



DRAFT

MARQUETTE AREA WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES March 20, 2025

A regular meeting of the Marquette Area Wastewater Treatment Facility Advisory Board was held at 10:02 a.m., March 20, 2025, at the Marquette Area Wastewater Treatment Plant.

ROLL CALL

PRESENT Brad Johnson, Chocolay Township (Chair)
Jim Compton, City of Marquette
George Patrick, City of Marquette
Sean Hobbins, City of Marquette

ABSENT Leonard Bodenus, Marquette Township

OTHERS Mark O'Neill, City of Marquette
Melissa Erkkila, City of Marquette
Dan Johnston, City of Marquette
Riley Bigerson, Public

AGENDA B. Johnson requested Audit Report to be added to the Agenda under New Business, b. It was moved by S. Hobbins, supported by J. Compton, to approve the agenda with the addition. Approved 4-0.

MINUTES It was moved by J. Compton, supported by G. Patrick, to approve the February 20, 2025, meeting minutes as written. Approved 4-0.

FINANCIAL

• Financial Report

M. O'Neill, City of Marquette, presented the Financial Report. M. O'Neill asked if there were any questions for him. The report is standard. M. Schlicht is available for questions also.

S. Hobbins offered a synopsis of the Board to the public attending. This plant is co owned by the City of Marquette, Chocolay Township and Marquette Township. Representatives are here from most of us today. It is basically to cover the administration and advise the plant operator, a City of Marquette employee, on operations and money being expended. B. Johnson stated each jurisdiction holds a percentage of the plant based on flows to the



plant from their area. Chocolay Township holds 7% and pays that percentage of the flow the plant treats. Each group has their own collection system and sends it to the plant to be treated and discharged into the Carp River.

OPERATIONS REPORT

D. Johnston, City of Marquette, presented the Operations Report

PERMIT COMPLIANCE FOR THE MONTH(S):

- PERMIT COMPLIANCE: There were no permit violations for the month of February.

PLANT NOTES:

- After 31 years of faithful service, Lyle Michael's last day as our Plant Mechanic was Friday, March 14th. When I started here in 1998, he was vital in showing me the ropes. His work ethic was second to none. We will miss having him around.
- I have been troubleshooting and documenting issues we've found with the operation of portions of the new Waste Receiving Station and Belt Press building. It is not unusual to find problems during the startup of any new equipment, so this sort of thing was totally expected. In fact, considering the scope and complexity of this project, it's surprising that more problems have not been found. Once the list is compiled, I will be working with Donohue to streamline the process of implementing the corrections. The City IT staff has been integral in assisting us. They been able to get us to work with the network. They have been fantastic.
- Alfa-Laval will be on site at the end of the month to replace one of the rollers on the new belt filter press that was damaged, as well as address a few final punchlist items and gather some samples for quality control evaluations.
- Staff replaced the starter motor on the #1 CoGen engine.
- Kraft will be on site within the next two weeks to perform regular service on both CoGen units. They will also be diagnosing some performance issues with the #1 CoGen unit.
- S&T Electrical will be replacing the transformer that serves our laboratory's circuit panel. This transformer has been buzzing loudly for over 25 years, but in the last four months it has gotten uncomfortably loud and needs to be replaced.
- Staff replaced both pressure hoses for the main lift boom on the Volvo loader.

INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER ACCEPTANCE ACTIVITY FOR FEBRUARY 2025

Source	Volume (gallons)	Total
Fabick/CAT	6,000	\$840.00
UPS	5,500	\$770.00
LS&I	20,700	\$2,898.00
RMS	4,000	\$560.00



Wisconsin Electric	44,500	\$1,780.00
Grand Totals	80,700	\$6,848.00

NEW BUSINESS

a. Digester Recirculation Pump

M. O'Neill stated we have four recirculation pumps, one for each of our three digesters and one on the shelf. These pumps are designed to circulate biosolids through a heat exchanger so we can keep our digesters at 95 degrees. We have had the need to move pumps around as needed for maintenance, rebuilds, etc. This means that two of our pumps have been running nonstop for sixteen years. They have been rebuilt several times, but we are at the point now where one is so bad it needs to be replaced. Bids are not useful because they are a pump that is compatible with our piping and configurations. Crane has provided a quote of \$24,371. M. O'Neill stated he is looking for direction from the Board regarding payment. It can either come out of the plant budget or the replacement fund. The plant maintenance budget has already been used to pay for unexpected failures due to the age of the units and this will continue in the future. During our budget discussion, M. O'Neill brought up that a lot of the equipment that was installed in the 2007 upgrade is reaching the 15-year life cycle, these pumps included. It raises the question again whether we should increase the budget to cover these items or keep it where it is at and address each issue as they come along. We did budget \$80,000 dollars this year, but we had unexpected failures including a boiler pump VFD, a flow meter, a BioP mixer, a transformer and a hot water tank which leaves \$21,000 left in the account until October 1. J. Compton stated he doesn't believe it is reasonable this cash flow issue is going to correct itself and as age goes on it will keep going up. It is reasonable to address that. B. Johnson recommended we take this purchase out of the replacement fund and address the budget in the future. He asked if this pump can only be purchased from Crane. M. O'Neill confirmed that they are the regional supplier for Wemco. S. Hobbins asked what the replacement fund balance is. M. O'Neill stated he would request that information from M. Schlicht. B. Johnson understands Crane is the Wemco supplier, but he would like to see three quotes, if possible, for future purchases. M. O'Neill agreed and stated the City Finance Department requires that as well. G. Patrick asked about the installation of the pump. M. O'Neill stated the plant staff will take care of that. B. Johnson motioned, supported by S. Hobbins, to take the \$24,371.00 out of the replacement fund to purchase the digester. Approved 4-0. J. Compton asked if it is the grit that wears these pumps out. D. Johnston confirmed that we have a grit removal system and a pretreat system, but it doesn't get the fine grit out. We have replaced the bottom plate several times and the cutting propellor gets plugged up with rags. They are in poor shape.



b. Audit Letter

B. Johnson stated he received a letter from the auditor Anderson & Tackman that required his signature. He didn't see any significant findings but has a copy of the letter if any of the board members would like to have a copy. M. O'Neill stated M. Erkkila can make copies and/or email it to the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

a. Solids Handling Project

M. O'Neill stated we are wrapping up the project and D. Johnson covered most of the issues we are having. G. Patrick asked about the storm sewer issue. M. O'Neill stated that he met with the contractor and engineers involved. Basically, what happened is we have a storm sewer from 1950 that was repurposed in 1979. They abandoned the bottom pipe but did not take it out. They put in a new pipe at a higher elevation and that is what our plans show. When GEI did their plan, they looked at the wrong pipe. They designed it based on the lower pipe. Because the pipe was so far off, all of the water was backing up the length of the new pipe. So, at our expense, we had to replace that pipe. That alleviated most of the problem. There is still a little amount of water in the pipe. We were going to make them dig it all up and replace it. The fear is to get that little bit of water out of there, they need to raise the pipe up in some places a tenth of an inch. Towards the back of the pipe, there are two concrete electrical vaults that are required to be 30 inches deep minimum, but it is not verified exactly how many inches they are in the ground, only that it is compliant. At 30 inches there is only two inches between the pipe and the vault. They may not have enough room to raise the pipe. They purposed putting in French drains in both manholes to allow the water to drain off. After listening to them, M. O'Neill met with Donohue to get their input and reached out to the City Engineer. The City Engineer said there is a lot of risk of ripping all of that up for a small amount of water. M. O'Neill stated he has elected to pursue the French drain option. We are fortunate that the City is at the plant dumping their vactor truck often. So, we will have them vac it out in the spring and then the staff will monitor it. B. Johnson asked how deep the drains were. J. Compton stated he didn't believe they were that deep because the plant is so close to the river. M. O'Neill stated one is brand new and the other was repurposed. That is the one that will have the French drains. There is gravel under there, so it is not on the water table. J. Compton stated he doesn't like French drains because they plug up with silt. It isn't the end of the world to have water sitting at the bottom of a pipe. Probably what will happen is where the water is sitting, it will fill up with sand and create a new bottom of the pipe. M. O'Neill stated it will make more maintenance for the staff but the vactor truck is here to help. We will keep a closer eye on it and maintain as need be. It seemed reasonable rather than digging up the entire pipe and possibly damaging the vaults. At the end of the day, it was not our fault but our plans were off and the plans did not show that second pipe.



Charter Township of Chocolay

5010 US 41 SOUTH • MARQUETTE, MICHIGAN 49855
PHONE (906) 248-1448 • FAX (906) 248-1312



PUBLIC COMMENT

- None

BOARD COMMENT

- B. Johnson stated Chocolay Township hired a Township Manager. Gregory Elliott will start April 1st.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Reviewed by:

Mark O'Neill

Director of Municipal Utilities

Prepared by:

Melissa Erkkila