

# Hull WATER STUDY Task Force

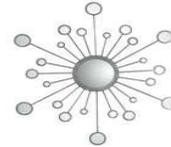
MINUTES –

## Hull WATER STUDY Task Force

Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.

TOWN OF HULL MUNICIPAL BUILDING

4550 WOJCIK MEMORIAL DRIVE, STEVENS POINT, WI 54482



- 1) **Call to order:** The meeting of the **Hull Water Study Task Force** was called to order on Thursday, December 8, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. by Water Study Task Force Co-Chair John Holdridge at Hull Municipal Building, 4550 Wojcik Memorial Drive, Stevens Point, WI 54482.

Present: Co-Chair: John Holdridge, Co-Chair: Mel Bembenek.

Committee Members: Tim Zimmerman, Russ Prusak, Gwynne Bablitch, Phil Gjevre, Water Study Secretary: Patty Amman.

Advisor- Paul McGinley of UWSP College of Natural Resources,

Advisor- Ray Schmidt Water Quality Specialist for Portage County,

Others Present: Dave Wilz

Excused: Bill DeVita, Harry Obremski, David Schmidt

Absent: Mike Olson, Gladys Laug, Terry Smith

- 2) **Approval of minutes from November 10, 2011 Water Study Task Force meeting.**  
*Due to the fact that there was not a quorum at the meeting (only 6 members out of 12), there were no motions made, only discussions.*

- 3) **Citizens wishing to address the Water Study Task Force on non-agenda items.**  
**Agenda items are for discussion and possible action:** *None.*

- 4) **Announcements/Comments Task Force members.** *None.*

- 5) **Communications from Robert Perkins regarding Task Force training for statistical analysis.**

Holdridge You have in front of you a letter from Robert Perkins to the Town of Hull Board of Supervisors. He says: *“Dear Board of Supervisors: It has become apparent to me that the approach of your study is contrary to generally accepted administrative or health study approaches. When the minutes of recorded meetings are not accurate and incomplete transcripts of the proceedings, while not a violation of open meeting law, anyone reading those minutes is misinformed making any claim of transparency political rhetoric so I am resigning from the Water Study Task Force. Respectfully yours, Robert L. Perkins.”* We just got that in the mail. I had written a letter to him because he

had put out (*something*) about statistical methods. That we ought to have some sort of instruction on statistical methods. I don't disagree with that but I don't see that as a function of this group. Maybe if we get to the point where we are going to be much more scientific, then that may well be necessary. I responded to him and I think there was a letter from Phil G., Russ P. and then his initial one that you have a copy of.

I haven't talked with Robert, but I think I probably will. I don't understand questions of transparency. We never pretended this was scientific. We said right from the get-go that we were going to have 6 meetings and our goal was to look at the evidence that is there now and see if we can make any sense out of it. We divided it up into sections, and that's hopefully what we'll end up with. With some sort of report that looks at data that may go back a number of years to try to get a fix on water quality and quantity in the Town of Hull. I don't think we've been misleading or anything like that. Does anybody disagree with that?

Prusak           No. Minutes are minutes and a transcript is a transcript. The minutes are only a summary of what goes on so if you want a complete transcript, you can always have the tape transcribed word for word.

Holdridge       I think the tape is probably those 35 pages. That's almost verbatim.

Amman           It's pretty close. It's almost verbatim.

Bembenek       I was going to say, there's maybe only one word or two that are missing.

Amman           The only thing we are missing is when somebody is rustling papers close to the microphone or there's more than one person talking at a time. I can't sort that out on the tape. Anybody listening to it (*the tape*) can't either. So I do the best I can with what I can actually hear. So it's almost verbatim.

Holdridge       I think Robert raised some good questions. At some point they can be explored more in depth, some of them. But other than that, I'm kind of confused about motivation and so forth. Any other comments? Okay, let's look at #6.

**6)       Outline of written summary report of Task Force findings on Hull's water quality and quantity.**

**And**

**7)       Preliminary discussions of future water monitoring that should occur in the Town of Hull.**

Holdridge       As a matter of trying to organize something, I put together an outline of the Water Study Task Force final report. You all have a copy of that. The background, I talk right up front that we ought to have limits of investigation and spell that out. I listed some there so nobody is confused about it being based on some scientific standards to go into a scientific journal. I came up with quality indicators. Basically I went off what Bill DeVita has and his sampling, the homeowner's package. These are the sort of things citizens are very interested in, bacteria, nitrate and so forth. I added in there the discussion about metals, well construction and water

flow. I think the last third of the minutes that you read talked about water flow and how that can influence. So that would be the quality indicators.

Then you look at each area. I said Northwest Hull, which we all know as this is becoming fairly public, the I-39/West area because of the planning for it and the issue over I-39 West/Casimir interchange with the City trying to annex it. Central Hull which is Jordan Road and North Reserve Drive, that's almost a central location. Northeast Hull is Torun Road and Fairview Village Mobile Home Park then Southeast Hull is Highway 10 and Brilowski Road, that area. So that puts them in some kind of geographical location tied to some kind of road network.

Then I think you need some section on quantity of water in Hull. I don't know as that is as big an issue as quality. It is an issue and I think it's an issue in the I-39 West area where there is some quantity question.

Then I think you need to explore municipal well #11 which has some data that was collected and see what is gained out of that.

Then summary and conclusion from what we learned.

Probably the most important part is Section 8, future directions, where does this group go from here once we've got some basic data down. How would we design a plan that would strategically collect samples and try to get us a long-term fix on what the quality is in the Town of Hull and possibly the quantity. That to me is what we ought to be looking for. But this is open and up to the Task Force, particularly Paul M. and Ray S., how they would see it going.

Schmidt I think from what I'm seeing here, John, developing a knowledge base and future direction. What I see as taking people from ignorance, who have unrealistic expectations, giving them the knowledge they need to understand the whole groundwater system and then adjusting their expectations. Because for generations people have been expecting to put in a well and get all the water they want. At one time, when they didn't want as much water as people want now, that was fine, they could do it. When I took a bath once a week, maybe, that worked. But now, folks are using a lot more water and like you said, in the I-39 area there might be some limitations on what those wells can provide. So it's a matter of understanding and people adjusting their expectations, I think.

Holdridge And probably the complexity of the issue.

Schmidt Yes.

Holdridge Questions are always simple. But trying to answer those questions can get very, very complex. That's why I think the limitation up in front is important. Any comments Paul?

McGinley Maybe just a brief comment or two. I thought it was a pretty good outline. I would agree with Ray, I could see where part of this... and maybe it reflects my background or bias on this but maybe a section ahead of that quality and you mentioned the water flow could be putting this into perspective. A couple of pages that talks about where the groundwater is coming from and the water table contours and showing the flow paths. In a way, it's complicated but there is sort of big picture view, I think, yes, a system view that may help people understand what we're looking at.

Holdridge I was thinking as you take those indicators and go down to Section 4, those become part of each section.

McGinley True, sure.

Holdridge Plug in the water flow, the depth, the well, all those indicators.

McGinley I think it's a good idea. I don't think you're looking at a particularly long report, something that gets right to the point and makes people enjoy reading it. An interesting read, that could be the challenge.

Holdridge That's why it's got to be short.

McGinley If they have any questions, they could go back and read the minutes. Maybe I can sneak something out that's related to this John: as I was looking at this I was thinking, what is the data you do have so far and I tried to make a quick summary of what I think is the existing data. So I'll pass these around. All I was trying to do was summarize what we were talking about so far in terms of that data set. I don't want to de-rail that discussion but maybe sneak this in here. The existing data you have is really strongly focused on that homeowner's package type analysis. I thought it might be interesting to look at some of those numbers. Just in the township alone in our database we have more than 1,600 nitrate analysis. So there's actually quite a few numbers out there. These are taken over time so it's not all in the last 10 years. As we talked in a previous meeting, more of those were taken in the 90's than were taken in the last 10 years. None the less, there are quite a few samples. We have the Town of Hull 1980's study which was actually separate. That's data that Melvin found stored away someplace that was another interesting set. John, you mentioned the Stevens Point wells. That data is readily available on-line. You can download the Stevens Point data, the other public water systems in the Township like the mobile home parks. I should say the Stevens Point monitoring wells that we're going to talk about later, probably.

Holdridge The monitoring wells; is that on the....

McGinley I'm sorry, I mis-spoke. The Stevens Point monitoring data is not available. That's what you hope to get. I was digging around in my files and I did find a map that Greg Disher had shared with me 10 years ago that actually does have the locations of different wells on there.

Bembenek Bring that along, we might have to leave it there!

McGinley So I really think you're looking for an update of what Greg shared 7 or 8 years ago.

Bembenek Does it just show the locations or does it show information on depth or anything?

McGinley There is a spreadsheet floating around. Greg shared a spreadsheet with me that went to about 2000 so that only included this data that was collected in 1988 when they started

collecting data. So I have a spreadsheet that goes to the first 12 years and then Ray, you're spreadsheet goes to 2005.

Holdridge How many wells were there?

Bembenek I was going to say there were like 40 some.

McGinley This is a little hard to see but on the map I have; this is the airport, we're here, here's Hwy. 66, Torun Road, where those orange dots are; those are the monitoring well locations. It's a rather interesting network.

Bembenek That's just the Town of Hull on there, right?

McGinley Yes. Then you come down here and there are quite a few more wells down here along the..... a lot of the wells are right here. I do have another sheet but I thought this was the area we were most interested in.

Bembenek I think there are some down by the river bottom off of Brilowski Road where the City owns the land, there's a few on that side, southeast.

Schmidt That whole monitoring network wraps around that.

McGinley Right, yes. In a way, it's an impressive network. I've played around in a preliminary way since I assume you are going to get the full data set so I didn't want to devote a lot of time to mess around with this. But you can track it. The water levels are in there. I listed the parameters that showed up in the spreadsheet that I have. It's really the same ones. It's the homeowner's package type information, pH, chloride, nitrate, manganese, iron, zinc which is something a little bit different, then alkalinity and hardness.

Amman What is COD?

McGinley COD is chemical oxygen demand so it's a measure of organic material in the water. I've never looked at that. I didn't see a lot of.....

Schmidt I didn't look at it.

McGinley There was nothing particularly interesting in the COD information. I'm not quite sure what they were hoping to see there. They also looked at sodium which is a little unusual, that's not part of our homeowner's package. Maybe they were thinking of road salt. That's potentially a pretty big piece of data that you have. The 4<sup>th</sup> one I had on this list was the public water systems which is the Stevens Point well you mentioned, John. There are the mobile home parks, Recre Acres. That's a community water system so they have been looking for a few things; nitrate, a little bit of additional testing. Maybe over the last 10 years they've sampled for uranium a couple of times so it's not a lot of data but that is a little more data than we have in the homeowner's type packages. There's a couple of taverns and a church that also were sampled.

Holdridge So this would be the key data sources?

McGinley I guess I was going to run this past you to see if I was forgetting anything.

Holdridge Ray, what do you have in your shop? Do you have anything outside of this?

Schmidt In addition to the ones that the UWSP data base has, we have some from the State Lab of Hygiene, from DATCAP and DNR that had done some investigation. Also from the Portage County Health Care Lab that was in business for 20 years from the late '70's until 2000.

Holdridge Do you have the well construction data?

Schmidt Yes, we have all that.

Holdridge I assume that would be helpful.

Schmidt Yes, I think so. That's what the GIS is based on and so is well construction.

Holdridge Other comments, thoughts? Of course, the one big question is who's going to do it? Paul and I have been talking back and forth and I think we'll resolve that some way.

McGinley I've been thinking some about our discussion. I would be happy.....this is one of the things I sort of do, which is write educational material. I would certainly be willing to be part of a group, or I'd be willing to work to try to draft up a ..... but I don't want to step on....if somebody else wants to do that or get involved in putting together a rough draft that a smaller group could review ahead of the next meeting. I'd be willing to wade in along that.

Holdridge I would certainly be supportive of that. We have some money in the budget, we're prepared to pay a going rate. I talked with my partner....

McGinley I wouldn't need any pay but if we, let's say we'd envision a student maybe crunching some data sets or something.

Holdridge Everybody will have the draft and we can critique that. We can send it out ahead of time and do it at the last meeting. We did this with the ordinance group. We'll refine it and sent it out to the people on this Task Force. If they have additional comments, they can get them to us and we'll move the process along.

McGinley Let me just throw this out there as a thought, would there be a couple of people who'd like to react to that draft ahead of the next meeting?

Schmidt I'd be happy to supply feedback.

Holdridge What you'd have is a draft that we'd send out and get reactions on.

McGinley Maybe we can do it a little bit more interactively, because I'm assuming whatever I'd concoct wouldn't be exactly what you would want. Maybe there'd be some gaps or pieces there that maybe some of you could make some suggestions.

Schmidt And adjust expectations.

McGinley I'm just trying to think of a process that will get a report that you're happy with.

Schmidt I think one of the things I'm looking at having more input on is the future direction.

McGinley That's true. The first couple of sections could be just the facts at this time. That might be less ambiguous. The committee can work on the recommendations.

Schmidt I've been telling some of the other town officials that Hull is going through this process and how it is working and that I would like to encourage them to implement something similar. Sharon Swab, the subcommittee chair for the Town of Grant is very interesting in having something like this for the Town of Grant. So what you guys are doing is being watched.

Bembenek The more it spreads out, the better.

Schmidt Yes.

Holdridge I could see Sharon doing something like this. In terms of this background, I could write an introduction and circulate that to you.

McGinley I'll leave that as a blank then.

Holdridge The other technical stuff.... If you could integrate the technical stuff from the districts, that's a little different ball game. I think Ray is right, that last part is really the most important: where do we go from here. How do we take everything....maybe that section has to come up after we've seen the draft and started to think about this.

Gjevre That would be my suggestion.

Bembenek Do you think, John.....one more meeting wouldn't be enough?

Holdridge It may or may not be. If we get a report that we pretty much agree on, we get together one last time and look at that.

Prusak What you do is maybe get the report out first and have a meeting next month, but it gets pushed into February or March, give you a chance to review the report and then come back, act on the report, approve the report and then go from there.

Holdridge Here's where this takes us. Kind of get at what Robert Perkins was looking for. Some sort of search that has validity based on a scientific method.

Bembenek What do you think, Paul and Ray? A couple more meetings probably to ..... instead of just having one more next month.

McGinley You'll probably have to wrestle with these recommendations a little bit.

Bembenek We'll have to see what we end up with next week with the City.

Holdridge Maybe we'd have one in January. The second Thursday in January, Patty?

Amman The second Thursday would be January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

Holdridge And maybe we'd look at that second Thursday in February (*too*). Then that would be the date we'd try to wrap this up and have a plan going forward, very crucial. The problem with the 1980's study is they collected data and it just kind of dropped. We don't want this thing to just drop, it's too important of a topic. Every time I read the newspaper, there's something in there about water.

Bembenek I don't think we actually dropped it, we got what we got and at that time, I think that was about as far as we could go. I think Ray would agree, it was something started....

Holdridge There wasn't the urgency.

Bembenek That could have been part of it.

Schmidt The state was rapidly ramping up. The DNR was throwing all kinds of staff and money at groundwater. Once the state got involved, they were pushing the local governments out. They wanted to have a certain way of looking at things coming down from the state and they were getting the money from the feds to do that. Now there's no money left in Madison, or in Washington so we need to look at citizens to help.

McGinley I can also picture where it's a little hard to ..... you get this information, like in that case, 40 wells, and you see quite a range. Some of the wells have higher than acceptable levels of nitrate, others don't, but every well is a little different. They have a different source of water. The trick is what kind of recommendations do you make, other than everybody should get their well tested.

Schmidt And then what is normal?

McGinley Right.

Schmidt These are all normal. Normal is a range.

McGinley But I think this group has gone a little beyond that. We've been talking about pesticides....

Holdridge If you brainstormed, what would you do for the future? How would you structure a program in Hull to monitor the water? What would that consist of, a reasonable approach?

Schmidt I think it's going to consist of wells throughout the Town, representative throughout the Town and sampled on a regular basis. Based on them and the publicity from those samples would encourage other folks to sample as well. I think what one of my goals county wide is to get people to stop drinking water unless they test it and know what they're drinking. Anything we can do to get to that is good in my eyes. I would like to see the whole Town represented in the future sampling and on a regular basis.

Holdridge Would you do something on the metals? Is there a need to get outside of the homeowner's package and look at something like uranium?

McGinley I would think the preliminary indications are yes. Although based on what we've seen, which is just a little bit, that it seems that is a bigger issue in deeper bedrock wells than it probably is in these upper wells. Stevens Point wells, they look for uranium too. They find it but it's not anywhere near the standard limit.

Holdridge By doing the historical analysis, that should tell us that maybe this area needs some monitoring for uranium and metals. Some more exotic kind of things.

McGinley Right. Ray showed in his map the area where wells are in granite. I don't know how deep a typical private bedrock well is. Maybe there's quite a variation there.

Schmidt There is.

McGinley I don't know how important it is. Is it going to be a bigger issue if you have a 300' deep well in granite or if you have a 50' deep well? I guess we really don't know that.

Prusak Wouldn't you do a retest like every 5 years or 10 years? I don't know how often you would do that. But things can quickly change on you. But even if it was a series of test wells, 10 wells in the Town would be tested every 3 years, every 5 years, something like that, you'd basically see what way your trend is. Then you'd know to go out in this direction and do more wells in concentrated areas or something like that. But it's good to get something so you know it's changing over time and how fast it's changing.

Schmidt Yes.

McGinley Yes, I agree. I think it'll be interesting if we can get this information from the City. The little bit I've plotted up, when you think about it, these wells were initially sampled quarterly for the first couple of years, now they're annually since 1988, that's a long time ago.

Holdridge They were pretty disciplined weren't they?

McGinley Yes.

Holdridge They probably had to be. Was it some kind of federal requirement?

Schmidt Those were just because they wanted knowledge on what was coming their way.

Holdridge They have federal standards for the water.

McGinley Sure.

Holdridge How they check it is a different issue.

Zimmerman I'd like to see...my vision of the future is emergency situations. What happens if a house runs out of water? The well just outright quits. You're up there in the northwest in the bedrock and it's a dry summer and you haven't got any water. Or, like the Kickapoo station when the neighbor was opening her water thing and the pipe came on fire. The City wouldn't connect her unless she joined the City. Well what happens if you get it out here along .... They finally annex along I-39 up there and put a gas station somewhere up there by Casimir or whatever and what if they get a leaking pipe, like Fleet Farm had. That was the best system they had and it still leaked, it cracked open. What can the Town do? What will the Town do? Will they say its tough luck and it's your own business? That type of emergency situation. Can we do something for 30 days or something like that? Haul water or.... For water quality/quantity types of things.

Bembenek There isn't much the Town could actually do. I've got a cabin in Sayner in the Town of Plum Lake and my well went out. It was a 4" casing, down 80'. I put a 6" casing in at 100' and I got the best water there is. I couldn't get any help, I was on my own.

Zimmerman I understand. This is where planning takes place. What if you put a \$1 tax on every house for every year? If you have 500 or 1,000 houses, you'd get a \$1,000 every year. A \$1 tax is not going to kill anyone. It's not going to increase before someone would start to holler. But again, you'd have some kind of reserve fund for doing something like those wire cages like the County sometimes haul. But it's just planning wise. You could put a cap on it as soon as the fund reaches maybe \$5,000, you'd cut it off, no more tax then. That's just a for instance. It's not a proposal. It's like they say, prior proper planning produces positive products, or something like that. The 5 "p's".

Holdridge I think that's a good idea. We have 2,020 households. What would happen if 500 households all of a sudden didn't have water? What would you do?

Bembenek They'd have to look for the closest water main, if you've got one around, and it's called annexation.

Zimmerman In Black River Falls about 20 years ago, they had that whole thing start.

Holdridge If 25 households lost water.... in the minutes it was referenced before about Scott Rifleman where all 4 were sharing a well.

Bembenek Those are pretty common in some areas.

Schmidt Yes, they are.

Zimmerman If you were going to put in a system yourself, how would you do it? Would you put a private/public partner so you'd put a well on a square inch of Stevens Point property and put a 12" pipe all the way up to the Town of Hull. On public.....like that so Stevens Point can't deny you the water. You're in Stevens Point and they can't deny you the water.

Holdridge They have to deal with towns that have a legitimate health issue. If they can provide it, they have some responsibility.

Bembenek But most of the Town of Hull they can't provide.

Zimmerman Like I said, you do planning for if it's a one-in-20 year situation, or one-in-50 years.

Holdridge I think that should be looked at. Another thing that Phil raised in terms of septic and lot sizes, if you discover these nitrates are coming from the septic, in some sections of Hull it may be coming from agricultural fields too, but if the lot sizes are ½ acre, maybe when a subdivision goes in, you need to impress upon people that the lot size is 2 acres. Some of the minutes reflected this water flow issue. You can't have a well or a septic up gradient from a well where the water flow is coming through and taking all the septic right into the well area. Isn't that the problem Ray?

Schmidt Yes, that's part of it.

Holdridge The Plan Commission is developing a revised subdivision ordinance and some of those kinds of thoughts ought to be in the subdivision ordinance. We ought to be reflecting through this effort what really impacts on the ground. I can see that some of these things have an impact.

McGinley That's where this student's project may be interesting. That was the motivation behind that. In parts of the Town, you have quite a bit of nitrate in the water. It is an interesting question. Where is it coming from? If you think about septic systems and private wells, you have one thing going for you and that is the plume from the septic system probably isn't that wide, that zone of contaminated water. Private wells don't really draw water from a big area. So you could have these lines of contaminated water and have these wells and there's kind of a random.... there's also the depth of the well issue. You can probably get lucky in a lot of cases and sometimes you're not going to get lucky. So I think it's a little bit trickier than being next to an immense farm field where there isn't a lot of mystery to where the water is going and it's all probably nitrate.

Zimmerman I have another question on patterns for housing. What if someone wanted to put a 40 unit housing thing around a creek or lake? Would that make any difference to the planning? Right now you say maybe single and duplex family houses but you don't really see a lot of large

apartment complexes in the Town of Hull. I think it would be wise to say..... sometime, somewhere someone is going to stick an apartment complex somewhere in the Town of Hull along a beautiful road or a lake or something like that and you should plan for that.

Holdridge      Some of that is pretty well controlled by the zoning. Most of our land is zoned for single family. With building permits, you have all these checks. I know, Ray, when they dig a pond, that's kind of a trend to dig a pond on their land, I think that is pretty well controlled by Portage County.

Schmidt        Yes, the County controls that.

Holdridge      I think you have some checks. I think good public information is the key. As much as you can communicate with the public is crucial.

Bablitch        What I'm wondering is who is going to be charge of keeping and maintaining this information, the database? Paul's got some information, Ray's got some information and we're collecting all this stuff but I think we need to establish someone or a body that is going to maintain the information and as new stuff comes in, it gets put in one place so that no one is running around in the future talking to Paul and to Ray and to anyone else just trying to find stuff. I think it's important to set up some kind of central body to keep it. Not to give you too much work, but it makes sense to go with Portage County because then maybe we can encourage other townships to start doing the same. If the townships around us start noticing trends in the change of their quality of water, that's a really great place for you to say, "Come to us and look at what's coming you're direction. We're seeing that here." I hate to give you this project but somebody central has to be collecting and have a spot where you can go to.

Bembenek      That would be a good idea to have it by the County, by Ray because the township can go to the County.

Schmidt        I think the GIS is pretty well suited to something like that.

Bablitch        The thing is, if we don't start doing it, and it might not happen for a long time but sooner or later someone at the state level is going to say that it all has to come to the state. But I think if you start it here and develop it and maintain control, it may end up growing and expanding. It becomes more like a network rather than coordinated through Madison or somebody else. Then we have more control over our data and have better access to our data.

Bembenek      You don't want to get it too far out of the area because then you have a problem getting it back.

Bablitch        Right.

Holdridge      LaVerne Syens is on our Board and we met and talked today about organizational questions, job descriptions, who's responsible for what. I think that's one of the crucial parts. I think that data...it needs to be somebody at this level that collects the data. That has to be coordinated with Portage County, they have enormous resources. It's like, why don't we have

our own police department? Well, 29% of what you pay in property taxes goes to Portage County so we ought to be using Portage County's Sheriff Dept. Now we use a little more because we pay a little extra money in the summer for patrols. As you look at the staff here and start to identify here is what we expect you to do, that's a function. It's not entirely different from who is responsible down here for animal control because that's a financial thing. We get something back from every license we get and I think we probably settled with the treasurer, Jim K. who has the skill level and seems to understand that. So I think you have to do that. Now we're not interested in hiring administrators and loading up that but we are interested in getting our personnel with certain assigned functions and that is their responsibility. Just like the zoning question, to some extent. We're under Portage County Zoning but we're going to have a section that pertains just to Hull. For example, the area where you live, Gwynne is a whole different planning area, I-39/West. We don't have anything like that anywhere else in Portage County. So that is a function that is a joint one. Our Plan Commission is a very strong commission, good solid people on there that have been there for awhile. We'll develop a subdivision ordinance that fits into the County's. We cannot put things in there that are a violation of the County's. It's all got to be coordinated but it's all local things that pertain to Hull. We've got a federal system, then the state, then county, cities, villages and towns. Each one of those has some roll. If we start taking over County functions, that percentage that you pay in property tax will go up and we don't want that. We want to utilize the resources we have at the County level which we really pay for.

Schmidt        The County has invested a lot in the GIS.

Holdridge      We don't need to create another Ray Schmidt.

Prusak         I don't know Ray, how you tabulate things like that. If you have some kind of linear chart that you have. If all of a sudden something started to creep up on you with all the new tests coming through and you alert the Town Board saying that you are seeing an increase in sodium or whatever it is you might be testing for out there, are you guys doing something in this area, maybe we want to study more in there. If it comes back from the County to the Town saying we detected a problem based on the data we collected, to come to the Town. We're not going to tabulate all the tests in the Town.

Holdridge      No. But I'm suggesting that Ray has 17 other towns and you don't do much work with the City.

Schmidt        No, very little work with the City.

Holdridge      But you have all these rural areas and I think we need somebody here that regularly looks over that data. Probably supplied by Ray or it comes from us to Ray. However that works.

Bablitch       What we need is a spot where somebody just hangs onto it.

Holdridge      You need a storage place.

Bablitch        The other thing is we should write in is some kind of partnership with the University because you guys are R&D. The guys that are going to inform us about upcoming stuff. They should have access to the data too, which at this point I don't think is a problem, but it wouldn't hurt to have something written in on their role in water quality in the area.

Bembenek        Yes, good suggestions.

Schmidt         You mentioned your Plan Commission, I brought along a couple of maps tonight. I think Patty gave them to all of you. One says Town of Hull Landfills and Wells. Somebody had brought that up in the past. It shows the wells that are within the setback for DNR. The DNR says you can't have a well within 1,200' of a landfill without a variance. That's where the landfills were. One north of here on Torun Road, one up on Hwy. 66 near Jordan Pond and the other one down by Jurgella subdivision. I put them all on one map but I also have the small maps of the individual ones.

Holdridge        Where is this one Ray?

Schmidt         That's up by Kozak's.

Prusak            Right on Torun. They cleaned that up in the early 1970's I think.

Schmidt         I don't remember.

Holdridge        Where was the one over in Jurgella?

Schmidt         That's in the southwest corner. You can only see about half of the subdivision.

Holdridge        It looks like half of a moon.

Schmidt         That's because the wells are covering up the eastern half.

Bembenek        That's where I told you the one house doesn't have a basement. That's where the landfill was.

Schmidt         That's something we can look at. I mapped it for you because the committee asked about it. We could look at the water quality data and see what it's like based on the groundwater flow direction. We can do those kinds of things. Like Paul said, it's hit and miss based on depth of the well and a lot of other factors.

McGinley        Do these still have monitoring wells around them? Or are they done, not doing any groundwater monitoring on any of these?

Schmidt         They never had any water monitoring wells.

McGinley        These are old-old landfills.

Schmidt Landfill is a misnomer. They're dumps.

McGinley But even old dumps will sometimes have some monitoring to it but these don't have any.

Schmidt These never did.

Holdridge We don't have any over in the western part of Hull, right?

Schmidt No known ones. The other map with the orange squares on it, you had asked earlier about septic systems in the Town. Presumably every house has its own septic system so there are over 2,000 of them. I did a quick and dirty count on the ones I thought were failing and I read in the minutes that I had said 30 or 40. Well, I did a better analysis of them and based on the depths of the soils. For any in-ground septic system where the soil map shows groundwater at less than 5 feet, because that would be roughly what would constitute a failing system, and that is where all of these orange squares are. We've got a couple thousand of them county-wide. You can see some out in the Towns of Carson and Linwood out in the west in the white area (*of the map*). In the Town of Hull, these orange squares represent about 160 septic systems that are operating right now too close to groundwater.

Bablitch That was my question. Are these still in use?

Schmidt Yes. One of the ways I asked Jeff to filter this with the GIS was systems that were installed prior to 1980. In 1980 was when I started and the County started inspecting every septic system when it was installed. So the combination of not having had an inspection and operating too close to groundwater to adequately treat the sewage, I would say is a pretty good estimate of the failing systems and there are about 160 of them.

Holdridge So give me the criteria again.

Schmidt The soils map showing that there's less than 5 feet of suitable soil above groundwater, and an in-ground system. Any in-ground system within that area would be, I think, operating too close to groundwater.

Holdridge How do you know that's failing? How do you know that?

Schmidt It doesn't matter whether it's taking the sewage and disposing of it. It may never fail hydraulically but it's not treating it from a bacteria, virus, contaminant stance.

Zimmerman In that situation or scenario of those 160 failing wells, what would you do on that basis for a house if it were ..... they sell them right and left. Is there any basis for denying them a living permit or upgrading.....

Holdridge Probably financing, would it be?

Zimmerman What I'm saying is, how would you bring them into code? Either by upgrading the sewer system or doing something else.

Schmidt I think the policy on it is something that the committee, Plan Commission or Town Board needs to come up with.

Zimmerman Are we talking mound systems here or what?

Schmidt Probably because for instance in that area up North Second Drive east of I-39, you can see where there are a lot of failing systems with the dots, but there are also a lot of mound systems in that area for new construction and also some that have been replaced over the years. We've got these older systems that are still in the ground that they've never sold the properties or they've never needed to upgrade them because of hydraulic failure, they're just failing to treat the sewage that's being discharged. I think if they were given an impetus and maybe the impetus is the committee or the Plan Commission or Town Board says we recognize now that based on the groundwater study that we have an issue here. The sewage isn't being treated and as responsible government officials, we no longer feel, with that knowledge we have now, we can allow that to continue. In the past, we've had some requests from for instance, lake management groups to the County to do survey's of existing septic systems around lakes. We've identified the ones failing and sent County orders to have them cleaned up. I think if a township made a request to the Planning Dept. to get involved in taking further action on identifying individual septic systems, notifying the property owners that their system appears to be failing based on this analysis and that the Town has recommended that they have a soil tester evaluate the soils on their property, over a short period of time, they could be cleared up. I used to think a short period of time was a couple of months. Now I think a short period of time is a couple of years.

Holdridge I look at the political realities of this. Telling 160 households that they have to...however you phrase it. The upshot is you've got to change your septic system. They're going to say, "Oh." The kicker is some kind of test that says you have a lot of nitrates in your water. You've got to link it with a crisis and the crisis may be that you're drinking water that is contaminated or something to that effect.

Schmidt Or that the water may be moving down gradient from that septic system.

Holdridge That would be a substantial issue to take on if there's no funding.

Schmidt Yes, you're absolutely correct.

Holdridge What does a mound system cost?

Schmidt About \$10,000.

Zimmerman What does a regular system cost?

Schmidt Probably \$4,000.

McGinley Let me toss in a thought on this: I agree. I think one thing we should talk about is how important is this from a nitrate standpoint. Just so there isn't any confusion there. I think when we talk about treatment, you're really talking about bacterial removal, viruses and maybe phosphorus. If I was in a lake group, I might be worried about that and if I shorten that amount of soil between the drain field and the groundwater, that might move more of that through there. But I think on the nitrate question, it's probably a little more ambiguous where it makes much of a difference.

Schmidt It doesn't make any difference if the septic system is too close to groundwater or if it's properly sited if it's a mound system. They're all going to turn all of the nitrogen into nitrate and it's going to go into the groundwater.

McGinley Right, and that extra couple of feet isn't going to make any difference.

Schmidt It's not going to make any difference. Thanks Paul. It's a good distinction.

McGinley Which opens up another....if someone really wanted to get rid of nitrate, I think there was a..... *(tape recorder skipped for a minute and the rest of his comment was lost)*

Holdridge From the minutes there were comments about the potential danger of viruses. You want to elaborate on that?

Schmidt Properly sited septic systems do a pretty good job on bacteria. Viruses have been found to travel several hundred feet before they're not infective anymore. Once they're in the groundwater, that's a real nice environment for viruses and bacteria because it's cool and it's damp and they can stay alive for a long time.

McGinley It would be interesting, I'm thinking about the student's project, if she was able to find...if there is high nitrate, whether from a septic system, if there is some indication of a sweetener or some trace element, that would open up the possibility of looking for viruses in that case. Virus testing is tricky.

Prusak In an area like Meadow Manor, it would give you something to look for when you have a concentration of apparently shallow septic systems, do more in depth testing looking for bacteria and viruses because of that concentration right in there. It would be something you'd want to go after.

Schmidt We always urge caution on doing well testing for viruses and bacteria as a diagnostic for a failing septic system because we know we've got potential there. But depending upon the time of year you do the test, the groundwater might be down a couple of feet versus another time of the year where it's up a couple feet and it's actually short circuiting the sewage into the groundwater. So we don't like to go that direction. We know it's a certain number of feet. It's under code. It's 3' of suitable aerated soil to treat the bacteria. If it's not there, the statute says the system is, by definition, failing to treat the sewage. Doing that, we can test the soil anytime of the year to see where the soil is mottled. That's where groundwater has been

sometime in the past and will be sometime again in the future. So that's the direction to go rather than getting into well testing. If for instance, that family is experiencing gastrointestinal illness, then we want to test the water and see if there are there bacteria in the water. In fact any time the kids got sick on the farm I grew up on, my dad wanted my mom to get a water test done because that was one of the things he believed in. If you've got symptoms, test the water. If nobody is symptomatic, the water sample might not tell you anything.

Prusak        A frequent standard, a study-like thing, if you put a monitoring well north of Meadow Manor and south of Meadow Manor and you have all these failing systems between the two, it might lead you to think maybe there is a problem and a relationship here; if you detect a higher virus count south of Meadow Manor as opposed to north of Meadow Manor. If that's the way the groundwater flows.

Schmidt       Or in Meadow Manor. If you are only dealing with a few hundred feet, you're probably seeing a lot of die off as you move through the subdivision. So it's only the ones on the down gradient edges of the subdivision that are going to be affecting your monitoring well. Versus nitrate which will build up. It's additive and it doesn't go away. There's nothing to make it go away once it hits the groundwater.

Holdridge     Ray, the County has a number of departments. They've got the Health Dept., Planning & Zoning; how do you relate in terms of somebody getting sick or potentially getting sick from the water? Does that go to the Public Health Dept. and they contact you or how does that work?

Schmidt       At times, they'll contact me for background information on the well that might be (*contaminated*). But any illness related stuff, that's all confidential health information that goes through the Health Dept. They have contacts with the medical community and the state immunology dept. They handle all that.

Holdridge     Paul, did you ever write that grant (*proposal*)?

McGinley     Yes. We submitted the grant. If you'd like a copy, we'd be happy to share it. We're keeping our fingers crossed.

Holdridge     I forgot to put that on the agenda.

McGinley     I put some language in there that this Task Force was very supportive of it. I think it's very persuasive. If we meet in February, we might know by then (*if the grant was obtained*).

Amman        So this would be (*grant*) money for 2012?

McGinley     Yes, it would start in the summer of 2012.

Holdridge     Any other thoughts, comments?

Zimmerman When we get that nitrate report back next month, what is it going to tell us? That we have no problems, that we have occasional problems?

Holdridge I don't know. Don't we have to look at the data?

McGinley Excuse me Tim, are you talking about the student's project where she's looking at the 10 wells?

Zimmerman Yes.

McGinley I think her objective there was to try to get at this septic system versus agriculture question. So on those 10 wells, she's looking for some pesticide break down products and also looking for things that are potential indicators from a septic system.

Zimmerman Okay. So that has nothing to do with nitrates per se.

McGinley It won't be comprehensive. I think she's only looking at 9 wells.

Zimmerman If she was looking at like 100, it might ring a bell or something like that.

McGinley Right. At this point, you'd like to figure out does this nitrate have to do something with the septic system and this might be a way to indicate that.

Holdridge Or you might discover some things you never thought of.

McGinley That we could probably research.

Schmidt We'll also get another picture of a slice of time what the nitrate is now. We also have older nitrate samples on many of those wells. So we'll have trend information.

Holdridge Can you tell by sampling whether it's older? Is there such a thing as longevity of a nitrate or how does that work? Can you say if it's 5 years old or 10 years old?

Schmidt I don't think so. But you can age groundwater, right?

McGinley There are some techniques people try to do to age groundwater by the things that came into it from the atmosphere at the time when the water came in but that's pretty involved. I think a nitrate molecule is a nitrate molecule and that's the challenge if you're trying to figure out where it's coming from and what you should do about it. Especially then if you want to think about a virus. You might not be worrying about that if it's coming from fertilizer, but if it's coming from a septic system, then you might. It would be useful to have some technique.

Schmidt Some offshoot research.

McGinley Yes.

Bablitch Did you ever get back the Madison sample results for the test on the uranium?

McGinley We were just talking about that. I don't think...Patty says they haven't seen it yet here. It would come here. They're pretty slow apparently.

Holdridge When that comes in, I think Barb will light that up. Then somebody said, if that's a real problem, then we'll probably have bottled water. I drink from it occasionally.

Bablitch It probably won't hurt you drinking from it occasionally unless it's screaming off the Geiger counter.

Holdridge It sounds like you'd have to be drinking it pretty consistently, like over a number of years.

McGinley Well that's how they set the standard. But on the other hand, it is something that has potential health risks.

Holdridge It's how they get rid of town chairmen!

Bembenek Over a number of years, if they keep drinking the water.

**8) Set next meeting date.** *The next meeting will be January 12, 2012 at 6:30 p.m.*

**9) Adjournment.**

*Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Due to the fact that there was not a quorum at the meeting (only 6 members out of 12), there were no motions made.*

Respectfully submitted,

Patty Amman  
Task Force Secretary  
Town of Hull, Portage County