

**Utilities Committee**

Tues, Mar 07, 2023 4:30PM

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 09:32**

Moving down, we have the item 23-0198. the polymer incidents update. Go ahead, Director Shaw.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 09:42**

Thank you, Chairperson Meltzer. So, the mayor kind of went over in just summary fashion at the last Council meeting. We haven't had a committee meeting. However, this memo, at least from February 25—much hasn't changed since this time, including the accounting. But this gives just a little bit more detail. So, I'd like to just go over just a couple of things. If you let me do that just real quick.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 10:09**

Okay, so I think I gave a pretty good description of the incident. There was an offloaded bulk tank—tanker of a polymer that ended up going into our system. So that represented like four to five months' worth of treatment chemical, that effectively just stopped our hauled waste program and our digesters. So, and I think everybody's aware of that.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 10:35**

So, initially, I do want to go over what we were attempting to do, the first couple of days after getting regulatory approval was to keep the digesters alive. To take the digesters down (and we've done this, and we're gonna have to do this in the future; it's just a maintenance event) it impacts us greatly in terms of revenues. As soon as we take down one digester, that's our effective excess capacity. So, we'll be able to treat the community, not an issue. But remember, we're always trying to take advantage of our excess capacity.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 11:05**

And not all treatment plants do this. And I—just for some context, I just wanted to bring in, I asked Brian Kreski, you know, "Where do we sit and compare it to communities, other POTWs, treatment works?" So, I wanted to find out for Green Bay, anything north of Milwaukee, and we're the largest north of Milwaukee. We double Green Bay's hauled waste program. So now, so that's something like \$20 million over the last 10 years. It's a great revenue program. But when we don't have it, we lose revenue, right? And so, we're going to end up doing that. We were planning on doing that for 2023. We did some ultrasonic testing. I don't know if you recall that [indecipherable] here, but when we were preparing the 2023 budget, we had talked about it. And it's a loss of \$5 million worth of revenue when we take that down—take down our excess capacity and just take care of the community and the industries that are here in Appleton. So, I wanted to bring that in.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 12:04**

So, we didn't want to lose that because we knew we would have a \$5 million hit. And also for the hauled waste program, within the first couple of weeks, we had been seeking out (and some of the costs are going to reflect this) that we were trying to get, at least looking at, permitting and having a hauled waste company pull the waste out of our treatment facility—right—contract it out. Obviously, this was a big endeavor for our staff. We were working around the clock to get this done. So, I just wanted to kind of bring in that.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 12:32**

And also just, when we talk about the tanker truck itself, some people were surprised when I when I talked about it to talk about "How many tanker trucks are there in a given, you know, in a given year?" There's like 6,000, hauled waste trucks that come into our facility. So, it's a it's a robust program. It's a large program, and

it's a large revenue program. So, I hope that brings some context into what we were trying to do initially at the treatment facility.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 13:01**

Then we go through the sa—the current safety of the plant and the environmental plan. We were—if you want to call it suc—I call it successful. We didn't have an environmental release to either storm, which means to the Fox River, and we didn't have one to sanitary. It didn't—it reintroduced into our plant. So, and I had talked about that at the last committee meeting, what would happen about floating a plan. So that was positive, I guess, that we were successful.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 13:31**

We were having uncontrolled gas releases at the plant. We couldn't control the digesters at that time. And I think you're aware of that we had the Appleton Fire Department come in. We had a hatch blow up and that sort of thing. So, there was there was a safety component to our response plan. But we never allowed staff to enter, and we always met our safety plan. Excuse me. So, we didn't—I guess you could, could understand, and this happens in industry, where you don't meet all of your safety requirements for the sake of production or, you know, somebody does something dangerous. We didn't allow our staff to do that. So that's why the Appleton Fire Department's there. That's why we had to make sure all of our safety equipment was up and running and maintained. That did extend some of the down on that sort of thing.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 14:25**

Moving down, regulatory compliance. I had reported out initially that we wouldn't be able to make our WPDES permit because we didn't have digestion. At the time, I thought we were going to be in violation, that we wouldn't be compliant. However, we ended up being. We had the variance to work around, but then the analytical for the PFRP—that's a Process to Further Reduce Pathogens, the number of germs if you will. That should have been high without digestion, but our water plant sends us water treatment residuals—the Appleton water plant—and we excess lime soften for the community. So, their waste is full of lime, which is very alkaline. So, it actually killed germs for us and allowed us to pass the process to further reduce pathogens and meet that requirement in our in our permit.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 15:14**

So, we had eight samples, some before and after, during—or excuse me, some before, during the event, and the worst case, what we would consider the worst case, day. And so, when we submitted, we were approved. And so, none of the biosolids ends up having to be landfilled, and we had talked about that. that was going to be a cost of about \$100,000. We didn't want to do that. And just for the reason of: it's not a good place for our biosolids anyway. We have a—we want to return everything to the environment not to a landfill that sits in a hole in the ground kind of thing. We want the nutrients to be used and that sort of thing.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 15:55**

Hauled waste impact. I do want to spend a little bit of time just talking about the hauled waste impact. I've listed out what the dollar amounts are. So, you can see, there was a response effort. And I think everybody's got this table. They should have this in their packet. Did everybody get this? No? Yeah, well, it should be at the end of the memo, or attached—a second attachment. So, if you want to look at it. Well, anyway.

**Aldersperson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 16:25**

I only see one attachment here.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 16:30**

It should be on there. I pulled it off. So go down on the agenda. There's two. There's another

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 16:36**

Oh, I see.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 16:37**

Over there.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 16:38**

Thank you. Got it now.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 16:41**

Okay, so there's some dollar amounts, and I've listed them in the in the memo. So, if you look at the response, there's a dollar amount. And that dollar amount says, at the end, "if this was projected revenues, it would be 2.3% of projected revenues", that sort of thing. And you might think, "Well, we have to come up with these revenues, these dollar amounts." So, I just want to clarify that. And Kelli is good enough to come and correct me when I'm wrong. She's she does, she'll do it too. So, I'll just stop talking and handing and hand her the mic.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 17:17**

But I do want to be careful when we talk about like the dollar amounts, there's—I think there's like \$40,000 or so just in general in the breakout. And that doesn't mean, when we look at the end of the year, we've got to find this \$40,000 to pay out those salaries. Those salaries were being paid regardless. So, our work effort was pointed towards this work. I wasn't at the water plant. I was at the wastewater plant. Kelli made sure that my salary dollars went into this project. We don't have to find new salary dollars for me. But I'm expensed over here. So, if I wasn't doing this, I might be doing regulatory work, lift station work, whatever. So, the water plant has a little bit of break in expenses. But really, in terms of where did the resources go, they went here.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 18:06**

Now there are some real costs in here—our consulting fees, contractors work, parts, pumps, those types of things. And they're listed also in here. There's also an insurance claim that's being made to look at the equipment that was damaged as a result of the gas release and the hatch opening, and that sort of thing.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 18:27**

So we do have revenues that we couldn't capture. They're not realized because the program was shut down. So, I've listed that out too. There's a number of days 17 and 26, depending on which hauled waste program you're talking about. And I put that in the memo as well. So, while we were down for those weeks, getting the hauled—excuse me getting the hauled waste program back, we didn't, we didn't realize revenues. So that's also listed. We did our best to project that.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 18:57**

We also had expenses that weren't realized, because we weren't treating. We didn't have chemicals. We didn't create biosolids. That's also in here.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 19:03**

And I know it's a little wordy, but overall, it kind of gives you a picture of where we put our resources. Some of this we will not recapture. You know, we bought things—although I guess we will. We had a—I'll give you an example. We had two pumps and two mixers (larger pumps and mixers) and they got beat up in the process to

regain. We knew you can't drive your car at 140 miles an hour for six days normal, right? It was just beat, beating. But to regain the hauled waste program (that was the goal, that was the objective), we had to beat up some of our equipment, and it was worth the loss.

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 19:41**

Well, that used equipment, we now have new equipment, right? It got damaged and we had to purchase new as a replacement. So, I guess we do have—and we do have actually a piping plan from one process to another that we didn't have. That's part of the contractor work that took place. But there are, there are expenses. They're listed in here. We'd be more than happy to talk about any of the individual or bring—the individual expenses or bring it back or whatever. So, I know this is a first look, and it sounds like the link was kind of underneath. And maybe you didn't see the actual breakout here of this.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 20:14**

I really appreciate that. I think that this does give a very full picture of what was happening. And I appreciate the additional table there with all the expenses listed.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 20:25**

Any comments or questions from the committee here? All right. Well, thank you very much, Director Shaw, and thank you to your team as well for their work to—you know, this, this could have cost us a lot more money. And so, I think that, you know, even though it was a tragic event, I think we still handled it very successfully.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 20:52**

All right. Moving down, we have 23-0102 monthly reports for October, November and December. They have a wastewater treatment plant synopsis and receiving station revenue report, water treatment facilities synopsis and the water distribution and meter team monthly report for December. Anything of note that you'd like to comment on Director Shaw?

**Director Chris Shaw (Utilities) 21:19**

Ironically, even with the December event to the hauled waste, we did \$150,000 or so more year over year. So that's good news for the hauled waste program.

**Alderson Vered Meltzer (District 2) 21:31**

All right. Any comments or questions up here? All right.