



# OFFICIAL NOTICE AND AGENDA

of a meeting of a City Board, Commission, Department Committee, Agency, Corporation, Quasi-Municipal Corporation, or Sub-unit thereof.

**Meeting:** **SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**Members:** Mary Kluz (VC), Carol Lukens, Jean Abreu, Jay Coldwell, Christine Daniels, Jesse Kearns

**Location:** Board Room of Wausau City Hall, 407 Grant Street.

**Date/Time:** **Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.**

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1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Election of Committee Chair
3. Public Comment
4. Discussion and Possible Action: Slow Your Mow updates and next steps
5. Discussion and Possible Action: Solar Array update – Jay Coldwell
6. Discussion and Possible Action: Communications with City Council
7. Discussion and Possible Action: Development of survey for city departments
8. Discussion and Possible Action: Membership & meeting time update
9. Next meeting date: TBD
10. Adjourn

It is likely that members of, and a quorum of the Council and/or members of other committees of the Common Council of the City of Wausau will be in attendance at the abovementioned meeting to gather information. **No action will be taken by any such groups.**

In accordance with the requirements of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), the City of Wausau will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in its services, programs or activities. If you need assistance or reasonable accommodations in participating in this meeting or event due to a disability as defined under the ADA, please call the ADA Coordinator at (715) 261- 6622 or ADAServices@ci.wausau.wi.us to discuss your accessibility needs. We ask your request be provided a minimum of 72 hours before the scheduled event or meeting. If a request is made less than 72 hours before the event the City of Wausau will make a good faith effort to accommodate your request.

Questions regarding this agenda may be directed to the City Planning Office @ (715) 261-6760.

**This Notice was posted at City Hall and emailed to the Media on 05/31/2024**

Any person wishing to offer public comment may email City Clerk Kaitlyn Bernarde at clerk@ci.wausau.wi.us with “SEEC comment” in the subject line prior to the meeting start. All public comment, either by email or in person, will be limited to items on the agenda at this time. The messages related to agenda items received prior to the start of the meeting will be provided to the Chair.

Other Distribution: Media, Alderpersons, Mayor, City Departments

## MINUTES

May 2, 2024

Members Present: Jay Coldwell, Jean Abreu, Carol Lukens, Mary Kluz, Jesse Kearns

Others Present: Andrew Lynch, Brad Lenz, Doug Diny

In compliance with Chapter 19, Wisconsin Statutes, notice of this meeting was posted and transmitted to the Wausau Daily Herald in the proper manner.

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**1. Welcome and Introductions**

Meeting started at 5:02 pm

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**2. Public Comment**

n/a

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**5. Discussion and Possible Action: Green Tier Legacy Community Scorecard Actions**

Included in the packet are the Supporting Actions from the GTLC scorecard. Lynch suggested that the committee did not have to wait for the Climate Action Plan to act. Out of 130 actions on the list, the City may be already doing some, some are more difficult, some are not applicable to Wausau but there should be something that could be started as a 'low-hanging fruit'. Kearns noted the Universal Design item LUSA-8 might be well accepted in our community. Coldwell asked if all the actions could be charted out to measure the ease of doing them versus the impact. Lenz noted that we may not need to chart each action because they may not apply or are already being done. The committee discussed that looking at the larger long-term picture is more effective. Lukens was interested in doing something with the requirement of clean energy in development agreements. Kluz would like to compare the GTLC scorecard from 2022 to 2023 and use that to help select Supporting Actions.

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**6. Discussion and Possible Action: Development of questionnaire for city departments**

Kluz envisions a discussion with department heads to see how the committee can best support them in pursuing the GHG resolution goals and items that are important to their department mission. Lenz suggested that Mayor Diny should be involved as the head of staff because he did ask, as an alder, that the GHG resolution not just sit. Kearns offered to pull out actions from the GTLC that might seem likely to be discussed by the department heads. The questions were suggested "What do you see for opportunities from the GTLC scorecard items?" and "What are the future challenges to providing city services because of climate change?". Lenz suggested further defining what the changes and challenges would be. Lynch will clean up the questions and bring them back to the next meeting. Lenz suggested that this could be more informal and more of a conversation with up to 2 committee members, staff, and the department head. Coldwell will produce a summary of the general direction of climate change to provide context for the department heads. Diny offered to push this information out during a department head meeting. He also suggested that Eric Lindman of DPW and MaryAnne Groat of Finance would have the most impact to talk with.

**13. Next meeting date: June 6**

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**14. Adjourn**

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Motion/Second by Kearns/Coldwell. Approved unanimously. Adjourned at 6:24 pm

# Slow YOUR MOW



## Flowers

### LEAVE THEM BEE

Flowers that grow within your lawn also provide forage for insects and bees.



## Clippings

### LEAVE THEM THERE

When you mow, mulch the grass and spread it on the lawn. This will help the lawn retain moisture and returns nutrients to the soil.

## Grass

### LEAVE IT LONG

*Keep your grass between 2-6" tall*

Conserve water, become more resilient to dry spells, save water and money



## Consider Planting

### Native Plants

Reduce your carbon footprint & support long-term ecosystem health

### Diverse Species

Provide blooms and food to pollinators and wildlife throughout the entire season (spring & fall)

### Pesticide-free Plants

Ask the suppliers if pesticides were used. Local nurseries tend to be the best source of pesticide-free plants.

### Bee Lawns

Turn your turf into food for pollinators. Bee lawns attract over 50 species of native bees.

### Avoid Chemicals

Pesticides (including herbicides) become incorporated into the soil and our water supply, harming both wildlife and people.



**CITY OF WAUSAU  
SOLAR ARRAY  
TASK FORCE**

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May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024

# TASK FORCE HISTORY

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- Started meeting in the spring of 2023
- Members

Chad Henke – Chair

Paul Svetlik – Vice Chair

John Robinson

Susan Woods

Jay Coldwell

Goal is to make a recommendation for the Water Utility and City Council

# TASK FORCE TIMELINE

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- Part 1

- Collect Solar Background Information

- Effectiveness of Solar

- System Lifecycles

- Utility Costs and Needs

- New Utility costs

- Solar Project Funding available

# TASK FORCE TIMELINE CONT.

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- Part 2

Develop options

Size, Location, Configuration

Gather public input on options.

- Part 3

Evaluate options

Long/Short Term Effectiveness, Practical, Monitorable, Cost

Public input and comment period in May 2024. That is why we are here today.



# TODAY

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- Discussion on options reviewed by committee for array size and location
- Discussion on committee's recommended final size and location of the array
- Paul will lead Question and Answer

# SCENARIO 1 (WELL HOUSE)



- 1.0 MegaWatt installation, Estimated 1.9 million kWh production first year
- Installation cost of \$4.2 M, Estimated payback of 19.9 – 15.3 years (15.5 – 12.4 years)
- Uses the maximum space East of the water plant

## SCENARIO 2



## SCENARIO 3



# SCENARIO 1 (WELL HOUSE) - ALTERNATE



- 720 KiloWatt installation, Estimated 1.19 million kWh production first year
- Installation cost of \$2.57M, Estimated payback of 19.3 – 15.0 years (12.9 – 10.9 years)
- Was found to be the best size for initial investment payback time



# COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

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- Factor 1 – City strategic plan and mission statement

Innovated public services:

4. Invest in solutions to ensure environmental sustainability for generations to come.

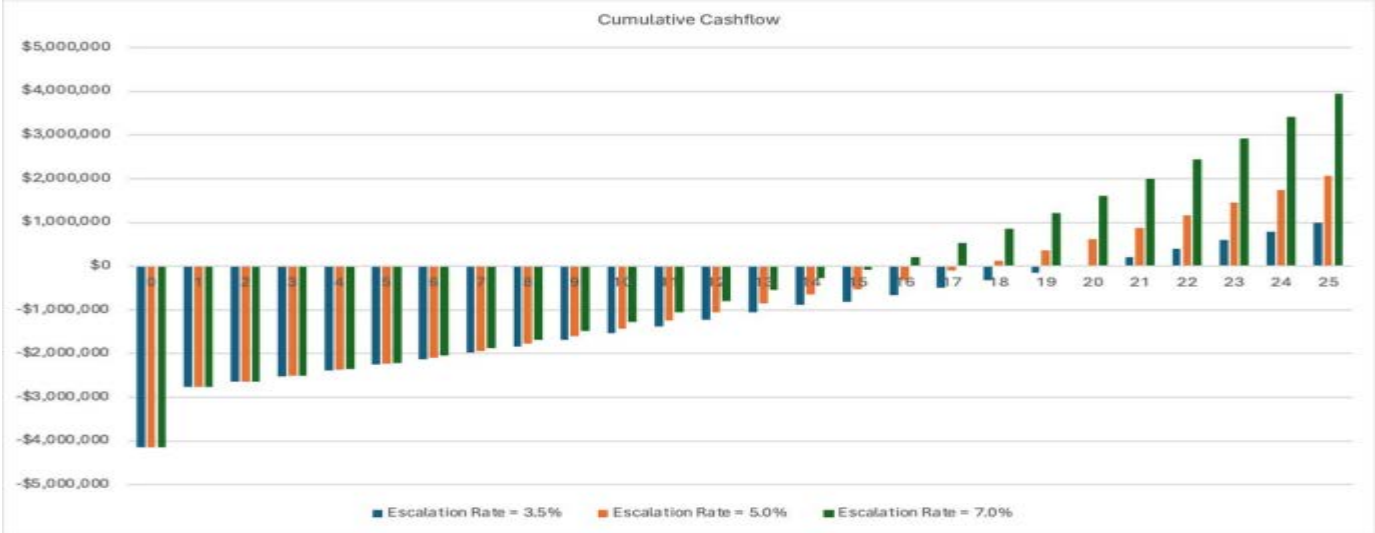
Strong regional alliances:

4. Support and lead in green and eco-friendly efforts and initiatives for a cleaner, healthier, and sustainable environment

Mission Statement. . . In response to our citizens, we will provide services in the most effective manner in order to promote and enhance our living environment. Plan and encourage positive growth. Promote a positive community image by encouraging citizen involvement and civic pride.

# COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

- Factor 2 – Financial and Resiliency
  - Committee set a goal of 10 years to payback the initial investment
  - Pay for this installation without affecting the water utility rate
  - Make the water plant less dependent on the electric utility



# COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

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- Factor 3 – Community Acceptance

No trees in forest area north of Bugbee Avenue will be removed

Berm will be built along Tierney Avenue to limit street view

Prairie will be established around panels

Access road will connect to Tierney Avenue near northern well house

Construction will be based at the water plant and limit interference with Tierney Avenue

No increase to water utility bill

# COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

- Factor 1  
Uses the property for a green and eco-friendly propose
- Factor 2  
Uses the property to build resiliency into the water plant. Also gives us the best return on our investment
- Factor 3  
Meets the surrounding community's concerns

Scenario 1 (Well House) -alternate



Design with future panel and battery installation in mind



# COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

- This is just the beginning.

We passed a motion to recommend this option with thoughts for the future.

Make sure we plan for additional electric generation to be installed.

Make sure we plan for energy storage installations if/when options become more cost effective.

Always keep in mind the existing environment and surrounding community.

\*cost and option details can be found in Solar Array Task Force Packet on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2024





## Climate change is here and now

- **The last two decades were the warmest on record in Wisconsin.** Statewide temperatures have warmed by about 3° Fahrenheit since 1950.
- **The last decade was the wettest on record in Wisconsin.** Average precipitation has increased 17 percent, about 5 inches, since 1950.
- **Extreme events in nearly every region of Wisconsin** are causing immense disruptions and impacting health, economy, and natural resources.
- **New analyses reaffirm previous projections.** The warmer and wetter trends will continue into the future, with wide ranging consequences throughout Wisconsin's natural and build environments.

## Communities across Wisconsin are already feeling the widespread impacts of climate change

- **Driftless Area:** This beautiful region is known for its rolling hills and deep valleys, along with an agricultural community known for helping develop sustainable farming practices. As land use changes and extreme storm events become more common, these agricultural communities are facing difficult decisions about flood recovery and an uncertain future.
- **Northern Wisconsin:** All seasons and regions of Wisconsin are getting warmer and wetter, but winters are warming more rapidly than summers. A warmer and wetter climate is changing conditions for cold-weather sports and tourism and impacting wildlife and plants in the region. Communities that thought they might be immune from the changing climate are concerned.
- **Great Lakes region:** Coastal communities are facing issues like rapidly fluctuating water levels, an increasing frequency of extreme storms, and eroding bluffs that endanger homes and roads.
- **Southern Wisconsin:** Since 1950, the southern two-thirds of Wisconsin has experienced the biggest increase in precipitation. Roads, bridges, culverts, and stormwater structures not built for the increasing volume and intensity of precipitation are contributing to damaging floods and increasing health risks.
- **Mississippi River:** The amount of water that flowed into the Mississippi in 2019 was double the historical average. Extended high water and fall flooding in seven of the last 10 years are impacting river transportation and wildlife corridors. The damage to transportation infrastructure and deliveries of agricultural chemicals was particularly hard on the agricultural sector, which represents a \$25 billion annual economic return to the Upper Mississippi River states, including Wisconsin.

*“I do have hope for the future, some days more than others. I liken our situation to a patient who is in the emergency room and needs to be treated immediately, but they are not in hospice. There are things we can do but we definitely need to take action quickly.”*

—Steve Vavrus, Senior Scientist at the Nelson Institute Center for Climatic Research, UW–Madison

# Climate change will continue to impact Wisconsin in the future

Without a large reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, we will see even bigger impacts to people, businesses, industry, tourism, and natural resources in Wisconsin.

## Responding to climate change in Wisconsin will require new approaches

The 2021 WICCI Assessment Report identifies specific steps we can take to protect our communities, our natural resources and our economy. Some examples of mitigation steps are to:

- **Protect the most vulnerable** in response to extreme weather events and set up timely public communication on climate-health issues.
- **Avoid grassland or natural vegetation conversion** to row-crop production or urban development to improve resilience to increasing precipitation and flood events.
- **Maintain and expand forest cover and urban tree canopies** with the greatest potential to store carbon.
- **Prioritize habitat management** actions that provide food and cover for wildlife in alignment with expected future climate conditions.
- **Help local communities become more resilient** by investing in flood risk reduction practices, pre-disaster mitigation programs, and comprehensive planning.
- Design and build infrastructure **that accounts for future climate conditions.**
- **Reduce greenhouse gas emissions** and create an equitable transition to renewable energy.

## Climate change affects everyone, but not equally

As we respond to climate change, everyone must be involved in the conversation, especially Indigenous populations, people of color, and people with low incomes. Fully considering all perspectives will result in greater innovation and lead to sustainable and equitable solutions.

## There is hope for the future, but it's up to us

There is rapidly growing recognition of climate change and its impacts. People are finding creative ways to use their knowledge of climate change to find technical innovations, develop clean energy, and explore innovative approaches to adapt to a rapidly changing climate. There is hope, but we need to take action quickly.

Wisconsin's Changing Climate: Impacts and Solutions for a Warmer Climate was produced by the Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts (WICCI), a project of the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Wisconsin

Department of Natural Resources. The Wisconsin Initiative on Climate Change Impacts is a nationally recognized collaborative network for linking science with action. The 2021 WICCI Assessment Report published in February 2022 is a product of 14 working groups of more than 200 scientists and practitioners representing over 50 national, state, and local agencies, organizations, and universities. It was peer reviewed by a science advisory board.

For more information visit [wicci.wisc.edu](https://wicci.wisc.edu)



From: Sustainability Committee  
Re: Survey on GHG Challenges and Opportunities

### **Context**

- City is a DNR Green Tier Legacy Community
- City's strategic plan references resilience/ sustainability
- City Council passed a GHG resolution one year ago
- Applied for funding to create a Climate Action Plan but undetermined timeline.
  - Creating a complete inventory of municipal operations carbon emissions with recommendations for reduction
- Don't need to wait for a plan to start

*we don't want the utility(WPS) to get in the way of making improvements*

### **The SEEC would like to advocate for your department**

#### **Questions:**

- At your professional conferences or through continuing education, is there any discussion/preparation in your industry due to climate change?
- What challenges do you foresee to providing City services due to changes in our environment/climate/extreme weather?
- What is your interest in lowering the energy demand or using alternative energy in your department?
- Are there other actions, not specifically energy related, you'd like to pursue that fall under sustainability?
- What do you see as actions you can take?
- What are the biggest hurdles to taking action? (\$, personal, knowledge)
- Is there a specific program or initiative that SEEC could advocate for?