

**NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES**  
**April 3, 2019**

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on April 3, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at the Civic Center.

Pat Becker called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Members Present: Bob Mullen, Dan Casey, 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 March 6, 2019 meeting, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

A motion was made by Dan Casey to approve March 2019 bills and disbursements, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

**Public Comment:**

None

**Water & Sewer Rate Study:**

Rae Ann Ailts updated the committee on the water and sewer rate study conducted by Trilogy. Rae Ann outlined the proposed communication plan to the Utility Commission. Over the next 30 days, staff will be meeting with commercial/industrial users and provide rate study information to those. Additionally, an open house will be held for all ratepayers in May. The community engagement feedback will be presented to the commission in June, along with a presentation by Trilogy on the proposed rate structure.

**4Q18 Financial Report:**

Joel Enders presented the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter financial report.

- Electric – Revenues ended 2018 approximately 1.5% below budget, but were more than offset by expenses that ended 4.1% below budget. Purchased power costs were \$423K (5.3%) less than anticipated, while local operating expenses were \$69K (3.7%) higher than expected.
- Water – Revenues ended 2018 on budget while expenses ended 9.5% under budget. Higher than budgeted operating income and capital contributions resulted in a favorable change in net position of \$219K for the year.
- Wastewater expenses ended slightly over budget, due primarily to one-time costs and sewer backup reimbursements. Operating losses were slightly lower than anticipated, and ending net position was favorable to budget due to capital contributions.
- Recent changes in accounting standards for health insurance liability reduced health insurance expenses for all departments.

**Meter Data Management & Advanced Metering:**

Stacie Running presented information on Advanced Meter Data Management and Large Power Metering. Implementation of the WPPI Energy MDMS and AMI programs will allow New Richmond Utilities to address opportunities exposed in the Retail Rate Benchmarking report reviewed at the January 9, 2019 Utility Commission meeting, while improving our systems, processes and ultimately the service we provide to electric utility customers in the City of New Richmond.

Proposed phase one of the MDMS and AMI implementation, in 2020, would involve twenty-four large power customers in the City of New Richmond. Estimated costs are as follows:

- \$12,000 metering & infrastructure upgrades
  - 24 Advanced Meters
  - 8 Repeaters
  - 2 Gatekeepers
- \$2,500 Energy IP to NorthStar data integration
- \$5,100 annual service fees (\$425/month)

**Water Department Pickup Truck Quotes:**

Jeremiah Wendt presented the solicited quotes for a new pickup truck in the Water Department, and the tentative disposal of the existing 2008 Ford F-250 by auction in the fall of 2019. Quotes were received from Johnson Ford (\$28,161.00) and Bernard's Northtown (\$34,119). A motion was made by Bob Mullen to accept the quote for the 2019 Ford F-250 at a price of \$28,161.00, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

**Electric Department Truck 36 Replacement Bid:**

Weston Arndt gave background information on the current Truck #36. It is a ¾ ton 2005 Dodge Ram 2500 regular cab equipped with a service body. A replacement for the truck was included in the 2018 Capital Improvement Plan. Due to further evaluation of vehicle need and the timing of CIP approval, staff would like to proceed with replacement in 2019. The only change in specifications sought in the replacement is to pursue at least an extended cab, to allow for additional conditioned storage. The existing truck would be traded or sold. Reserve funds would be used as the source to acquire the replacement truck. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to solicit quotes for a new vehicle from the three local dealerships and solicit quotes for the service body from regional vendors, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried

**Electric Reliability Benchmarking:**

Weston Arndt presented some background information on the 2018 Annual Benchmarking Report Commissioners received. The American Public Power Association (APPA) offers online electric outage tracking software called eReliability Tracker and provides an Annual Report to assist utilities in their efforts to understand and analyze their electric system. Outage data for the New Richmond utilities distribution system for both 2017 and 2018 have been entered into software. The software provides Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) reliability metrics that allow for comparison to other utilities across the country.

Comparing our local metrics for the past two years, we can see that despite a larger number of interruption events in 2018, the duration of the outages were generally shorter. Comparing our local metrics for 2018 to averages, utilities within our region, and utilities with a similar customer size show that we scored very well.

**Home and Business Energy Report:**

Stacie Running stated there was an error in the Home and Business Energy Report previously mailed. WPPI has corrected the errors in the report. Stacie is reviewing the corrected report before it is submitted to the printer. The corrected report is scheduled to be sent out the week of April 8<sup>th</sup>.

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

- Inflow and Infiltration is higher, but overall we are in good shape.
- Staff did some thawing of storm sewers.
- Compost site will be opening April 15<sup>th</sup>, as well as curbside pickup.
- 2019 bags will need to be biodegradable.

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

- City Council approved the Biosolid DOT resolution and this has been sent to the attorney at the State level.
- Ammonia levels are still a little high, lower than last month.
- More INI, found a couple of manholes that were not sealed.
- More testing for certifications the first week on May.

**Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:**

- Busy with residential sewer and water inspections.
- Contractors meeting coming up on April 18, 2019.
- Locates have started.
- Jetting.
- Frozen line at St. Andrews.
- Hydrant repair.
- Water leak on East Second.
- Meter Change outs continue.
- Bob Meyer attended a technical conference at La Crosse, looking at information on ice pigging to clean mains.

**Weston Arndt, Electric Superintendent:**

- 2018 Reliability Benchmarking - highlighted that outage durations were shorter in 2018, despite the fact that there were nearly twice the number of outages.
- Completed annual Energy Information Administration (EIA) reporting, in partnership with WPPI Energy.
- Submitted the bi-annual Preventative Maintenance Report to the WI Public Service Commission.
- Continued to explore ways to improve internet speed and access issues in the community. Met with area providers and attending a 5G forum hosted by MEUW.
- Electric crew has been performing underground and overhead inspections. During this process, we have been installing pedestal, transformer, and sectionalizer cabinet markers.

- Making plans to reconductor a section of overhead line on East First St due to the load growth east in the Fox Run and Whispering Prairie developments.
- Our mapping updates are complete and we're working on printing maps and utilizing mobile devices to access our maps on the cloud.
- Crew has been working to repair a few underground faults where we've had temporary wire run above the ground.
- Thank you to Dan Casey, who is celebrating 7 years on the Utility Commission.

**Stacie Running, ESR:**

- Focus on Energy – over \$19,123 has been paid to customers in incentives for January and February
- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Customer recognition will be going to Lakeside Foods
- 2020 New Richmond Utilities will be celebrating 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – we would like the members to participate in planning anniversary events
- Westfields Hospital has enrolled in the construction design program; Stacie will be meeting with them concerning incentives

**Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:**

- The audit was completed and will be published in June, and presented to the commission in August
- PSC annual filing was completed for the electric and water department, copies will be sent to members
- March has been busy with training
- Municipal software is being kicked off in April. EO Johnson has been contracted to assist in locating the software that will best fit our needs.

**Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:**

- Council will be looking at maternity, paternity, and bereavement leave as well as flextime
- RFP is out for the Beebe building, expecting interviews later this month

There being no further business, Dan Casey motioned to adjourn, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

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Pat Becker, President

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Gerry Warner, Secretary