

**March 2, 2016**

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on March 2, 2016 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.

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

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the minutes of the January 12, 2016 meeting, along with the bills and disbursements from January 2016 and February 2016, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

**Public Comment** – None

**Wellhouse Security** – Questions have recently arisen about the current security practices at the City's wellhouses, specifically with regard to how our chemical supplier accesses the buildings when delivering chemicals. Staff looked into the policies of other cities related to this issue. It was determined it is common practice to allow chemical companies access to buildings to make their delivery, without a staff member onsite. Staff is recommending our chemical supplier sign an agreement detailing specific employees that will have access, and affirming certain background check requirements have been met. It was also recommended to have a sign off sheet inside the wellhouse. This would be signed, along with date and time, by delivery employee upon completion. Chemical company currently notifies the Water Department when delivery is scheduled to be made. This practice would also continue. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to move forward with the policy to have a signed agreement with the chemical company, along with a sign off sheet in the wellhouse, in order to continue to have unsupervised access to the building, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried.

**2016 Street/Utility Projects** – Jeremiah Wendt gave an update on the 2016 Street and Utility Projects. These are currently in the preliminary/design stage. Plans were submitted to the City Council for N. Starr Avenue, E. and W. River Drive, Paperjack Drive, and N. Shore Drive projects. Preliminary costs are available. Staff is looking for formal approval from the City Council to bid these projects at the March meeting. Timeline is to begin these projects mid-May 2016, with completion in October 2016. A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the bid process for the 2016 Street and Utility Projects, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

**1 ½ Ton Truck Replacement Proposal** – Staff solicited a quote for a new 1 ½ Ton pickup truck with a dump box that would serve the Electric Department in day to day operations. Tom Rickard presented a quote from Bernard's Northtown for a Dodge 5500 pickup truck. Other dealerships in the City of New Richmond were not able to offer a comparable vehicle. A comparison was made with quotes the Street Department received from other areas. Preference is to purchase locally. The Electric Department also received a quote for the additional equipment needed for the Dodge 5500. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the purchase of a 1 ½ Ton vehicle from Bernard's Northtown, and the equipment package, not to exceed \$50,000.00, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

**Water Well Inspection Bid** – The wells serving the City of New Richmond are scheduled to be inspected every 6-7 years. Based on this scheduled requirement, Well#5 is due for inspection in 2016. The Water Department has contacted Bergerson-Caswell, who have done our inspections in the past, to provide a quote for this work. The quote provided includes a base price for well removal, inspection, televising, reinstallation, and testing, as well as a shop rate that will be charged hourly for any repair work. Because of the nature of the work involved, it is difficult to develop a firm price ahead of time. A motion was made by Gerry Warner to enter into a contract with Bergerson-Caswell for inspection and repair of Well #5, not to exceed \$16,000, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

## **Department Reports:**

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

Next month a project idea for 140<sup>th</sup> Street lighting will be brought to the Utility Commission meeting. Jeremiah Wendt and Mike Darrow will be meeting with Richmond Township to discuss this lighting project. Staff will be looking at additional streets and master planning within TIF 6. The City Council approved the WPPI project in early February, and is in the process of being signed. It is currently in the process of being signed. Mike also gave a brief overview of projects taking place within the City. This included updating the City's strategic plans, development projects, the hiring process for the new police chief, looking into annexation issues within the City, to name a few.

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

Meters and cross connections are ongoing. Completion of the Itron conversion is scheduled for June. PSC projects are taking longer than usual, due to additional information being required. There have been a few minor issues with the SCADA system. The SDADA radio was losing power, resulting in no communication. Some staff members are attending continuing education classes to obtain the required continuing education credits. Marty Powers is following up on the hydro inspections.

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

On February 16, 2016, the West Central District for Wastewater Operators met in New Richmond. The meeting went well, and was followed by a tour of the wastewater treatment facility. Steve thanked Weston Arndt for his excellent LED presentation. The wastewater operators gained a better understanding of the savings related to LED lighting. Steve also extended a thank you to Tom Rickard, and the electric department for changing the WWTP electric meter to a different rate meter. The new rate meter should result in cost savings for the WWTP. A mixing pump at the main lift station stopped working and will be replaced under warranty. The Hammond Wastewater Treatment Plant lost all biological treatment. Porcupine Transportation hauled two loads of activated sludge from our plant to get them started again. Biosolids facility in Ellsworth has paid down all debt except for one loan which should be paid in two years. The Biosolids facility is trying to set aside more funds in a replacement fund as loans are paid off. This helps make it possible to operate under capital, instead of having to take out loans for repairs and upgrades.

Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent:

The Electric Department has been working on servicing all trailers and vehicles to minimize any breakdowns during the upcoming months. The PSC requires yearly system inspections. One fifth of the entire electric system is required to be inspected. These inspections are scheduled to be completed during the month of March, along with the remaining ITRON and LED light conversions.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

Jeremiah gave a brief update on the CMOM (Capacity Management Operations Maintenance) manual that is required by the DNR to be completed and adopted by August 2016. This is the DNR's strategy to ensure the collection system will not have a catastrophic failure. There are ten different chapters in this program that need to be written. Dave Pufall is taking the lead on this project, with Steve Skinner, Bob Meyer, and Jeremiah reviewing the work. The capital projects will be starting, and just like last year, the plan is to pull Marty Powers, and possibly Jon Evans, into these projects. They will do inspections, and be the City's representative in the field. MSA was selected to do the facility planning for the WWTP. We have been waiting for the DNR to determine what the effluent limits will be to determine what we should plan for over the next 20 years. The question remains, how much phosphorous can we discharge from the plant. Jeremiah believes it is time to have MSA begin the facility planning, and would like to see them start during the month of March. Their initial work will be in projecting future flows and loadings, which in turn will allow the DNR greater precision in determining the facilities effluent limits.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:

### **Community Solar Update**

138 panels sold. Finalizing some new marketing tools in preparation to additional business meetings. Also continuing to explore the donation and giving concept. Website display of the community solar output is online and functioning.

### **WPPI Energy – Website updates**

WPPI Energy is working to update the website service so member sites can be freshened up and more user-friendly. This work is expected to be completed in mid-2016.

### **Focus on Energy – 2015 Reporting**

In 2011, WPPI Energy members were encouraged to fully participate in the Focus on Energy program – a statewide administered energy efficiency program. Per state statute, we are required to collect an average of \$16 per meter, half for low income, half for energy efficiency. In 2015 we collected about \$33,000 that was sent to Focus on Energy. Last year, incentives paid to New Richmond Utilities customers for energy efficiency improvements totaled \$169,505. Estimated first year energy savings were 2.7 million kilowatt-hours, with a demand reduction of 227 kW.

### **Home (Business) Energy Reports**

Home Energy Report (& Business Energy Report)– mailing to all customers containing electric and water history, as well as program information, will be sent in mid to late March.

### **National Theatre for Children**

The traveling troupe from the Twin Cities performs energy-related skits. All elementary schools were invited to schedule performances. Paperjack and St Mary's were this week.

### **School Visits**

Starting to schedule water week, electric safety, and pedal power with the elementary schools.

### **Street Lighting**

Continuing to test some LED products for decorative fixtures and evaluate when conversion makes sense.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Gerry Warner to adjourn, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 a.m.

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Pat Becker, President

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Gerry Warner, Secretary