

NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

February 21, 2018

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on February 21, 2018 at 2:00 p.m. at the Civic Center.

Pat Becker called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

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

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

A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the minutes of the January 3, 2018 meeting, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve January 2018 bills and disbursements, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

Public Comment:

None

Letter of Appreciation to Jerry Frey:

Mike Darrow stated Jerry Frey has resigned from the Utility Commission. WPPI has sent Jerry a letter of appreciation for his years of service on the Utility Commission. Mike will work setting up a time when Commission members can go out for dinner with Jerry.

E 4th Street Project Update:

At the January 2018 Utility Commission meeting, the Commission directed staff to further research the concept and costs of reconstructing the sewer on E 4th Street between Rounds Ave and Park Ave. Staff has worked with consultant SEH on the development of a design/construction services contract, as well as a more detailed cost estimate, based on preliminary assumptions for the project.

The construction cost estimate confirmed the initial assumption that the construction cost would be in the range of \$150,000-\$175,000. Engineering design and construction services costs would be an additional \$50,000. However, with the City providing the construction inspection services we can reduced this amount approximately \$33,000. There was discussion on how the homeowners would hook up; this cost would be included in the project. Jeremiah explained each homeowner would be contacted on what the project will consist of. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to continue with the design phase, but not to exceed \$18,000.00, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Miscellaneous Projects:

Jeremiah Wendt reviewed the project list, There are lift stations and some items in the water system needing to be replaced.

- Lift Stations
 - The pumps in the Greaton Lift station have single vane impellers, more prone to clogging than the vortex impellers that the City has made our standard more recently. These pumps should be replaced in 2018 at an estimated cost of \$13,000.
 - The controls for the two lift stations on North Shore drive are original to those lift stations, dating back several decades. The corrosive environment on the wet well side, as well as the age of the controls makes maintenance or failure seem imminent. Staff is recommending that these controls be replaced in 2018 at an estimated cost of \$32,000.
 - The Utility operates a small grinder station serving six homes off of St. Andrews Place. The grinder station is not currently connected to the SCADA system, so any alarms at the station are conveyed audibly by a beacon light on the control panel. Staff is recommending upfitting the control panel with a SCADA connection in 2018, at an approximate cost of \$5,000.
 - The above \$50,000 in Lift Station Upgrades would be paid for from the Sewer Utility's Savings for Lift Stations.
- Water System
 - The valves on both the north and south ends of the alley between Minnesota Ave and Dakota Ave from W 1st Street to W 2nd Street are non-functional and in need of replacement. This alley is being proposed to the Public Works Committee and City

Council for reconstruction in 2018. As part of the reconstruction, these valves should be replaced at an approximate cost of \$30,000 to the water utility savings for watermain replacement.

- The watermain on E 8th Street east of Riley Avenue is 2-inch diameter and has experienced several leaks in recent years. Replacement of this watermain is in the Capital Improvement Plan for 2019 at an estimated cost of \$100,000 to the water utility. Additional costs may be incurred depending on how the watermain is looped, and the extent of street reconstruction needed as a result.
 - A leak recently developed in the watermain on E 11th Street near Starr Avenue. Currently the watermain is being left in service, but will need to be excavated and repaired in the spring. The cost should be in the range of \$10,000-20,000, which will be borne by the operating fund.
- Sewer Services
 - The sewer service for 342 N 2nd Street runs through the neighboring house before entering the City's sewer system. There is currently no sewer main adjacent to this house to which it could connect. In order to run sewer main to serve the house, approximately 350 feet of new sewer would have to be constructed at a cost of at least \$50,000.

Gerry Warner moved to approve all mini projects to be completed on the schedule as noted above, with the exception of 342 N 2nd Street, seconded by Bob Mullen, motion carried.

3rd Quarter 2017 Financial Review:

Rae Ann Ailts reviewed the Utility financial report and explained some of the changes. Utility expenses are anticipated to be on target at the end of the year. We have been busy preparing for the audit in March.

Communication Plan:

In late 2017, a small group of staff members from various departments prepared an internal plan with recommendations to improve our communications, branding, and overall customer service. Some of the noticeable changes in the short term include staff wearing name tags, having laminated copies of our communication principles displayed at work stations and in vehicles, having branded staff shirts for Civic Center staff to wear on Fridays, and implementing best practices when it comes to press releases, memos, social media, etc.

Department Reports

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

- Working on PSC reports
- Extra DNR reporting for 1st Quarter
- Meter change outs continue
- Pat Howell is back after having knee surgery
- Doing water disconnects
- Water freeze up on Williamsburg
- Trouble with a lift station at Whispering Prairie, staff is working with Quality Flow

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

- Met with St. Croix County DNR rep regarding water quality trading in lieu of plant upgrades
- Working on getting proposals for upgrading the SCADA system

Tom Rickard/Kevin Blader, Electric Superintendent:

No report

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

- Designing 125th Street continues, will be brought to Council in March for approval to bid
- New Public Works employee, Andrew Miller

Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:

- Doing Audit work
- Joel Enders joined us on January 15, 2018
- Darren O'Flanagan joined us February 5, 2018 as a Journey line worker
- There have been a number of inquiries regarding sewer adjustments

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:

Schools

National Theatre for Children performances were held at Paperjack and St Mary's last week (February 14 and 15). Water, Wastewater, Electric presentation scheduling is underway for our annual spring outreach.

Focus on Energy

In 2016, the PSC directed Focus on Energy program to develop offerings that would incentivize broadband providers to market energy efficiency opportunities along with new or upgraded service. The goal was to increase access to broadband as well as Focus on Energy offerings in rural locations. In 2017 they partnered with communications providers to promote internet service upgrades. Now in 2018 they've expanded their "Connected Device Kits" to all of Wisconsin's rural zip codes. New Richmond is 100% eligible as rural, and customer eligibility is based on access to 10 MBs speed.

The connected device kits would include 5 options, with a mix of free and options with a co-pay. Measures include smart power strips, lighting, wifi-enabled and learning thermostats.

Focus on Energy marketing staff is seeking to partner with utilities to promote the offering. They would assist in development and cobranding of direct mail pieces, social media messaging, newsletter content and newspaper advertising, at no cost to the utilities. Customers would be directed to a website to complete their application and make co-payment if necessary.

Staff will evaluate the options, and will proceed in the best interest of the utilities and customers.

Customer Work

Recent customer work includes with 45th Parallel, Breaktime Café, & Phillips Medisize.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

- Capital Projects will be looked at in April

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

Motion to approve additional staff compensation was made by Bob Mullen, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Motion to approve Electrical Superintendent Agreement was made by Gerry Warner, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Gerry Warner to adjourn, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Pat Becker, President

Gerry Warner, Secretary