



**Utility Commission
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February
5, 2020 at 8:00 AM
Civic Center ED Lab**



The Utility Commission of the City of New Richmond was called to order on Wednesday, February 5, 2020, at 8:00 AM, in the Civic Center ED Lab, with the following members present:

PRESENT: Bob Mullen, Pat Becker, Mike Kastens

ABSENT: Gerry Warner

**OTHERS
PRESENT:** Julie Brunner, Jeff Kuschel, Mike Darrow, Rae Ann Ailts, Joel Enders, Stacie Running, Weston Arndt, Bob Meyer, Steve Skinner, Sally Turpin, and Debbie Powers

CALL TO ORDER

Mike Kastens called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Patrick Becker made a motion approve the agenda as presented. Robert Mullen seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Patrick Becker made a motion Minutes from January 15, 2020. Robert Mullen seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND DISBURSEMENTS JANUARY 2020

Robert Mullen made a motion to approve the bills for January 2020. Patrick Becker seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Water Department - Bob Meyer

- Water disconnects continue.
- Sewer and water residential inspections continue.
- Locates have dropped off considerably.
- Meters / cross connections continue.
- Pipe painting in the well houses has been finished.

- Working on DNR and PSC reports.
- Adam going to classes in Chetek with Steve.
- Attending a webinar with Jeremiah concerning lead and copper revisions to old rules.

Utility Manager - Mike Darrow

Mike thanked Bob Mullen for his years of service on the Utility Commission and other committees he served on. Bob stated he has enjoyed it and will miss it. Bob has been invited to attend the Council meeting on February 10th.

Sewer Department - Steve Skinner

- Joel Enders and myself went to Madison to present at Assembly and Senate Transportation Hearing for the Biosolids hauling law change.
- Attended a meeting with 45th parallel to discuss options for wastewater discharge before completing an industrial user agreement.
- Attended a meeting with MSA engineering going over facility plans. Working to finalize plans so they can go out for bid.
- Jeremiah and myself went to the Middle School to Judge projects the students had done for a future city project.
- Wastewater Department will be Hosting West Central District meeting on Feb 11th at the American Legion. Anyone interested in attending is welcome to.

Finance Director - Rae Ann Ailts

- On January 28th the My Account portal was launched.
 - 660 registered users, 2200 transactions processed and 194 payments made to date.
- Working on having people sign up for e-billing.
- Posting soon for the Purchasing/Finance manager position that was part of the 2020 budget.
- Entering into the audit season.

WPPI-ESR - Stacie Running

- Focus on Energy
 - Incentives paid January 2020 = \$3,938
 - 56 residential customer incentives
 - 19,165 first-year kWh savings
- NR Utilities 130th logo introduced.
- WPPI Updates
 - EV Pilot targeting auto dealers -Partnership: WPPI, Slipstream, RENEW Wisconsin and Kanndo Consulting utilizing \$75,000 grant.
 - Working to schedule Power Dinners & Member Utility Manager Roundtables
 - Website update
 - APPA Resources for Governing Body Members
- Upcoming Events
 - MEUW Day at the Capital – February 13
- Customer Connections
 - Large Power RFP for Energy Efficiency – March 27 deadline
 - Industrial Refrigeration Course

- NRSD Pedal Power & PowerTOWN today
- Bosch changes to Syntegon Packaging Technology Inc.
- New Richmond 8 Theatre

Electric Department - Weston Arndt

- **Substation Annual Inspections** –Energis performed thermal imaging inspections and battery tests on three substations. The battery tests were satisfactory. Thermal imaging revealed no issues at White Pine, multiple arrestors that should be replaced when convenient at Highview, and one switch contact that should be looked into at Knowles. We will plan to switch Highview offline at some point in the next month, after Xcel finishes their work in Knowles. The Knowles switch was looked at, cleaned, torqued, etc. when the sub was de-energized for Xcel’s maintenance. Xcel has requested another offloading for next week.
- **Tree trimming** – We continue with tree trimming. We have been coordinating with the public works crews who are trimming over roadways and sidewalks.
- **Street lights** - We took time to work on street lights, identifying and correcting several issues. Our attention was on the main corridors.
- **Energy Operations Intern** – Josh Miller will be wrapping up his hours soon on his internship. He has been working on updating our transformer records in GIS, allowing us to move away from the Access database currently used. This required some field verification, but we’re nearing completion.
- **Hwy 64 / Hwy 65 intersection lane configuration** – WI DOT requested work plans for facilities in conflict for their scheduled work in 2021. We expect four street lights and no electric facilities to be in conflict. We completed the work plan and submitted it to the state for review.
- **MEUW Training** – Next Wednesday in River Falls for underground safety and February 26 on-site MEUW training.

Public Works Director - Jeremiah Wendt

- Gave an update on City & Utility projects
- Bid opening on February 27th
- Jefferson Marshall project open house on February 20th
- WWTP upgrade project in final design
- Gave an overview of the lead and copper rule revisions

UTILITY COMMISSION VACANCY INTERVIEWS

Julie Brunner lives here in New Richmond. Mike Kastens had asked Julie if she would be interested in serving on this commission. Julie volunteers at a children's respite. She would like to be on this commission and give back to her community.

Jeff Kuschel has been in New Richmond for about 20 years. He works with high school students and can see how Utilities can impact the community. He is a member of the Free Masons and Shriner's. Patrick Becker made a motion to recommend the two candidates names to the mayor for filling the vacant positions. Mike Kastens will contact them after the City Council approval. Robert Mullen seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.

130TH ANNIVERSARY BRANDING

Static Running gave an update on the 130th Logo. She has been working with WPPI to review the branding. This logo will be used for the remainder of the year.

COMMUNICATION AND MISCELLANEOUS

None.

CLOSED SESSION PER STATE STATUTE 19.85(1)(E)

DELIBERATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS - UTILITY ACCOUNT - 1280 MADISON AVE

Patrick Becker made a motion made to go into closed session Per State Stature 19.85(1)(e). Robert Mullen seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.

OPEN SESSION - ACTION ON CLOSED SESSION AGENDA

No action was taken from closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Robert Mullen made a motion to adjourn at 8:41 a.m. Patrick Becker seconded the motion. Carried unanimously.