconsin. It might be in the Megatrends document that was shared at this meeting.

**8) LaCrosse County Water Task Force article from Jim McKnight, Amherst Community Spirit newspaper.**

- JH said the LaCrosse County issue involved a task force that was created in response to part of a public health problem due to high nitrate levels. He felt it was good that county was taking this on as a public health issue.
- JH pointed out that municipal water can have challenges as well as private water. Citing municipal water in Flint, Michigan and others.

**9) Dates for Water Committee meetings in 2019.**

- Discussion on the best start time for Water Committee meetings. Matt J. and Ben K. both preferred 5:30. It seemed 5:30 p.m. generally worked out best for this particular group.

*A motion was made by Madge Bishop to approve the suggested meeting dates/calendar for 2019 for the Hull Water Committee and to keep the meeting time at 5:30 p.m. Motion seconded by Ben Kollock. Motion passed.*

**10) Next meeting date: Tuesday, January 22, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.**

**11) Adjournment.** *A motion was made by Dave Pederson to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Bill DeVita. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Amman  
Water Committee Secretary  
Town of Hull, Portage County