

NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

November 17, 2016

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on November 17, 2016 at 3:30 p.m. at the Civic Center.

Pat Becker called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Jerry Frey, Bob Mullen, Gerry Warner, and Pat Becker. Dan Casey via phone.

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 October 18, 2016 meeting, approve bills and disbursements, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried.

Public Comment: None

Employee Handbook Update:

Kari Kraft gave a brief update on the employee handbook. The initial updates started with a consulting group. They had the following suggestions:

- Labor Attorney approval – made some suggestions
- Executive showing of changes to handbook-subject to Council approval
- Significant changes:
 - Changes probation period - orientation
 - Most significant change was the PTO & leave policies

The process to update and revise the handbook took approximately two years. Bob Mullen moved to support the updated Employee Handbook, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried. The Employee Handbook will now be sent to the City Council.

Strategic Plan:

Mike Darrow updated the group on Strategic Planning. Mike thanked the members for meeting with him one on one. Items include the following items:

- Planning Capital
- Strategic Plan – replacing Utility Commission
- Look at Territorial agreements

The Strategic Plan will be brought back to the Utility Commission the beginning of 2017. This will be New Richmond Utilities first Strategic Plan.

Proposed 2017 Utility Budget:

Rae Ann Ailts thanked the Commission members for meeting with Mike and herself. An overview of the highlights of the 2017 Budget were given. Some of the highlights included:

- Staffing perspective- feel we are staffed effectively
- Debt perspective
- 2017 Capital improvements
- New Wellness Program through Health Insurance
- North 4th Street design process
- Additional funds for the 2017 Comprehensive Plan

Motion was made by Gerry Warner to accept the budget as presented, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried.

Uncollectible Special Assessments & Delinquent Utilities:

At the last meeting Rae Ann updated the Commission on the special assessments that were sent to tax roll for collection. The County has informed the City the proceeds from the sale of Whispering Prairie Development were not sufficient to cover the assessments. Therefore, in 2016 the Utility will

need to write the \$18K bad debt off as uncollectable with Whispering Prairie. Motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve writing off the amount of \$18K, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Department Reports

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

Fall flushing is being completed. Lakeside Foods will be finished with production by the end of the week. Street projects are winding down. There was a waterline replaced on West 1st Street. Meters & cross connection inspections are scheduled with Hydrocorp. Jetting still needs to be completed. There was a water leak on East 1st street that has been repaired. Water disconnections have begun.

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

The influent sampler has been repaired. The Huber Fine Screen brushes have been installed. The final invoice came in below the original quote. The gravel bed nursery trees have been planted. Greg Hermansen completed his first test for Wastewater Certification. Steve and Greg are collecting and testing additional wastewater samples for MSA to see if biological treatment for phosphorus removal will work.

Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent:

The new service to Taco Bell, R3 Sons, and Aldi's is finished. All the ground work is completed for Dorset Lane lighting. The permanent transformer is in place for the ESR Building. The ground work is approximately half done for the new DQ building. The ambulance transformer has been relocated and the old transformer removed. The Electric Department assisted DOT with replacing street light cabinets. The street lights on North Shore Drive are 60% complete. The street lights on East & West River Drive are installed. Lots of new services and locates continue to take place. Tom commended his staff on getting all this work completed before the weather turns.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

We are starting to work with MSA for the Facility Plan and Phosphorous Optimization Process. This is requiring more sample collections and testing. The gravel bed project has been taken on by the Wastewater staff, saving the City thousands of dollars. This project produced approximately 80 trees which have been planted throughout the City of New Richmond. Jeremiah commended Dave Pufall on the time he has spent working on the Street and Utility projects. Pat Howell has taken the lead on the private well permit process. There were 80 properties that needed to be contacted to either procure a permit or to abandon the private well. The Itron water meter conversion has been completed.

Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:

Rae Ann gave an overview of the Metrics and Financial Reports for 3rd quarter 2016. Through lien processing, a little over \$6,000.00 was sent to Tax Roll this year. This dollar amount is down from last year. Rae Ann commended staff on their collection efforts. The utility office averages 300 electric and water disconnections throughout the year.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:

Customer Work

Temporary power monitoring results from Table 65 provided the customer with correlation to the weather and how significant their cooling costs are for the business. This is evident across most residential and commercial customers, impacting some more than others. Customer work also included St Luke's Church, Westfields Hospital, Wisconsin Lighting, Federal Foam Technologies, and Phillips Medisize.

Clean Power Plan

With the November 8 election results causing a shift to republican control in Washington, it is expected that the EPA's Clean Power Plan will be revoked. This will cause only a slight modification of WPPI Energy's business plan. Overall, the change is minimal and immediate impacts are negligible.

APPA Legislative Rally

Save the Date – 2017 APPA Legislative Rally – February 27 – March 1. The annual rally is crucial to ensuring that US Senators and Congressional members hear the voices and concerns of WPPI Energy members. As local elected officials, commissioners and utility managers, our members are well positioned to influence policy and to represent the public power community as a whole. The next legislative session will bring a change of administration and single party control to Washington, D.C. and we believe there will be a strong appetite for tax reform. Protecting tax-exempt municipal bond financing will be critical in the upcoming legislative session.

WPPI Energy will be mailing out information about the APPA Legislative Rally within the next week or so. Please note that all attendees are eligible for a travel grant to help mitigate the costs of attending this important event. WPPI Energy offers an all-expenses paid grant for the chief elected official from each WPPI Energy member community and an airfare grant for all other attendees.

Focus on Energy New Homes Program

The Wisconsin Public Service Commission is requesting energy usage data for new homes built in 2015 and 2016. I've been compiling data in support of their request.

Municipal Street Lighting – Focus on Energy

There were no financial incentives through Focus on Energy for municipal streetlighting in 2016. We have advocated to program administrators to bring them back. We are hopeful they will be back in 2017, which can help us complete LED upgrades that haven't been completed yet.

Noah Wiedenfeld, Management Analyst:

Noah Wiedenfeld updated the commission on the more than \$300,000 in grants received in 2016. Some of the notable grants received include a \$145,000 grant for the Fire and Rescue Department, numerous smaller grants for the Parks Department, a \$10,000 Wisconsin DNR Urban Forestry Grant for an Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan, and a \$42,500 Urban Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant for retrofitting an existing stormwater pond to reduce pollutants in the Paperjack Creek. City staff are continuing to apply for additional grant opportunities as they're made available for other projects, such as the Police K-9 unit.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

There have been interviews and a series of webinars on the Emergency Software Plan. The intent is to utilize emergency and nonemergency phone contacts. This will enable quick notification to residents in both critical situations such as a tornado to updating customers on street projects. Comprehensive Plan interviews were done today. Mike will be contacting River Falls to pursue cost sharing in regards to extraterritorial mapping, strategies, and policies. Jeremiah Wendt and Mike toured the Monarch Paving Plant. Currently there will not be a Utility Commission meeting during the month of December. The next meeting will take place in January 2017.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to go into closed session per State Statute 19.85 (1)(c) – Non-union wages - Considering employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility, seconded by Jerry Frey, and carried.

A motion to approve salaries and wages as presented during closed session 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 4:40 p.m.