

**WATERLOO UTILITY MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 11, 2025
6:00 P.M.**

Mayor – Stan Darter
Aldermen Ward I Joel Vogt & Matt Buettner
Aldermen Ward II Jim Hopkins & Jim Trantham
Alderman Ward III Tina Charron & Kyle Buettner
Aldermen Ward IV Jordon Riley & Gary Most

Administrative Staff Present:

J.R. Landeck - Director of Public Works, Nathan Krebel – Deputy Director of Public Works, Roberta Rohwedder – Subdivision & Zoning Administrator, Brad Yearian – Building Inspector, Sarah Craig – Collector / Finance, Sarah Deutch – Community Relations Coordinator, Trisha Hoagland – HR Coordinator, Dane Luke – Chief of Police, Natalie Steppig – City Attorney, Mechelle Childers – City Clerk.

Petitions by Citizens on Non-Agenda Items.

A couple of residents expressed concerns about the number of water leaks that have been occurring. They stated that even local plumbers have commented on the unusually high number of water leaks since the change in the water system. The residents suggested that there appears to be a correlation with the startup of the new water plant—possibly related to pH levels, water pressure, or another factor—causing corrosion around copper fittings. One resident added that everyone he had spoken with, who had experienced a leak, reported corrosion at a fitting. Another concern raised was whether the homeowner would receive any relief on their utility bill due to the leakage.

Alderman Kyle Buettner suggested that the Utility Agenda be amended to allow the Director of Public Works to address water matters. Mayor Darter requested a motion to amend the agenda.

A motion was made by Alderman Riley and seconded by Alderman Vogt to amend the Utility Meeting Agenda and allow the Director of Public Works to present his monthly report and address the water concerns.

Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote.

Director of Public Works – J.R. Landeck

- a. Water Leaks/Concerns – JR shared with the residents that water leaks are an occurrence in the city, and in fact, they happen every year. A detailed diagram was shared illustrating how a water main connects during the construction of a development. Terms like curb stops, whips, parkways, and tree lawns were explained. The builder is responsible for installing the water line beginning at the curb stop, through the city-supplied meter, and into the home. (It was noted that in some cases, city-supplied meters are located inside the home.) It was also mentioned that the point at which a homeowner becomes responsible for the repair of a water leak can vary depending on the city. JR reported that there haven't been any major water main breaks, aside from those caused by contractors hitting a water line. Most leaks happen around copper fittings near the meter. Additional leaks are also being found in the small section where the copper pipes transition to PVC pipe, as well as at foundations where settlement has occurred. A gentleman in the audience mentioned that there has to be a link between the new water system and the recent leaks, pointing out that the new water plant has been the biggest change in the

past six months, which appears to be contributing to the problem. Research and discussion with professionals and other communities suggest that the new Type K copper, paired with flare fittings, might be a factor in the issue. Alderman Vogt requested that this type of vintage copper be included in the coupon rack for evaluation. Moreover, the elevated tower's increased pressure (3.5 PSI) could be another contributing element. Homes built within the last 20 years seem to be the most impacted. The water chemistry is less corrosive today compared to the past. However, in some cases, brass fittings have deteriorated due to improper installation and soil movement around the connections. Residents shared their frustration with the responses they have been getting about leaks on their property. They still felt that the issue was related to water quality, citing numerous complaints from other community members. It was mentioned that the current water hardness is lower than it was with the previous service. Mayor Darter offered to have their water tested free of charge, with residents welcome to observe the testing process. He emphasized that the results would confirm compliance with Illinois EPA water quality standards. Other possible causes of the leaks include foundation settlement, street movement, and this year's record-breaking wet spring. Other municipalities that have been consulted reported experiencing the same types of leaks within their communities. The issue of adjustments to water and sewer utility bills was brought up again. While sewer charges would remain unaffected, water passing through the meter still needs to be billed. However, the City indicated a willingness to discuss the billing process with the affected resident after he received his bill.

- b.** Water Treatment Facility – The final punch list of items has been addressed, and we are currently working through a few warranty items. The water hardness for the month of July measured 190 milligrams per liter, and logs remain available for review on the City's website.
- c.** Well Update – Currently operating on Wells Two and Three while addressing some issues with Well One. Well One is producing slightly higher levels of iron in the water. Is it worth mentioning that this iron does not make it into the drinking water, as it undergoes extra treatment to ensure it meets drinking standards.
- d.** Water Violation Update – Research and FOIA requests revealed that the IEPA sent the demand letter—detailing required samplings for the quarter, year, or three-year period—around April 1, but it was not received until mid-June. JR shared a detailed explanation, including dates, letters, and communications among all parties (IEPA, Pace Analytical, Certop, the City, and press releases) about the water sampling process. The demand letters also had inconsistencies: some were sent to incorrect recipients, and the City was not copied, leaving the City unaware of certain requirements and deadlines. The IEPA has been very cooperative in responding to FOIA requests and providing additional information. When asked why the City was not copied on the demand letters, the IEPA stated they were simply following their standard procedure. Because sampling demands vary, preparation work cannot be completed in advance. The City has decided the best approach is to centralize all related communications through City Hall, providing a single management point. A spreadsheet was shared to help plan and track water sample logs. Since starting this process, multiple errors have been found in Pace Lab shipments. Returning samples for timely testing has also been problematic; however, we believe this issue is now resolved by personally delivering samples to Pace Laboratories' Hazelwood facility for transport to their Peoria, Illinois, location. This new SOP will require all sampling demand letters and mailings to first go through City Hall for verification, ensuring the correct sample materials match the requirements in the demand letter, including routine samples. Once verified, the information will be sent to the appropriate team—either at the water plant or within the distribution system. Finally, confirmation will be made to ensure the samples were delivered to the right parties.
- e.** Capital Projects Update:

 - Villa Court & Greiner Drive – A meeting with the property owners is scheduled for tomorrow. A similar meeting was also held two weeks ago.

- Concrete Replacement Program – The concrete replacement program is now underway, with numerous sidewalk slabs and sections being replaced throughout the city.
 - Reviewing & Planning Roadways/Sidewalks – Currently reviewing and planning for the reconstruction and construction of roads, sidewalks, and shared-use paths. Then identifying available funding to enable cost-sharing with the federal government.
- f. New Turbine Generator (#14) – While excavating, a foundation issue with the soil was uncovered. The solution will be to drill piers. A review of a 1901 city map indicates that a pond once existed in this area, possibly explaining the soil conditions. A video was shown of the sludge being excavated. The turbine generator is anticipated to arrive in early September.
- g. Power Outages – There have been recent intermittent power outages on the South Circuit. While such outages are often caused by squirrels, raccoons, or other rodents, many of the recent issues have been due to trees interfering with power lines. It was suggested that the City contract with a tree-trimming service, with Kendall Vegetation Services being recommended. To better manage tree growth long-term, it was further recommended that the City establish an ongoing vegetation management program and include it as part of the annual budget. Alderman Kyle Buettner noted that funds are available in the electric fund and that the budget could be amended accordingly. He emphasized that residents deserve reliable service and recommended moving forward with this plan. All aldermen agreed to move forward with amending the budget and reaching out to Kendall Vegetation Services.
- h. New Pickup Truck – The new 2025 F-150 Crew Cab pickup truck approved by City Council for the Power Plant Department was not delivered because the vehicle received was grey instead of white. A white replacement will need to be sourced.

Human Resource Coordinator – Trisha Hoagland

a. Staffing – Staffing updates:

- Mark Herrmann has accepted the role of Building Inspector and is here this evening. He started on August 05, 2025, and is doing a great job.
- Brad Yearian is set to start his new role as a Power Plant Fleet Mechanic on August 25, 2025.
- Crossing Guard Position – There is an opening available for a crossing guard.
- Sewer Plant Lead – The Sewer Plant Lead position has been awarded to Mark Degener, effective October 2, 2025.
- Sewer Plant Operator – The Sewer Plant Operator position, previously occupied by Mark Degener, is scheduled to be posted this week with an effective date of October 2, 2025.
- Underground Utilities – The Mayor mentioned that the City is currently short two employees in the Underground Utility Department. Since the City is already advertising for a Sewer Plant Operator, he suggested it would be beneficial to also advertise for an Underground Utility Operator. Because the positions are similar, it would be advantageous to interview candidates for both roles at the same time. All aldermen approved posting both positions.

City Clerk – Mechelle Childers

Motion to approve the Utility Minutes dated July 14, 2025, was made by Alderman Kyle Buettner and seconded by Alderman Charron.

Motion passed to approve the Utility Minutes dated July 14, 2025, with Aldermen Kyle Buettner, Riley, Most, Vogt, Matt Buettner, Hopkins, Trantham, and Charron voting ‘aye’.

Subdivision & Zoning Administrator – Roberta Rohwedder

- a. Permits – Thirteen (13) permits were issued in July: five residential, three accessory structures, two excavations, and three sign requests. A detailed review of each permit was presented. So far in

August, working on two residential permits, one commercial, three accessory building permits, two excavation permits, and four sign applications.

- b. Planning Commission – The Planning Commission will not meet tonight, August 11, 2025, due to a lack of agenda items.
- c. Zoning Board of Appeals – The Zoning Board of Appeals will meet on August 21, 2025, to consider a special sign permit for *The Coffee Girl*. The request involves an exterior sign that extends beyond the 24-inch limit specified in the City’s sign ordinance.
- d. Quail Ridge – Quail Ridge has successfully passed both its pressure tests and BAC-T tests.
- e. Remington Ridge – All sewer laterals have been completed, and now working on the storm sewer.
- f. Burger King Sign – The broken Burger King sign was discussed, with questions raised about whether any action could be taken by the City to request that it be repaired. Burger King has contacted the City regarding sign specifications.
- g. Business Signage on Mill Street – Comments were made regarding slot signs, feather flags, easel signs, building signs, and signage in the alley. Roberta noted that letters had been delivered to businesses reminding business owners of the ordinances about feather flags and temporary signage. It was also clarified what is permitted in murals on buildings.

Deputy Director of Public Works – Nathan Krebel

The monthly report was given concurrently with the Director of Public Works’ report.

City Building Inspector – Brad Yearian

- a. Monthly Report – The July monthly report was distributed.
- b. Power Plant – Inspections have been ongoing at the power plant during excavation and drilling. Crews are drilling at least 13 feet before reaching clay. A video was shown highlighting the rebar and exhaust cages. A third-party inspector is also present on-site.
- c. Country Club Hills Sheds – Two sheds were being constructed without the required permits. For one, the piers and wood foundation were already in place; however, the structure is being built on an easement. For the other, OSB was being used on the roof. The homeowners were advised on the need to obtain a building permit, the proper materials required under the ordinance, and the restrictions regarding building on an easement.
- d. Dollar General – Recurring issues with overgrown grass and weeds in the ditches, and the City is currently working on issuing a violation.
- e. Mark Herrmann – Mark has been shown around the city to meet and get acquainted with the contractors we frequently work with. We have conducted some rental inspections, reviewed new construction projects, and worked on related paperwork. He is picking up on the processes quickly.

Chief of Police – Dane Luke

- a. Monthly Report – The July 2025 monthly police report was distributed.
- b. Chief of the Day – On August 8, 2025, the WPD hosted a “Chief for the Day” event with Henry Krebel. The day included breakfast at Family Kitchen, a swearing-in ceremony, a visit to the courthouse, a tour of the dispatch department, a visit with EMA, and a canine demonstration featuring drug detection work and article searches.
- c. New Police Vehicles – The new police vehicles have been picked up and delivered to Datatronics for outfitting. They are expected to be added to the fleet and operational by October.

Collector/Finance Officer – Sarah Craig

- a. Grocery Tax – The Grocery Tax Ordinance has been sent to the Illinois Department of Revenue. A document was distributed showing monthly food sales and 1% tax information from Schnucks for the past year. The same information has been requested from Walmart. This data provides a valuable perspective on how much the City has received in remitted taxes from a single retailer. As a reminder, this is not a new revenue source; it reflects the tax the City has been receiving since January 1, 1990.
- b. IML Conference – Hotel reservation deadline is August 27, 2025 and the advance online registration deadline is September 05, 2025.
- c. IMLRMA Insurance Renewal – The city's liability and workers' compensation insurance renewal packet has been completed and submitted to IMLRMA. Expect to hear back from them in October. One additional broker has recently expressed interest in bidding on the City's insurance. Sarah will send them our information and request a quote.

Community Relations Coordinator – Sarah Deutch

- a. Upcoming Events:
 - *August 16 – 'Loo Family Fest' at the Monroe County Fairgrounds.* This is the annual Monster Truck event.
 - *August 28 – Southwest Illinois Council of Mayors Monthly Meeting.* The City of Waterloo is hosting this event at the Vintage Wine Bar. Attendance by all elected officials would be appreciated.
 - *September 12 – Night at the Museums at the Monroe County History Museum.*
 - *September 13 – "Chalk-A-Lot" on Mill Street, 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.*
 - *September 20 – Optimist Club Bull Ride at the Monroe County Fairgrounds.*
 - *September 27 – Be the Light: Monroe County's Walk for Hope, 10 AM at Lakeview Park.*
- b. Monroe County Actors Stage Company (MASC) – Reached out to MASC and was able to secure sponsorship in this season's playbill. A full-page ad was purchased and will be included in all five playbills.
- c. New Website Preview – A draft format of the new homepage was presented. The quick links are based on the most visited pages from last year's activity, and the calendar will allow users to toggle between City events and community events. Next steps include building the interior pages and finalizing content. The new site will also be mobile-friendly.

City Attorney – Natalie Steppig

No Report.

Mayor's Report

- Monroe County Economic Development – At the last Monroe County Economic Development meeting, it was decided to issue a check for \$1,000 to each of the participating entities. The only stipulation is that the funds must be used for economic development—specifically, for initiatives aimed at attracting more visitors to the communities. The City of Waterloo has indicated that it will use its allocation with AO Creative.
- Appreciation – Appreciation was expressed to J.R. Landeck and Nathan Krebel for their diligence regarding the water situation, including FOIA requests, phone calls, gathering and organizing information, and ensuring the City is copied on relevant communication.

Committee Reports & Minute Approval

- a. 07-21-25 Economic Development Committee Mtg Minutes. Hopkins-1st, Riley-2nd. Passed.
- b. 07-21-25 Ordinance Committee Mtg Minutes. Hopkins-1st, Most-2nd. Passed.

Comments

Alderman Hopkins mentioned that potential reparations on water bills should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and the City should be ready to address them as necessary. He also expressed that JR and Nathan did a tremendous job with their presentation.

Alderman Riley expressed thanks to JR and Nathan for their thorough presentation and for the valuable information they provided, as well as extended thanks to the guests who came and spoke.

Adjournment – A motion to adjourn was made by Alderman Hopkins and seconded by Alderman Riley. Motion passed by a unanimous voice vote. Mayor Darter adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

Minutes respectively submitted by Mechelle Childers – City Clerk