

NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES
August 7, 2019

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on August 7, 2019 at 8:00 a.m. at the Civic Center.

Mike Kastens called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m.

Members Present: Bob Mullen, Mike Kastens, Gerry Warner, Dan Casey (via phone), and Pat Becker.

A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the agenda moving agenda item # 8, WPPI Member Governing Body Presentation, prior to agenda item #7, Audit Report, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

A motion was made by Pat Becker to approve the minutes of the July 10, 2019 meeting, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

A motion was made by Pat Becker to approve June 2019 bills and disbursements, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Public Comment:

None

WPPI Governing Body Presentation:

Tom Hanrahan from WPPI Energy joined the Utility Commission meeting for a Member Governing Body presentation. The title of the presentation was “The Power of Great Places” and focused on what that means for New Richmond as a member-owner of WPPI Energy. The presentation highlighted some recent accomplishments WPPI members have achieved by collaborating through joint action, noted some current WPPI and industry developments, and discussed ways that WPPI can support member’s local efforts and priorities. WPPI currently has 51 members, 41 are Wisconsin owners, and run by members.

2018 Auditor Report:

Kim Schultz from Bakker Tilley gave an overview of the financial report.

- Electric sales have been consistent, increasing a total of 10% from 2015 to 2018
- Water volume increased 0.5% from last year but has increased 3.1% since 2015. The increase is primarily due to irrigation usage, which increased 27.3% from last year and increased 60.2% since 2015.
- Sewer volumes have remained fairly consistent overall, increasing 4.1% from 2015 to 2018. Residential customer volumes increased by 4.5% during this time while interdepartmental and public authority volumes decreased 7.5% and 19.0%, respectively.
- Current electric rates were implemented on December 1, 2013.
- Current water rates were implemented on July 1, 2014.
- Bond Resolutions require that earnings from the system be 1.25 times the revenue bond annual debt service based on the bond year. The coverage requirement was met in 2018.
- Cash flow from operations should be sufficient not only to recover operating costs, but also to provide for debt service, transfers to the municipality for property tax equivalent and routine plant additions.

Department Reports

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

- No Report Jeremiah absent

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

- Greg Hermansen is testing in Plover for more wastewater DNR certifications.
- The air compressor in the basement of the digester was repaired. Failed psi switch was the source of the problems.
- Pump at Main Lift Station has been blowing fuses. Fuses were ordered from J.H. Larson on July 10th, but still have not received them. Contacted J. H. Larson and found out they will not be shipped until August 26th. Instead of waiting for those fuses, an order was placed on Amazon with delivery expected within a week.
- Steve Skinner met with Rep. Rob Stafsholt on concerns and costs of transporting biosolids. Rep. Stafsholt will bring it back to the capital to discuss with other representatives. Hopefully the issue will be brought to the House of Representatives in the next 6-8 weeks.
- Annual generator service is scheduled for next week.

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

- Lightning strike hit transducer on Tower #1.

- Fox Run Lift Station panel had a control piece fail during the lightning storm. Quality Flow brought new part and did repair.
- Water Department is still busy doing locates.
- Residential sewer and water inspections continue.
- Installation of new meters is ongoing.
- Jetting continues.
- A sewer reline took place by the old high school.
- New truck arrived approximately three weeks early. Still needs to be converted.
- Manhole rehab is on the agenda to be completed.

Weston Arndt, Electric Superintendent:

- **Bosch Packaging Outage** – On Tuesday, July 16, we had a failed underground primary cable feeding the south service of the Bosch facility. A temporary primary was established, restoring power within roughly two hours. On July 17, River Falls brought their fault finding equipment to help us find where the cable failed. Fortunately, the failure was south of the parking lot. The cable was spliced on Wednesday, and Thursday morning at 6:00 am we had a short outage to switch back to the repaired cable. We are making plans to upgrade this line from the riser pole to the transformer. This will take some coordination with Bosch, and will likely occur in October.
- **Only one other outage** – squirrel at Immaculate Conception.
- **Rustic Ridge** – We completed our underground system improvements.
- **Overhead Improvements** – Continuing with work along East Sixth, East Fifth Streets
- **James Place** – Getting closer to joint trench work with Xcel at James Place development.
- **Electric Operations Intern** – We are proceeding with offering our current GIS intern, Josh Miller, the opportunity to stay on as our Electric Operations Intern. He will work roughly 16 hours per week during his fall semester, for 266 hours. This position is funded by an APPA grant.
- **Shared Meter Tech Service** – Two meter technicians from WPPI Energy are testing meters August 6, 7, and 8th. They'll also be performing thermal imaging as time allows.
- **WPPI Energy Executive Committee member visit** – On July 23, Wes met with member representatives from Waupun, Cedarburg, and Black River Falls to discuss performance and provide feedback on WPPI Energy.
- **Mutual Aid** – Wes shared a presentation on our mutual aid assistance for Barron and Wisconsin Rapids. It was a good learning experience and the importance of tree trimming and placing underground services.

Stacie Running, WPPI ESR:

- Focus on Energy:
 - Incentives paid January-June, 2019 = \$49,670
 - \$22,415 paid last month
 - 781 customer measures:
 - 20 commercial/industrial
 - 913 residential
 - 11 school & government
 - Estimated contribution into the program < \$40,000/year
 - 850,823 first year kWh savings
 - 10,901,129 kWh lifecycle savings
- WPPI/New Richmond Utilities
 - We received the APPA Smart Energy Provider plaque.
 - Solar inverter repair was made on the Community Solar Garden.
 - A thank you from RISE was shared for the recent contribution.
 - We are planning a Lunch and Learn for the New Construction Design Assistance Program in partnership with River Falls and Slipstream for the Fall of 2019.
 - Working with the PACE Wisconsin program to offer Property Assessed Clean Energy financing to New Richmond customers.
 - Customer Connections:
 - Barley Johns
 - NRSB
 - Phillips Medisize

Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:

- Working on the 2020 budget with all departments. Conversations with the Utility Commissioners will take place in the coming weeks. Draft to follow.
- Working on improving the Capital Improvements Planning vs maintenance.
- The Municipal Management Software Request For Proposals went out the end of July. The initial intent responses will be evaluated by EO Johnson in August and September. Small group of vendors will be brought forward for selection.

- Working on municipal management software, EO Johnson will evaluate the responses in August & September
- Next month's Utility Commission meeting will take place at the WWTP.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

- Mike complimented staff on great transparency. The audit report will be on the website.
- Interviewing took place with firms interested in the Beebe Building. Three firms have been brought forward, with information released to the public later in the week. A decision is expected to be made sometime in the fall.
- Staff is doing a value statement of compensation before jumping into benefits and wages.
- The Friday Memorial Library is hoping for a location decision by August 26th.

There being no further business, Gerry Warner motioned to adjourn, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Mike Kastens, President

Gerry Warner, Secretary