



MARQUETTE AREA WASTEWATER TREATMENT FACILITY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES September 18, 2025

A regular meeting of the Marquette Area Wastewater Treatment Facility Advisory Board was held at 10:00 a.m., September 18, 2025, at the Marquette Area Wastewater Treatment Plant.

ROLL CALL

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

ABSENT Leonard Bodenus, Marquette Township

OTHERS Mark O'Neill, City of Marquette
Dan Johnston, City of Marquette
Karla Kramer, City of Marquette

AGENDA It was moved by S. Hobbins, supported by J. Compton, to approve the agenda. Approved 4-0.

MINUTES It was moved by S. Hobbins, supported by G. Patrick, to approve the August 21, 2025, meeting minutes as written. Approved 4-0.

FINANCIAL

- **Financial Report**

M. Schlicht, City of Marquette, presented the Financial Report. M. Schlicht stated she is here to answer any questions about the August Financial Report. Everything is moving along as expected. The budget approved at the last meeting will be presented to the Commission at the September 28th meeting. M. Schlicht requested that the per unit rate be approved by the Board. A unit rate of \$3.026 per k/gal was calculated per the budget and distributed to the Board at the last meeting. M. O'Neill stated the budget has to be approved by the Commission before the per unit rate can be voted on by the Board. It will be put on next month's agenda. S. Hobbins asked that Marquette Township is aware of the vote needed next month.



OPERATIONS REPORT

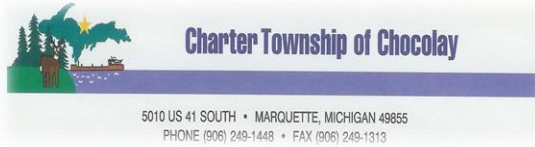
D. Johnston, City of Marquette, presented the Operations Report

PERMIT COMPLIANCE FOR THE MONTH(S):

- We violated our total phosphorus permit level for August. We are uncertain as to the exact cause, but it was most likely something coming through the plant that harmed the phosphorus-accumulating organisms in the Bio-P treatment section of the plant. M. O'Neill stated we are doing extra lab work to figure out what is causing it. We are also working with our engineer at Donohue to look over the data. G. Patrick asked what kind of things cause this. M. O'Neill stated that the microorganisms that biologically take on phosphorus are temperamental. The data points show that everything should be working but it isn't. We previously had one instance where something came through the plant and killed all the microorganisms. G. Patrick asked how much above the permit level did we violate. M. O'Neill stated the monthly average limit is 1.0 milligrams per liter and we were at 1.2 milligrams per liter. The state wants to know what is happening, why it is happening and what we are doing to fix it. The chemical we use, sodium aluminate, was never engineered for us to use. We were designed to use ferric chloride. The problem with ferric chloride is that Lake Superior does not have a lot of alkalinities in it. So, when we get high strength waste in the plant, we nitrify the ammonia and that uses up alkalinity. When we also have a phosphorus problem in the plant and the bugs quit working, we use ferric which has a lot of acid and our Ph drops. This forced us to stop using the ferric. The best and cheapest course of action was to switch to sodium aluminate that is notorious for crystallization. At this point we are not able to pump enough chemical to offset the bugs not working. The long-term solution would be to reengineer where the sodium aluminate tank is. Place it where we are feeding it and feed it through gravity rather than a pump. However, this a large capital cost. G. Patrick asked how big the tank is. M. O'Neill stated the tank is approximately 4,000 gallons. The other option was to keep using the ferric chloride and then add Soda ash to raise the alkalinity at the head of the plant. This option is a high capital cost also, so the cheaper course of action was to use aluminate. Unfortunately, it is not as effective.

PLANT NOTES:

- Our current polymer vendor, Midwest Chemical, had two employees on site to perform some jar testing on our liquid biosolids. Once again, they confirmed that the product we are using yields the best results for dewatering the sludge. We also had two reps from another polymer vendor, Polydyne, on site to try some of their products. Their results showed that the Midwest product does indeed yield good results, but they have two products they believe may be better. We have sent another digested sludge sample to Alfa Laval this week so they can run their tests using these two new products alongside the polymer we have been using. Results are pending.
- Kraft was on site to remove the genset from the #2 CoGen unit. We have brought the genset to Malton Electric in Ishpeming for an estimate for repair/overhaul, if possible.



- We are ready to go with what should be our final biosolids cake haulout to the Kempker farms in Trenary. We are waiting for the hauler to let us know when they are ready.
- I have been working with Donohue to correct some random issues that have been occurring with our new EQ Pump...it randomly decides to shut itself off with no obvious reason why it would do so. One of Donohue's integrators and I agreed that the problem could be a faulty output from the PLC. Such a failure is very rare, but it is a potential cause that we can eliminate.
- Staff repaired another leaking fitting on our FEW system.
- Staff from JCI were on site to replace a failed camera and to begin the process of repairing or replacing our camera system's NVR server. JCI is also on the hook to finally address the outstanding issues with our site access system.
- Staff repaired a faulty valve stem for one of our outdoor FEW hydrants.

INDUSTRIAL WASTEWATER ACCEPTANCE ACTIVITY FOR AUGUST 2025

Source	Volume (gallons)	Total
Fabick/CAT	2,000	\$280.00
Wisconsin Electric	44,500	\$1,780.00
MDOT (Liquid Vactor Waste)	14,600	\$2,044.00
MDOT (Storm Sewer Sand)	79	\$10,665.00
Grand Totals	61,100	\$14,769.00

SEPTAGE ACTIVITY FOR AUGUST 2025

Source	Volume (gallons)	Total
Carey/Sodergren	47,638	\$8,574.84
North Country	57,187	\$10,293.66
Stenberg	46,965	\$8,453.70
Hamel	1,666	\$299.88
A1 Toilets	5,908	\$1,063.44
Grand Totals	159,364	\$28,685.52

NEW BUSINESS

- None

OLD BUSINESS

- **Solids Handling Project**



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M. O'Neill stated we are down to the polymer and JCI. Staff have been able to achieve the 16% on their own so we will probably sign off on it. JCI is having problems with the provider of the NVR server. That is finally moving forward. Now we have to get the gate integrated with the City's software, which is a JCI product. Miron wants this project done because of the retainage we are holding so they are pushing hard on JCI to get their portion completed.

PUBLIC COMMENT


- K. Kramer stated during the Cultural Center renovations, the contractor realized a roof drain was routed into the sanitary drain. That will be fixed and routed to the storm drain.

BOARD COMMENT

- G. Patrick stated he will be gone January and February.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.



Reviewed by:
Mark O'Neill
Director of Municipal Utilities

Prepared by:
Melissa Erkkila