

## NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

**April 4, 2018**

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on April 4, 2018 at 3:30 p.m. at the Civic Center.

Pat Becker called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bob Mullen, Gerry Warner, and Pat Becker.

A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the agenda, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2018 meeting, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

A motion was made by Dan Casey to approve February and March 2018 bills and disbursements, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

### **Public Comment:**

None

### **2018 WPPI Energy Regional Power Dinners:**

Weston Arndt gave an update on the Regional Power Dinner to be held on June 14, 2018 in River Falls. Pat Becker, Bob Mullen and Gerry Warner are interested in attending.

### **Utility Commission Member:**

Rae Ann Ailts introduced two citizens interested in filling the vacant position on the Utility Commission. Jeremy Poole, Taco Bell Manager, has been a City resident for 5 years, and is active in the [CAT-CAP](#) process. Jeremy would like to help serve the needs of the City of New Richmond. Mike Kastens has been a resident of the City for 34 years. He retired from the New Richmond Police Department after serving 37 years. He currently serves on the Plan Commission and Sex Offender Appeal Board. By serving on both the Utility Commission and Plan Commission, Mike's goal is to ensure tax and utility funds are spent in an efficient manner while the City grows. Rae Ann Ailts stated there was also a verbal interest in the commission opening. Bob Mullen moved to table the Utility Commission seat until the next meeting, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

### **Sewer Backup Policy:**

Joel Enders gave background information on sewer backups that took place in 2017.

No definitive cause was determined, and it is likely that several factors caused the backup. Some possibilities included tree roots, rags, and the design of the system itself. Staff and Council members met with each owner shortly after the incident occurred, and the Utility Commission met in special session to review the damage, and discuss possible next steps.

The impacted homeowners indicated that their insurance policies would not cover damages. The City's insurance carrier also indicated there would be no coverage. Although the City is not legally liable for the backup, the Utility Commission and Council expressed a desire to offer some amount of voluntary reimbursement to property owners affected by sewer backups. Joel reviewed the No-Fault Sanitary Sewer Backup Policy that staff is proposing and recommending. Gerry Warner moved to forward the policy to City Council for a resolution, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

### **Applications for Sewer Adjustment:**

#### **a) Phillips Medisize**

In February, Phillips Medisize contacted staff regarding a possible sewer credit for excessive water usage, which occurred in December 2017. Staff provided a copy of The Water Leak Sewer Adjustment Policy to the customer. Phillips Medisize submitted a completed sewer credit application on February 16, 2017.

The application submitted by Phillips Medisize provided the required details as outlined in The Water Leak Sewer Adjustment Policy. Staff has evaluated the excess usage, and has determined an excess usage of 517,000 gallons of water amounting to \$3,076.15 in sewer charges.

Gerry Warner moved to deny the application as it does not meet all criteria of the policy, [as excess water consumed was processed by the Waste Water Treatment Plant](#), seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

#### **b) Sarah Peterson**

On March 21, 2017, the Utility received a completed application for sewer credit from Sarah Peterson, following notification from the Utility department regarding high usage on her account. A frozen pipe underground running from the house to an outbuilding was determined to be the issue causing the excessive usage. Utility Staff shut off the valve servicing the line early in the week of February 19, 2018.

The usage history is limited as the residence was recently acquired in September of 2017. However, based upon the limited history and average usage of similar household size an average usage of 5,000 gallons per month has been calculated resulting in an excess usage of 16,000 gallons from 12/5/17-3/5/18, amounting to \$95.20 in sewer charges.

Due to weather, repairs have not been completed; however, all other application criteria was met, and the leak did not add any volume of water to the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Dan Casey moved to issue a sewer credit in the amount of \$95.20 once repairs are completed and confirmed by Utility Staff, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

### **WWTP Upgrade Design:**

The Facility Plan is nearing completion. The final hurdle needed to be completed is the phosphorus compliance portion of the plan, which will spell out how the City plans to comply with the DNR's proposed effluent phosphorus limit of 0.075 mg/L.

Two other facets of the WWTP's effectiveness over the next twenty years were evaluated in the Facility Plan: capacity and upgrades needed to maintain safety/compliance. With regard to capacity, based on current projections, the WWTP should be able to handle the flows and loadings that the expected growth will bring over the next twenty years. However, there are several items that need to be addressed to maintain safety/compliance.

The items identified that need to be addressed in order to allow the WWTP to continue to protect staff, the public, and the environment include:

- Grit removal facilities
- Gravity thickener equipment replacement
- Sludge storage monitoring/decant equipment
- Installation of a second PD blower
- Online phosphorus monitoring/chemical feed
- Control building roof
- Digester piping removal
- Chlorine contact tank cover

It should be noted that all of the major items above have been listed in the City/Utility's draft Capital Improvement Plan over the next few years.

The Facility Planning effort has been funded through the STH 64 Corridor Communities Stormwater/Wastewater Coalition with funds allocated to mitigate growth as part of the St. Croix Crossing project. A limited amount of funds remain to be distributed with a short timeframe to encumber the funds. With this in mind, the City could receive up to \$10,000 toward the design of the facilities mentioned above if we are in a position to start the project now and expend the funds by May of 2019.

Bob Mullen moved to contract with MSA for a total design contract of \$89,900.00, and pursuit of the remaining Coalition funds, which could be up to \$10,000.00, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

### **Department Reports**

#### **Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:**

- Locates have begun
- Meter change outs and cross connections are ongoing
- Upgraded VFD's in lift station at Whispering Prairie
- Jon Evans and Pat Howell attended the Wisconsin Rural Water Conference
- Adam Jackson was on vacation
- Well meters were pulled for testing
- Currently working with contractors on a couple of annexation projects

#### **Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:**

- The communication antenna on the North Tower was scheduled to be worked on today, but has been rescheduled for April 16, 2018.
- Staff is working with generator companies to obtain annual service quotes.
- Pat Becker came out to the plant last month. He spoke with the Mayor of Hartford about a Chemtrade chemical they were using at their WWTP. Steve Skinner contacted Hawkins, our chemical supplier, and asked if they have something similar to what Hartford was using, and they do. Hawkins came out to the plant and did some jar testing on sludge at the plant. This chemical is supposed to be more proficient in the settling of phosphorous. The chemical is Poly Aluminum Chloride. New Richmond WWTP is currently using aluminum sulfate.
- When the power outage occurred, power was lost to the South Tower, resulting in the SCADA system only having communication for ten minutes with the battery backup power supply. Staff reached out to St Croix County to see if they would be willing to allow for the

South Tower to be connected to their standby generator. Steve will be meeting with St Croix County staff on Friday to discuss the possibility.

- The Effluent Sampler developed a Freon leak. A replacement part has been ordered for the repair of the refrigerator assembly within the sampler.

**Kevin Blader, Electric Lead:**

- Tree trimming is finished.
- New service for Phillips Plastics has been completed.
- Installation of electrical temps for new construction are taking place.
- Staff servicing equipment, along with ABM Truck Service repairing oil leaks on the booms.
- Pole trailer was sandblasted and painted.
- Chapman Metering is currently in town testing some three phase meters.
- In mid April the north sub will be shut down for maintenance work and repairs.
- A 1200 foot primary extension will begin this spring for Derrick Construction Richmond Prairie Condo's.
- 140<sup>th</sup> Street lighting project to begin this spring – includes installation of 47 new lights.

**Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:**

- Over thirty building permits were issued the first quarter of 2018.
- During a power outage, only the main lift station has backup power. Generators and pumps are used on the remaining sixteen lift stations.
- Kudos to staff for work completed during the Saturday power outage.
- Sprint has indicated an interest in doing an upgrade on the south tower. SEH will do a structural analysis. A \$10,000 escrow is paid upfront. and as the bills come in the escrow is reduced.
- E 4<sup>th</sup> Street project design is in process. Council will be asked for permission to start the bidding process.
- Bid opening is scheduled for Wednesday, May 2, 2018 (later revised to Monday, May 7, 2018). Plan is to present bids to Utility Commission at the next utility commission meeting, and to City Council the following week.

**Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:**

- The onsite audit took place March 19<sup>th</sup> through March 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- A formal Audit report will be given in May or June.
- The PSC report was submitted on March 31, 2018. Rae Ann thanked all those who helped in completing the report. The PSC required additional water reporting this year in regards to private laterals.
- The PSC report will be available on the Utility website.
- Capital Improvement Plan responses [have been received and are being compiled.](#) ~~will be reviewed.~~ Goal is to have this wrapped up by August 2018.
- Utility staff will be marketing the availability of E-billing to residents.
- Rae Ann thanked everyone for their team efforts in response to the power outage.

**Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:**

No report given.

**Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:**

No report given.

Motion was made by Gerry Warner to move into closed session per State Statute 19.85 (1)(c), seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

Motion to approve as discussed in closed session was made by Bob Mullen, seconded by Dan Casey and carried.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Gerry Warner to adjourn, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

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Pat Becker, President

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Gerry Warner, Secretary