

Minutes of the Meeting of
the Board of Water Commissioners
City of Norwich, New York
October 8, 2025

Present: Jennifer Kelly, John Kolb, Steve Simmons, Doug Wilson, Sue Dietrich, Gigi Baas, Commissioners.

Tim Miller, Superintendent, Scott Folts, Assistant Superintendent.

Absent: Alison Locke

Also present: Timothy Russell, Greenfire Forestry
Michael Flanagan
Erik Scrivener, City of Norwich Planning and Community Development

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jennifer Kelly, at 6:30 PM. Steve moved to accept the minutes of the September meeting. Doug seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Guests: Erik Scrivener reported that Laberge Engineering has been retained to develop a Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Plan, funded by a \$50,000 Community Development Block Grant. Don Rhodes, lead engineer, will be contacting Jennifer for input from the Commission about its priorities and concerns. March 2026 is the expected date for completion of the plan.

Michael Flanagan and Timothy Russell were introduced to discuss the potential and feasibility of harvesting timber in the watershed around the reservoirs. The 120 acre area contains significant wetlands, and DEC permitting is likely required. Tim Russell has surveyed the area and reported that there is a considerable amount of white ash trees which are threatened by an invasive species of insect. Some trees are already dying and of little value, but most are still viable. If any value is to be retained, the living trees should be harvested soon. He discussed his process for acting as a broker for the wood, including the sealed bid process and his role as an overseer for the work to insure all conditions in the bill of sale are met. He estimated the value of the ash and harvestable oak and maple to be between \$190,000 and \$200,000, the ash representing 2/3 of the volume of the harvest and 3/4 of the value. Mr Russell charges 15% of the value of the contract for his services. Jennifer suggested that there may be hidden costs related to permitting and damage mitigation which may reduce the value of the contract. Tim Miller expressed concern that other factors should effect the decision to go forward with the project, such as the risk of erosion and degradation of the environment surrounding the water source, a negative cost/benefit analysis, and the inability of the department to police and maintain roads that would be required to remove the harvested trees from the property. It was agreed that more information is required before the city moves forward on the project, as it is unclear if the income realized from this activity is enough to warrant the disruption of the area around the reservoir.

Water Treatment: Scott reported that Avanti will be installing new chlorinator pumps and “smart valves” on wells 3 and 4. The booster pump at the lower CIT pump station will be reimbursed by the Town of Norwich. Scott also mentioned that there were suspicious visitors in the vicinity of the wastewater plant, who were later identified as officers from Homeland Security. Scott acted properly by promptly reporting the incident to the proper authorities, who explained the presence of the uninvited guests.

Correspondence: None.

Old Business: Chenango Lake. Doug reported that he was contacted by Dave Forster about the proposed dry hydrant and Doug reiterated the necessity for a DEC permit and an Engineer's stamp of approval for the proposal, as discussed at the August meeting.

Steve will update the letter Doug wrote to the Mayor and, and Council regarding violations at Chenango Lake, replacing names with tax map lot numbers, and will resend to the Board for review.

The Town of New Berlin has replaced nine culverts under West Shore Drive without consulting the City of Norwich. The lack of knowledge of the rules and regulations concerning the Chenango Lake watershed and the land abutting the water source on the part of the Town of New Berlin, New Berlin DPW and Code Enforcement, Chenango County Code Enforcement, realtors and property owners in the watershed was discussed. Steve suggested that the City of Norwich send a letter drafted by the Board to all stake holders outlining the regulations governing the water source. Doug mentioned that this information could also be disseminated via the Lake Association newsletter, or included in tax bills. Jennifer stated that many of the rules and regulations apply to the entire Chenango Lake watershed, not just the lakefront. The content of the letter and the means of distribution will be discussed at the November meeting.

Adjournment: Steve made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by John. The next meeting will be held on November 12 at 6:30 PM at the Sewer Plant.

Respectfully submitted,

Gigi Baas