

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE WAUNAKEE UTILITIES?

The utility has been providing services to customers since 1915 and is a locally owned, not-for-profit utility. There are no shareholders to think about, and the utility operates exclusively to provide reliable, affordable, safe, electric, water and sewer services to customers. The Village of Waunakee owns the Waunakee Utilities and the utility is governed by a seven person Utility Commission comprised exclusively of Village residents.

The utility is responsible for maintaining, troubleshooting and planning for over 140 miles of water and sewer mains and 113 miles of electric lines. The utility employs 17 people, and the three longest tenured employees have a combined 84 years of employment at the utility.

Even though Waunakee Utilities is tax exempt, a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) is made annually to the Village. The PILOT payment for 2017 was \$868,000. If the Village was not served by Waunakee Utilities, this payment would stop, causing significant budget issues for the Village.

Water is supplied from five wells that pump water from deep under the Village. Once the water is extracted, it needs to be stored and pressurized. To that end, there are four water towers throughout the Village and one underground reservoir. The largest water tower has a 500,000 gallon capacity and the reservoir holds 300,000 gallons.

Waunakee Utilities is one of 51 member-owners of WPPI Energy, which is headquartered in Sun Prairie. WPPI Energy is a joint action wholesale electric power provider who supplies 100% of the power the utility sells to customers. By pooling the resources of many smaller entities, a large entity with purchasing power and unified leadership can be created. The members are primarily municipally-owned utilities in Wisconsin, though there are also members in Upper Michigan and Iowa. Economies of scale are leveraged and power purchase agreements or power plant investments are made for the whole of WPPI's membership rather than just for an individual utility. The utility, through its membership in WPPI, is able to offer programs and services that are traditionally only offered by larger utilities.

WPPI Energy and WPPI's Board of Directors (Waunakee Utilities has a seat on the Board) take a very conservative, calculated approach to any addition or subtraction to their power supply mix. They only participate in projects or sign power purchase contracts that are favorable to WPPI Energy from multiple facets. This approach has proven effective and helps to ensure that they are not stuck with long term deals or projects that detract from the goal of keeping costs to a minimum.

WPPI Energy utilizes a diverse power supply mix and additional solar and wind resources were recently added in 2017. Over a ten-year period CO₂ emissions are down 28% and WPPI Energy is on target to reach a nearly 40% emission-free power supply portfolio.

Waunakee Utilities is proud of the many different ways we are able to help area homes and businesses save energy. Last year alone, Waunakee customers saved over 986,156 kwh due to energy efficiency projects – over \$103,546 in savings.



New Metering Technology

The Utility Commission recently approved a project to install a new metering system. This new system, called Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), provides two-way communication from and to the meter. The current metering system only allows communication from the meter.

The AMI system provides significant benefits to customers. When fully deployed, customers will have the ability to monitor electric and water usage from a computer or smart phone which can help proactively manage electric usage during peak electric times. Customers will also have the ability to be notified of small water leaks which can aid in conservation and lower water bills.

The AMI system allows the utility to have the ability to read all meters from the office and staff will no longer need to be dispatched throughout the service territory to obtain usage information as is currently being done.

The utility will also have instantaneous information about power outages and the utility hopes to deploy a system in the near future to allow for electric customers to be automatically notified of service interruptions and the estimated restoration time.

The process to convert to the new metering system for the electric utility has started and the conversion of the water meters is contingent on regulatory approval. The electric portion of the conversion is expected to take up to 12 months to complete while the water portion will likely take up to three years to complete. The budget for the entire project is approximately \$1.9 million.

We ask for your cooperation during this process as utility staff will need to enter customer homes and businesses to change out the water meter. A utility representative will be contacting all customers to set up an appointment for the water meter exchange. Electric meters can be exchanged on the outside of the building and a brief service interruption may be needed. Customers will be notified in advance of this occurring.

The Future

As we look to the future, we hope to replicate the successes that allowed the utility to serve customers for the last 103 years. It will be important to keep up with the growth in the area while continuing to provide reliable and economical service. In our industry, it is crucial that we make decisions with an eye on the future. It does us no good to simply run a utility line to a new customer; we need that new line to both strengthen our existing system and lay the groundwork for the system of the future.

Our vision is *to contribute to the success of the Village of Waunakee and surrounding area by being an essential partner in providing electric, water, and sewer services to customers.* We look forward to accomplishing this and we thank you for allowing all of us at the Waunakee Utilities the opportunity to provide service to you.



At Waunakee Utilities, we join forces with other local not-for-profit utilities through WPPI Energy to share resources and lower costs.

waunakeeutilities.com 608-849-8111

Shared strength through  WPPI Energy