

NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

February 8, 2017

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on February 8, 2017 at 7:30 a.m. at the Civic Center.

Pat Becker called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

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

Members Absent: Dan Casey

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

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the minutes of the January 10, 2017 meeting, and approve January 2017 bills and disbursements, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried.

Public Comment: None

Set 2017 Utility Commission meeting schedule:

The meeting schedule for 2017 is as follows:

March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, July no meeting, August 2, September 6, October 4, November 1, and December 7. Meeting time will be 3:30 p.m. instead of 7:30 a.m. Mike Darrow will check on having the March meeting at the Airport.

Water Department Vehicle Quotes:

Jeremiah Wendt updated the commission on quotes that were received for two new vehicles in the Water Department. The two vehicles in question were budgeted for in the Capital Budget for 2017. They include a pickup truck to replace the existing 2004 Dodge Ram, and a cargo van to replace the existing 2004 Ford Ranger.

Discussion took place on replacing the Dodge Ram with a cargo van, and quotes were reviewed. After Staff's recommendation, a motion was made by Gerry Warner to accept the bid for the 2017 Chevrolet City Express LT at a price of \$20,731.00, with an additional amount up to \$1,500.00 to be spent on up fitting, and transfer the existing 2004 Ford Ranger to the Wastewater Treatment Plant, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

Quotes to replace the 2004 Dodge Ram were presented and reviewed. Jeremiah made a recommendation to purchase the 2017 Dodge Ram 1500 Crew Cab, and to keep the 2004 Dodge Ram until the fall of 2017. A motion was made by Gerry Warner to accept the quote for the 2017 Dodge Ram 1500 Crew Cab at a price of \$26,785.00, and dispose of the 2004 Dodge Ram by auction in the fall of 2017, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

Department Reports

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

Meter change outs are ongoing as well as disconnects. Dave Pufall attended inspection classes in Madison. Bob is working on compiling information Rae Ann Ailts needs for PSC and DNR reporting. There was a water leak by the Centre needing repair. During the repair work, it was noted there are lead connections requiring replacement. The lead connections will be replaced in the spring. A homeowner is responsible for the recent leak on Fairfield Road. Staff is working with the homeowner to help them locate a contractor to repair the leak.

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

Steve reported last month that two touch screens at the WWTP are inoperable. He is working on getting those touch screens replaced. The next couple of days will be spent replacing or repairing five valves in the basement of the digester. One of the VFD's at Main Lift Station located at the Nature Center is failing. The pump is surging. Consequently only the number one pump is being used while determining if the VFD can be repaired. If it becomes necessary to replace the VFD, the cost will be approximately \$10,000.00. Steve will be in class next Wednesday for Biological Phosphorous Removal.

Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent:

Tom stated everything is going well. Tree trimming is currently taking place. Once complete, staff will be working on maintenance and getting equipment ready for spring. Energis completed the annual maintenance of all three sub-stations. Tree trimming will continue for approximately three more weeks. The conversion of downtown globe lights to LED's is approximately 50% complete.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

Jeremiah and staff continue to work on the North 4th Street design. The plans should be presented at the March Utility Commission meeting, along with some historical information on the lead services remaining within the city. A number of lead services will be eliminated on North 4th Street during the upgrade. Water was tested at the Civic Center. Results were good – no exceedances of EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level for lead. Jeremiah and Bob Meyer will be going to River Falls to see demos on sewer lining processes. Some of the sewer mains televised last year showed infiltration. Staff is looking into the possibility of lining some of those sewer mains.

Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:

Rae Ann presented the 4th Quarter 2016 Reporting Metrics showing statistics on customer usage and consumption. There has been steady annual growth amongst the Utility Services (Electric, Water & Wastewater) since 2012. The yearend financials for 2016 will be given at the April meeting, once the 2016 audit is complete.

WPPI will be updating their website platform which will allow the Utilities to update our website. This website update is expected to take approximately six months to complete.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:Wholesale Rate Impacts

Following work with the Rates Services Advisory Group in 2016, WPPI Energy staff recommended changes to the wholesale rate tariffs for 2017. The changes would better align revenue to the costs incurred to meet our peak summer demand. The changes were approved at the December 2016 board of directors meeting and became effective January 1, 2017. The change will lower the rates for the months of October through May, and have slightly higher rates in June through September. The changes will be seen on monthly wholesale power bills, and will be passed on to retail customers through the power cost adjustment charge (PCAC).

Communication planning is underway and is expected to include bill messages, bill inserts, and tips in the home and business energy reports, from March through May. Face to face communications will occur for the large power customers. Sample comparisons for these customers were provided.

2016 Focus on Energy Impacts

Energy Efficiency incentives for the Phillips Medisize expansion were a significant portion of the totals. However, with over \$126,000 in incentives returned to New Richmond Utilities customers, participation in the Focus on Energy program continues to benefit the community as a whole.

Focus on Energy Wastewater Bridge Program

The wastewater treatment plant was enrolled in the Focus on Energy Wastewater Bridge Program. The program offers rewards for facilities that utilize low or no cost methods to achieve energy efficiency savings. There is no cost to participate.

Focus on Energy – School and Government TLED Trial

The Focus on Energy School and Government program is offering a trial box of 50 TLED products for \$2 per lamp. TLED are Tubular Light Emitting Diode lamps that are designed to replace 4-foot fluorescent lamps, reducing energy consumption by roughly 50%. As these products sell for roughly \$10 per lamp, the cost offers a great opportunity to test the technology. This information has been shared with eligible facilities in the community and the City intends to also participate in the trial.

School Involvement

We partner with the National Theatre for Children to offer their touring performances in the local elementary schools. Their energy-themed skits provide a fun and entertaining message to the students. They will be in town the week of February 13th. A visit to Starr elementary is scheduled for February 17th to present electrical safety and pedal power. Work to schedule additional visits including water and wastewater is also in progress.

Noah Wiedenfeld, Management Analyst:

Noah Wiedenfeld shared the dates and times for three upcoming events. An open house meeting for the North Fourth Street project will be on February 16th at the street shop from 5:30-7:00 p.m. The first public meeting for the Comprehensive Plan will be held February 21st at 5:00 p.m. at the Fire Hall. More than thirty community members have volunteered to be on the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Comprehensive Plan, including Bob Mullen from the Utility Commission. Finally, the annual "State of the City" presentation sponsored by the New Richmond Area Chamber of Commerce will be held on February 24th at WITC from 7:30-9:00 a.m. Representatives from each city department give a presentation on current and upcoming projects, and have a question and answer period. There are typically about seventy five people in attendance from the business community.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

Mike stated links would be sent to keep residents updated on the Comprehensive Plan. Next week New Richmond Township should approve the financing of a portion of the 125th Street project. This project will be brought back to the City Council during a work session in March to discuss when the project should occur. On Friday, Mike will be on site at the WWTP observing daily operations. Last week Mike spent six hours at the airport. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served during the candlelight walk taking place at Doar Restoration Park on Thursday, February 9th at 5:30 p.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Gerry Warner to adjourn, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

Pat Becker, President

Gerry Warner, Secretary