

# CITY UTILITIES

200 E Berry Street, Suite 270  
Fort Wayne, IN 46802



## UTILITY ADVISORY GROUP MEETING – Meeting Notes

Wednesday, September 5, 2018 – 5:30 p.m.

Three Rivers Filtration Plant

The meeting began with a tour of the Filtration Plant given by Plant Superintendent Mike Gierscher. The tour began in the electrical/generator building then moved on to the foyer in the original part of the plant. The group proceeded through Plant 1 to the chemical feed area then proceeded to the mixing and settling tanks in Plants 2 and 3. The tour concluded with a walk through the Filter Gallery and an opportunity to look over the ultraviolet disinfection system before returning to the laboratory building.

### Attending

Rod Vargo, Northwest Area Partnership  
Beulah Matzack, Southwest Area Partnership  
Bryan McMillan, Southwest Area Partnership  
Elizabeth Garr, Hacienda Village  
Pone Vongphachanh, Upstate Association of Realtors  
Mike Gierscher, Superintendent, Water Filtration Plant  
Ben Groeneweg, PE, Program Manager, Capital Asset Management  
Mary Jane Slaton, Program Manager, City Utilities

### The meeting was called to order at 6:25 PM.

Residents and staff members introduced themselves.

UAG members thanked Mike Gierscher for the tour and commented on the valuable asset that the Plant represents in the Fort Wayne community. Mike gave a brief overview of the SCDA system that allows operators to monitor water quality, which pumps are operating at the plant, pumps at St. Joe Dam, and levels of water in elevated and ground storage tanks. Questions focused on whether the Plant is staffed at all times (yes, it is) and on what would happen if there was a massive power outage (we would go to back up generators). With the finished water reserves in elevated and underground reservoirs, the Plant could supply water for basic uses in the community for a couple of days if some event impacted our raw water source.

### Large Water Meter Replacement Program

Ben Groeneweg, PE, from City Utilities Engineering gave a presentation on City Utilities' program to change out all of the large water meters (meters larger than 1.5") in the distribution system. Water meters tend to slow over time, thus reflecting a smaller than actual usage. This impacts CU's water revenue. City Utilities goal is to bill customers fairly and accurately so if meters that measure water use by largest customers are under-reading, it means that smaller customers may be paying more to make up for revenue not collected. This "lost water" is an issue when City Utilities approaches State regulators for water rate changes. Auditing lost water is something City Utilities has done for many years. In 2016, City Utilities has about 20% unaccounted for water.



City Utilities' water system has approximately 100,000 active water meters. About 3% are large meters – sized 1.5" to 10". Approximately 43% of all water sold goes through these large meters. Since our large meter replacement program began earlier in 2018, City Utilities has been able to increase water revenue by \$110,000. Because water meter readings are used (in most cases) to bill for sewer, there is also an increase in sewer revenue when water meters are more accurate. 97% of meters are residential, but residential customers only account for about 57% of water sold.

It costs about \$0.27 to produce 1 unit (748) gallons of water. The major costs in operating the water utility are the fixed costs attributable to operating and maintaining the water distribution system. The incremental cost to produce more water for larger users is relatively small compared with the costs to operate and maintain the distribution system at full flow to supply their needs.

Discussion focused on whether City Utilities is continuing to actively market Fort Wayne to potential new, large water customers. City Utilities works closely with area economic development agencies to share information with prospective new businesses about the available capacity and quality of water produced in Fort Wayne. Bryan McMillen remarked that we have a great selling point for the Fort Wayne area – our water.

### **Departmental and Project Updates**

Mike Kiester, City Utilities Engineering

- Mike provided a list of construction projects that are underway. Smallest investment and fewest projects are currently being done in the water utility because of the lack of funds for capital projects. If the pending water rate case is approved, City Utilities expects to replace about 70 miles of water main in the next 5 years or about 14 miles per year. That is on track with the goal of replacing 1% per year.
- Largest investment continues to be in the sewer utility followed by stormwater where the rate increase plan approved in 2017 is helping to fund a number of neighborhood drainage projects. Beulah asked about locations of improvements being made as part of Southwest Miscellaneous Storm Drainage Package. Mary Jane will provide a map.
- Mary Jane gave a brief progress report on the tunnel. Working shaft is nearing its ultimate depth of 220+ feet. Construction is underway on four drop shafts and work will begin on the fifth (Thieme and Berry) early in October.

### **Other Business**

- Rod reported on a drainage issue behind Belle Tire on Lima Road. There is a private road behind the business that floods because water does not go down the drains along the street. May be an issue with the detention basin. Mary Jane will pass this along to Stormwater Maintenance.
- Rod also reported that the issue in Ludwig Park with an open trench and collapsed drain tile has not yet been resolved.
- Beulah asked about responsibility for cleaning storm drains on the street and particularly on private property. City Utilities appreciates receiving help from residents who clean debris off storm drains on the streets. It helps reduce street flooding especially when leaves fall. In general, drains on private property are the responsibility of the private property owner. City Utilities can help provide information that neighborhoods can publish on websites or in neighborhood newsletters helping to explain the importance of keeping storm drains clear.
- Mary Jane invited everyone to attend the MamaJo tours to be held on Sunday, September 9 from 11 AM – 3 PM at the tunnel work site near the Water Pollution Control Plant. Rod and his wife have

volunteered to help. Tours will begin with a video then guests will ride trolleys around the work site with several stops for photos and in depth information.

- Public open house/tour events will be held at the Filtration and WPC Plants this fall on the following dates:

**Water Pollution Control Plant – 2601 Dwenger Avenue**

Saturday, September 15, 10:00 AM – noon

Saturday, October 20, 10:00 AM – noon

**Three Rivers Water Filtration Plant – 415 Baltes Avenue**

Saturday, September 22, 10:00 AM – noon

Saturday, October 27, 10:00 AM – noon

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at 5:30 PM at Citizens Square**

(Please contact Karen Salge at 427-5065 or at [karen.salge@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:karen.salge@cityoffortwayne.org) if you are unable to attend. Thank you!)