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(54) Title: HVAC SYSTEMS

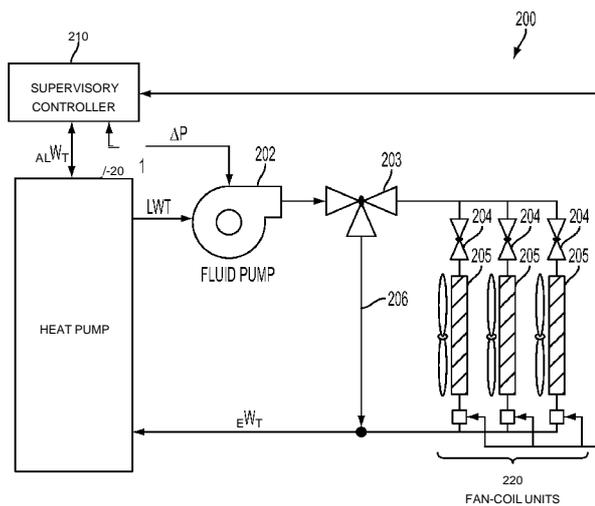


FIG. 2

(57) Abstract: A system includes a heat pump configured to match a working fluid's temperature to a fluid temperature set-point, a fluid pump in fluid communication with the heat pump through the working fluid and configured to match the working fluid's pressure/flow to a fluid pressure/flow set-point, at least one heat exchanger in fluid communication with the fluid pump, and a supervisory controller in signal communication with the at least one heat exchanger, the fluid pump, and the heat pump. The at least one heat exchanger includes a proportional valve and a return air temperature gauge configured to monitor return air temperature associated therewith. The supervisory controller is configured to vary the fluid temperature set-point and vary the fluid pressure/flow set-point based upon a position of the proportional valve and the return air temperature.



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- *as to applicant's entitlement to apply for and be granted a patent (Rule 4.17(a))*
- *as to the applicant's entitlement to claim the priority of the earlier application (Rule 4.17(Hi))*

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HVAC SYSTEMS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Generally, a conventional heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system utilizes predetermined and/or fixed set-points for control of heat pump and fluid pump operations, while relying on local fan-coil unit controllers for localized control. For example, FIG. 1 illustrates a conventional HVAC system. As illustrated, the system 100 includes a heat pump 101, fluid pump 102, three-way valve 103, and a plurality of fan-coil units (FCUs) 120. Each fan coil unit may include a proportional valve 104 and variable speed fan-coil heat exchanger 105. In the HVAC system 100, a working fluid may flow through each component to provide cooling or heating according to well-known manners. The working fluid may be any suitable working fluid or refrigerant, including water.

[0002] The heat pump 101 provides heating or cooling according to a predetermined or user-defined fixed-value of leaving water temperature (LWT). The heat pump adjusts cooling capacity based on entering water temperature (EWT) and LWT in order to maintain the associated LWT. The water pump 102 controls water flow based on pressure drop across the fan-coil units 120. The three-way valve 103 by-passes surplus water flow to maintain minimum water flow required by heat pump 101. In system 100, the valve position and the fan speed of each FCU may be used for controlling a different conditioned space's temperature.

[0003] In conventional implementations, the fixed LWT and pressure set-points of HVAC systems result in short-comings which include capacity which may not fully and quickly match an actual load. Thus, HVAC systems are not operated in the most energy efficient condition. Further, in HVAC systems where set-points are assumed to be varied based on steady-state load conditions, power consumption changes associated with equipment wear and equipment variances are not adequately considered. Moreover, even if a LWT set-point is routinely reset based on ambient temperature, internal load changes are not considered on the fly.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0004] According to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a system includes a heat pump configured to match a working fluid's temperature to a fluid temperature set-point, a fluid pump in fluid communication with the heat pump through the working fluid and configured to match the working fluid's pressure to a fluid pressure set-point, at least one heat exchanger in fluid communication with the fluid pump, and a supervisory controller in signal communication with the at least one heat exchanger, the fluid pump, and the heat pump. The at least one heat exchanger includes a proportional valve and a return air temperature gauge configured to monitor return air temperature associated therewith. The supervisory controller is configured to vary the fluid temperature set-point and vary the fluid pressure set-point based upon a position of the proportional valve and the return air temperature.

[0005] According to another exemplary embodiment of the present invention, a method of HVAC system control includes monitoring valve positions of proportional valves associated with individual heat exchangers of the HVAC system, monitoring return air temperatures associated with the individual heat exchangers of the HVAC system, determining a new fluid pressure set-point and a new fluid temperature pressure set-point for the HVAC system based upon the monitoring, and providing the new fluid pressure set-point and the new fluid temperature set-point to the HVAC system.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] The subject matter which is regarded as the invention is particularly pointed out and distinctly claimed in the claims at the conclusion of the specification. The foregoing and other features, and advantages of the invention are apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

[0007] FIG. 1 depicts a convention HVAC system;

[0008] FIG. 2 depicts a HVAC system, according to an exemplary embodiment;

[0009] FIG. 3 depicts a control schematic of a HVAC system, according to an exemplary embodiment;

[001 0] FIG. 4 depicts a dead-band coordination scheme for a HVAC system, according to an exemplary embodiment; and

[001 1] FIG. 5 depicts a method of control of a HVAC system, according to an exemplary embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[001 2] As disclosed herein, exemplary embodiments of the present invention provide a control method for providing changes to preconfigured set-points of a HVAC system. According to exemplary embodiments, LWT set-points for a heat pump and delta pressure (DP) set-points of a fluid pump are altered in real-time based on temperature and valve position feedback from local FCU controllers of the HVAC system.

[001 3] For example, according to exemplary embodiments, an HVAC system's load is estimated based on the local FCU controller information such that proper floating set-points for LWT and DP can be calculated to ensure a required capacity may be generated to relatively quickly match the HVAC system's load. The technical benefits of exemplary embodiments include energy savings throughout both cooling and heating cycles of an entire HVAC system.

[001 4] Turning to FIG. 2, an exemplary HVAC system 200 is depicted. The HVAC system includes heat pump 201. The heat pump 201 may be any suitable heat pump configured to exchange heat with an energy reservoir, for example, an external air source or water source. The system 200 further includes fluid pump 202 in fluid communication with the heat pump 201. As shown, the heat pump 201 provides a working fluid at a configured LWT to the fluid pump 202 for distribution throughout the system 200. The distribution is facilitated with three-way valve 203, which is arranged in fluid communication with both the fluid pump 202 and the heat pump 201.

[001 5] As further illustrated, the system 200 includes a plurality of local fan-coil units 220 in fluid communication with the three-way valve 203 and the heat pump 201. Each fan-coil unit of the plurality of fan-coil units 220 includes at least a fluid valve 204 and a fan-coil heat exchanger 205.

[001 6] As further illustrated, the system 200 includes supervisory controller 210 in signal communication with the heat pump 201, the fluid pump 202, and each fan-coil unit of the plurality of fan-coil units 220. Each fan-coil unit of the plurality of fan-coil units is arranged to provide conditioned air or fluid to a conditioned space. Furthermore, each fan-coil unit of the plurality of fan-coil units is configured to provide feedback information associated with a respective valve's position and conditioned space's return air temperature (RAT) to the supervisory controller 210.

[001 7] The supervisory controller 210 is configured to process information received from each fan-coil unit to determine an appropriate ALWT and Δp . Further, the supervisory controller may be embodied as a processing apparatus, computer processor, or any other programmable processing device configured to perform method of HVAC system control as described herein, including processing of the ALWT and Δp values. The ALWT and Δp values are provided to the heat pump 201 and the fluid pump 202, or are added to default values and provided to the heat pump 201 and fluid pump 202.

[001 8] Turning to FIG. 3, control logic associated with the supervisory controller 210 and the HVAC system 200 is illustrated in more detail. As shown, the controller 210 includes coordination logic 301 configured to process RAT and valve position information from local fan-coil units 220. The RAT and valve position information is processed to determine if a LWT and/or DP error exists, or more clearly, if an adjustment to the LWT of the heat pump and/or the DP of the fluid pump is desirable.

[001 9] For example, as illustrated in FIG. 4, if an average value of valve position and/or RAT taken across the fan-coil units 220 exceed upper or lower bounds of associated DP and LWT dead-bands, an error or other suitable signal is provided to proportional integral derivative (PID) controllers 302 and 304. In each local FCU, a coordination map between a valve and fan may be pre-defined and the

valve is used to control RAT. Therefore, valve opening and RAT information may be considered a load indicator for a local zone. If valve opening (e.g., position) and RAT information is taken as a weighted average across all fan-coil units, appropriate dead-bands may be determined and used to coordinate the error signals.

[0020] For example, a valve target set-point may be set as V_3 for the HVAC system. Further, a $V_1 - V_4$ dead-band may be appropriate for PI_DP controller 304 and a $V_2 - V_5$ dead-band may be appropriate for PI_LWT controller 302. Outside of the dead-bands, the PI_DP controller 304 and the PI_LWT controller 302 may receive associated error signals DP_{err} and LWT_{err} . Although illustrated as a particular range of averaged values $V_1 - V_5$, it should be understood that any appropriate values may be equally suitable according to any HVAC system implementation.

[0021] In response to receipt of an associated error signal, the PID controllers 302 and 304 process the error signals to determine an appropriate or desirable change in LWT and/or DP settings for the HVAC system 200.

[0022] The change in LWT and/or DP settings may be limited by associated limiters 303 and 305 to maximum/minimum values and combined with default set-points to create new set-points for the HVAC system 200. The new set-points are subsequently provided to the heat pump 201 and fluid pump 202. Alternatively, limiters 303 and 305 may be omitted with appropriately limited values being provided directly from controllers 302 and 304.

[0023] As an example, in cooling mode, a desirable $ALWT_{sp}$ (e.g., set point) may be within $0 \sim \alpha 1^\circ\text{C}$, where $\alpha 1$ is a positive number, for example, $\alpha 1=3$. Therefore, if a default $LWT_{sp}=7^\circ\text{C}$, LWT_{sp} will be floating within $7-7+ \alpha 1^\circ\text{C}$ based on different cooling loads. Similarly, a desirable ΔP_{sp} (e.g., set point) may be within $-\beta \sim 0$ kPa, where β is a positive number, for example, $\beta=50$. Therefore, if a default $DP_{sp}=100$ kPa, DP_{sp} will be floating within $100-\beta \sim 100$ kPa based on different loads. As a further example, in heating mode, a desirable $ALWT_{sp}$ may be within $-a2 \sim 0^\circ\text{C}$, where $\alpha 2$ is a positive number, for example, $\alpha 2=5$. Therefore, if a default $LWT_{sp}=45^\circ\text{C}$, LWT_{sp} in heating mode will be floating within $45-\alpha 2 \sim 45^\circ\text{C}$ based on different heating loads.

[0024] Turning to FIG. 5, a method of control of the HVAC system 200 is provided. The method 500 may be processed by the supervisory controller 210 according to the schematic control scheme illustrated in FIGS. 3-4.

[0025] The method 500 includes monitoring RAT and valve information from the fan-coil units 220, at block 501. The method 500 further includes determining a weighted value for each fan-coil unit based upon the RAT and valve information at block 502. The weighted values, according to a particular exemplary embodiment, may be determined according to Table 1, provided below:

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Table 1:   for (i <= N){
            if (valvePositionp] > valveThreshold and RAT_err[i] >=
            lowThreshold and RAT_err[i] <=mediumThreshold)
            {
                weightp] = 1 + (RAT_err[i] - lowThreshold) * w 1;
            }//endif
            elseif (valvePositionp] > valveThreshold and RAT_err[i] >
            mediumThreshold and RAT_err[i] <= highThreshold)
            {
                weightp] = Constant + lowThreshold * w 1 +
                (RAT_err[i] - mediumThreshold) * w2;
            }//endif
            elseif (valveOpennessp] > valveThreshold and RAT_err[i]
            > highThreshold)
            {
                weightp] = Constant + lowThreshold * w 1 +
                mediumThreshold * w2 + (RAT_err[i] - highThreshold) * w3;
            }//endif
            else {
                weightp] = Constant;
            }//endelse
        }//end for;

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[0026] In Table 1, N is the number of FCUs, RAT_err is a variance in RAT from an associated target RAT. Further, w1, w2, w3 are predetermined weight values chosen based on increasing error. Moreover, the Constant may be any appropriate base integer suitable for a range of weighted values. Thereafter, the method 500 includes calculating a weighted valve average for the fan-coil units based upon the weighted values at block 503.

[0027] The weighted valve average value, according to a particular exemplary embodiment, may be determined according to Table 2, provided below:

Table 2: $\text{Weighted_valve_avg_meas} = \sum_{i=1}^N (\text{weight}(i) * \text{val_pos}(i)) / N;$

[0028] In Table 2, by taking into account RAT information in the weighted average value, the supervisory controller may actually consider comfort information such that enough cooling/heating capacity is provided.

[0029] Turning back to FIG. 5, if it is determined that the weighted valve average is outside of a dead-band (e.g., FIG. 4) at block 504, a new LWT and/or DP set-points are determined at block 505. Thereafter, the new set-points are provided to the heat pump 201 and fluid pump 202 at block 506, and the RAT and valve information are monitored again at block 501 .

[0030] If the weighted average value is within a dead-band, the method 500 further monitors RAT and valve information at block 501 .

[0031] Thus, as described above, exemplary embodiments of the present invention provide HVAC systems and associated control methods which enhance energy efficiency through real-time adjustment of heat pump and fluid pump set-points. LWT and DP set-points are adjusted based on an HVAC system's load. As particularly evident, energy savings are increased in partial loads, which consist of majority of operational time of HVAC systems.

[0032] It is noted that although particularly described as being associated with return air temperature and valve position, any other suitable variables in a HVAC system may be monitored to determine new set-points. Furthermore, although particularly described as being associated with fluid pressure and temperature set points, other adjustable variables including mass flow, air flow, or any other suitable set-point may be equally applicable to exemplary embodiments.

[0033] While the invention has been described in detail in connection with only a limited number of exemplary embodiments, it should be readily understood that the invention is not limited to such disclosed exemplary embodiments. Rather, the invention can be modified to incorporate any number of variations, alterations, substitutions or equivalent arrangements not heretofore described, but which are commensurate with the spirit and scope of the invention. Additionally, while various exemplary embodiments of the invention have been described, it is to be understood

that aspects of the invention may include only some of the described exemplary embodiments. Accordingly, the invention is not to be seen as limited by the foregoing description, but is only limited by the scope of the appended claims.

CLAIMS:

1. A system, comprising:
 - a heat pump, wherein the heat pump is configured to match a working fluid's temperature to a fluid temperature set-point;
 - a fluid pump in fluid communication with the heat pump through the working fluid, wherein the fluid pump is configured to match the working fluid's pressure to a fluid pressure set-point;
 - at least one heat exchanger in fluid communication with the fluid pump, wherein the at least one heat exchanger includes a proportional valve and a return air temperature gauge configured to monitor return air temperature associated therewith; and
 - a supervisory controller in signal communication with the at least one heat exchanger, the fluid pump, and the heat pump, wherein the supervisory controller is configured to vary the fluid temperature set-point and vary the fluid pressure set-point based upon a position of the proportional valve and the return air temperature.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the fluid temperature set-point is a configurable default value varied by the supervisory controller.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the fluid pressure set-point is a configurable default value varied by the supervisory controller.
4. The system of claim 1, wherein the at least one heat exchanger is a fan-coil unit.
5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of heat exchangers in communication with the fluid pump, wherein each heat exchanger of the plurality of heat exchangers includes a proportional valve and a return air temperature gauge configured to monitor return air temperature associated therewith.
6. The system of claim 5, wherein each heat exchanger of the plurality of heat exchangers is a fan-coil unit.
7. The system of claim 5, wherein the supervisory controller is configured to vary the fluid temperature set-point and vary the fluid pressure set-point based upon a weighted average value taken across all valve positions of each proportional valve of the plurality of heat exchangers and taken across all return air temperatures associated with the plurality of heat exchangers.

8. The system of claim 5, wherein the supervisory controller is a programmable processing apparatus configured to perform a method of HVAC system control, the method comprising:

monitoring valve positions of each proportional valve of the plurality of heat exchangers;

monitoring return air temperatures associated with each heat exchanger; and

calculating a weighted average value across the monitored positions and the monitored return air temperatures.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the method further comprises determining a weighted valve position value for each proportional valve of the plurality of heat exchangers and determining a weighted temperature value for each return air temperature associated with the plurality of heat exchangers, wherein the weighted average value comprises an average of the weighted valve position values and the weighted temperature values.

10. The system of claim 9, wherein the method further comprises determining if the weighted average value is outside of a dead-band range associated with an average target valve position, and, if the weighted average value is outside of the dead-band range, determining a new fluid temperature set-point and a new fluid pressure set-point based upon the weighted average value.

11. A method of HVAC system control, the method comprising:

monitoring valve positions of proportional valves associated with individual heat exchangers of the HVAC system;

monitoring return air temperatures associated with the individual heat exchangers of the HVAC system;

determining a new fluid pressure set-point and a new fluid temperature set-point for the HVAC system based upon the monitoring; and

providing the new fluid pressure set-point and the new fluid temperature set-point to the HVAC system.

12. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

calculating a weighted average value across the monitored positions and the monitored return air temperatures, wherein the new fluid pressure set-point and the new fluid temperature set-point are based upon the weighted average value.

13. The method of claim 11, further comprising:

determining a weight for each monitored valve position and each monitored return air temperature; and

calculating a weighted average value for the HVAC system across each determined weight, wherein the new fluid pressure set-point and the new fluid temperature set-point are based upon the weighted average value.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising determining if the weighted average value is outside of a dead-band range associated with an average target valve position for the HVAC system, and providing the new fluid pressure set-point and the new fluid temperature set-point to the HVAC system if the weighted average value is outside of the dead-band range.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the dead-band range is a range of average valve positions within a predefined acceptable set-point error range for the HVAC system.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the predefined acceptable set-point error range is a range of variance between a desired return air temperature and actual return air temperature.

17. A system, comprising:

a heat pump, wherein the heat pump is configured to match a working fluid's temperature to a fluid temperature set-point;

a fluid pump in fluid communication with the heat pump through the working fluid, wherein the fluid pump is configured to match the working fluid's mass flow to a fluid mass flow set-point;

at least one heat exchanger arranged in a conditioned space and in fluid communication with the fluid pump, wherein the at least one heat exchanger includes a proportional valve and an air temperature gauge configured to monitor air temperature of the conditioned space; and

a supervisory controller in signal communication with the at least one heat exchanger, the fluid pump, and the heat pump, wherein the supervisory controller is configured to vary the fluid temperature set-point and vary the fluid mass flow set-point based upon a position of the proportional valve and the air temperature.

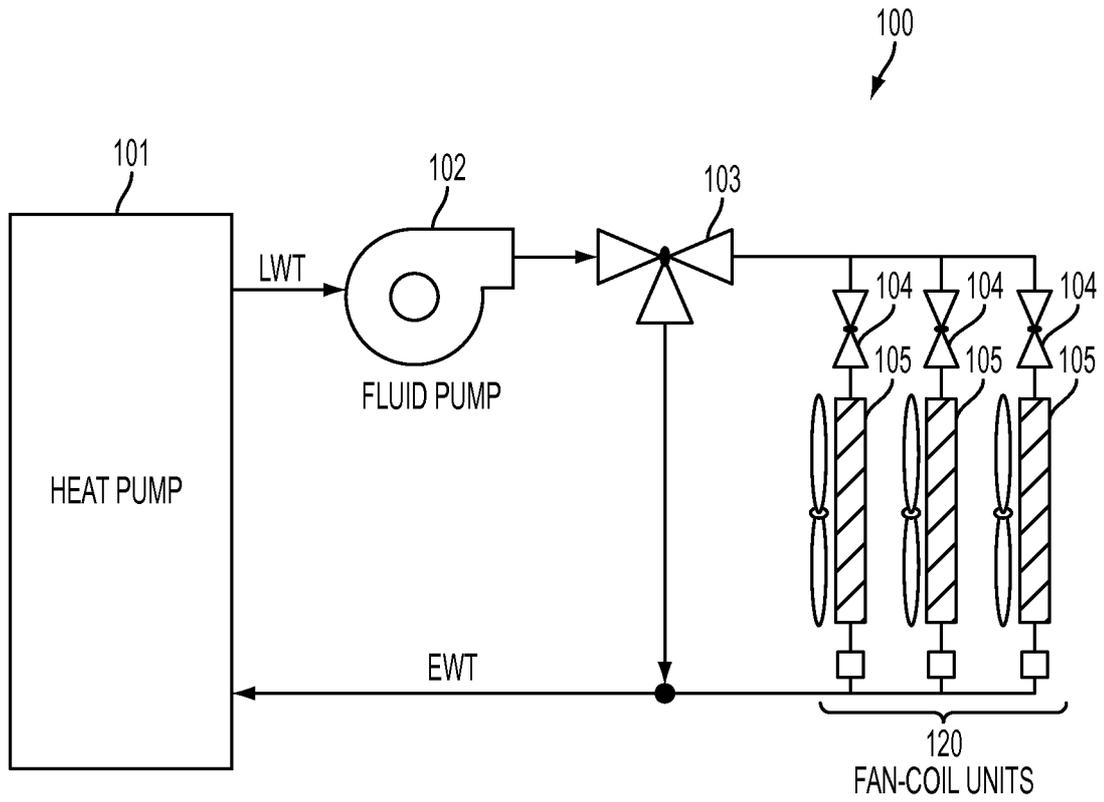


FIG. 1

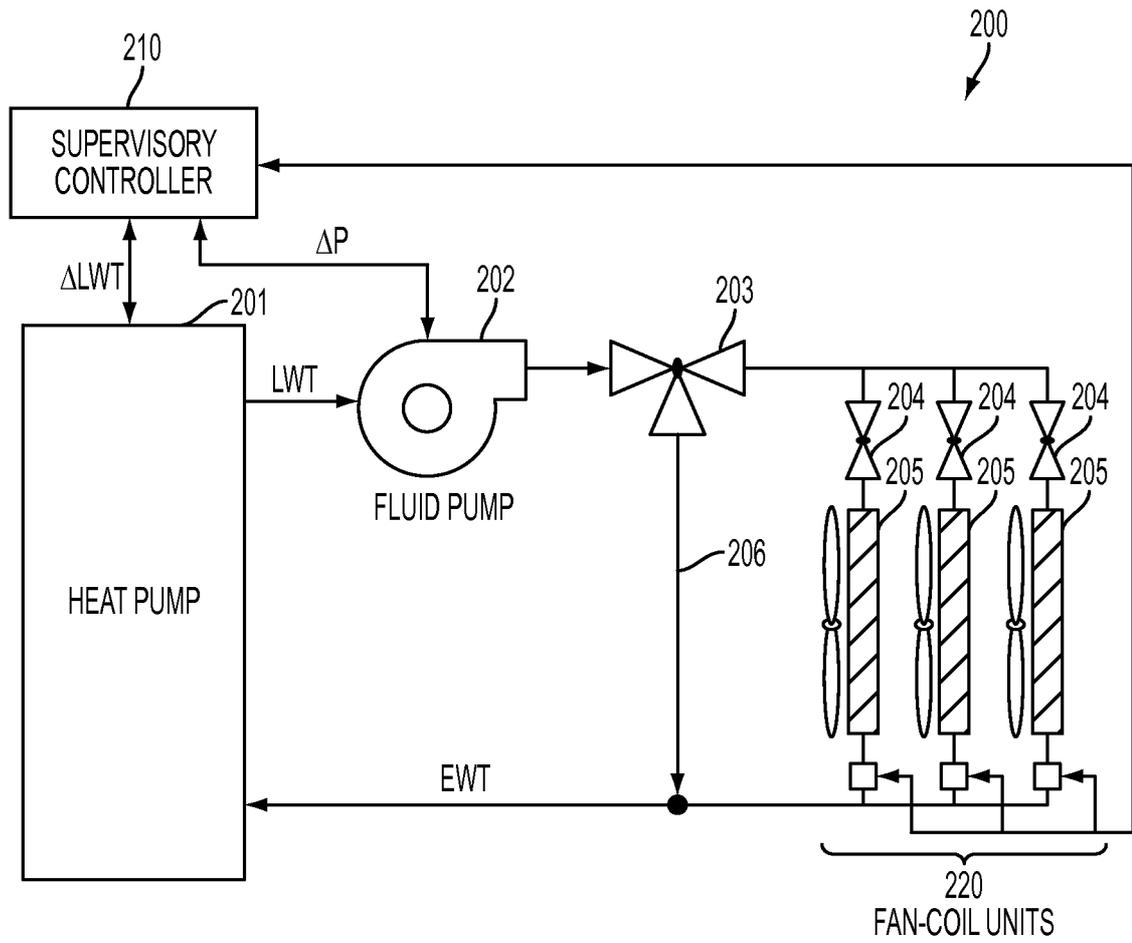


FIG. 2

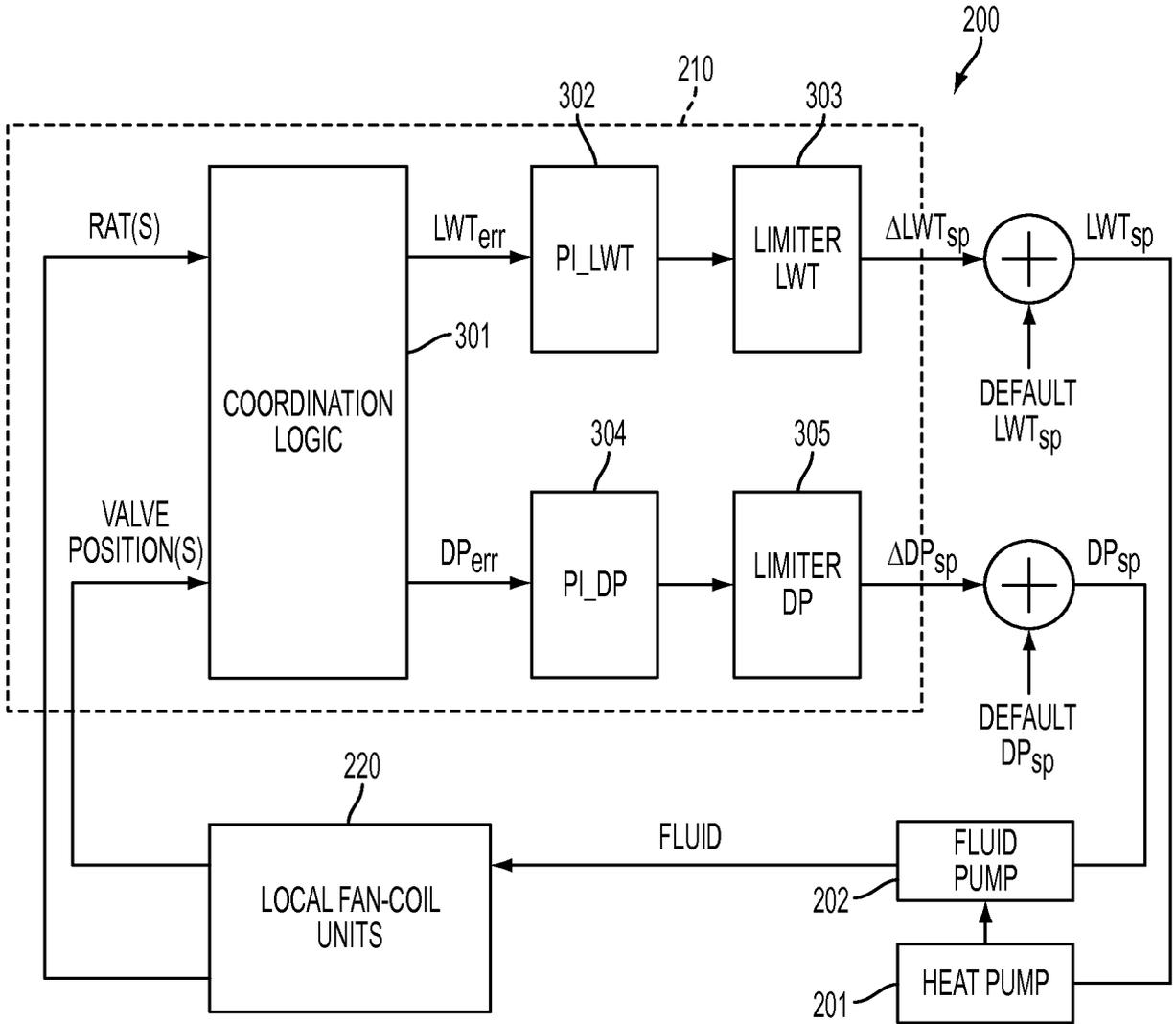


FIG. 3

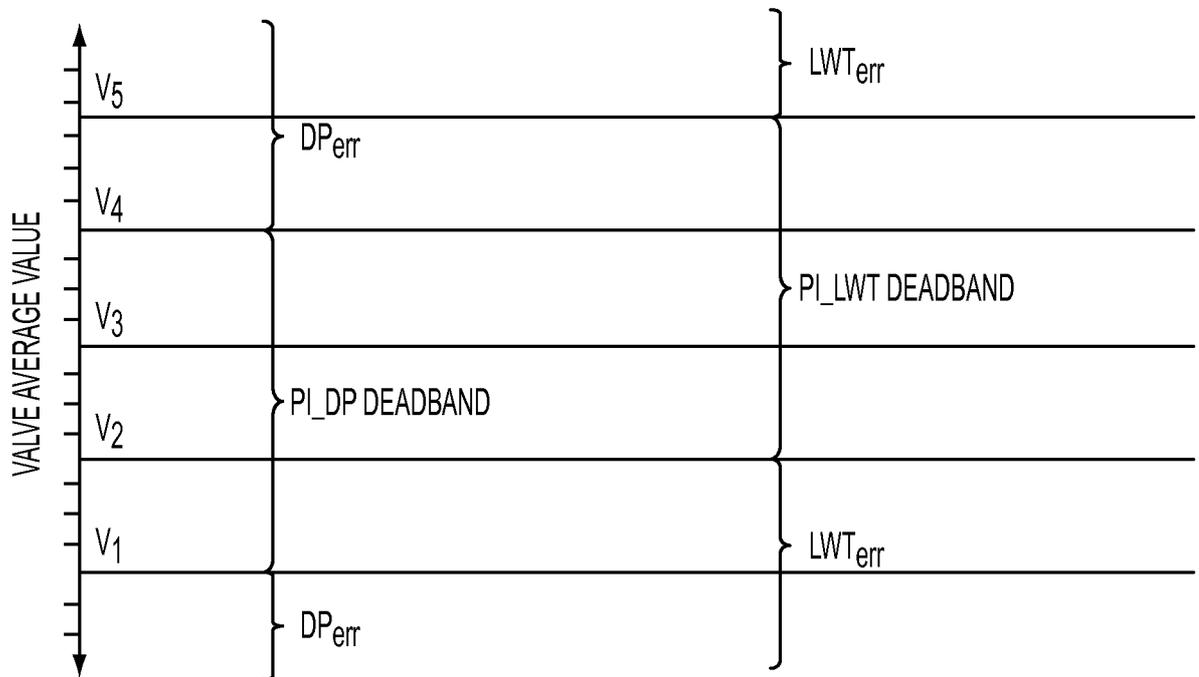


FIG. 4

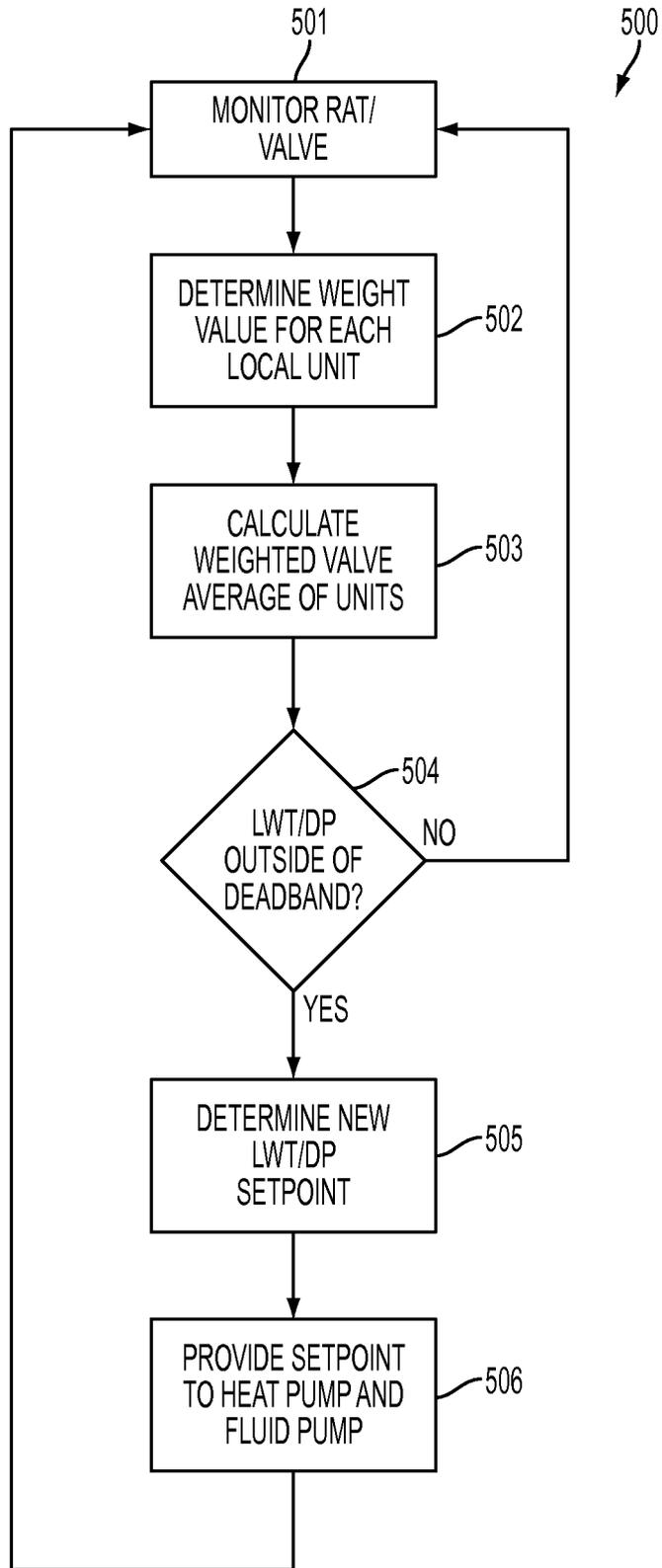


FIG. 5