

NEW RICHMOND UTILITY COMMISSION MINUTES

October 11, 2017

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on October 11, 2017 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, Dan Casey, Gerry Warner, and Pat Becker.

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

A motion was made by Jerry Frey to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2017 meeting, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve bills and disbursements from September 2017, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

Public Comment: None

Community Solar Discussion:

An update on the Community Solar Garden was given by Rae Ann Ailts. The project has been well received and supported by the community, with 25% of shares sold to date. The goal in the coming year is to continue to increase the awareness and support of the project. During budget conversations, several ideas for increasing participation in community solar were discussed. Additionally, River Falls Utilities has taken some new approaches to community solar within the last year. Kevin Westhuis, Utility Director for River Falls Utilities, has been invited to the next utility commission meeting to discuss their programs, and the impact experienced in River Falls.

2018 Budget Update:

Rae Ann Ailts gave an update on the 2018 Budget. Over the past several months staff and the Commission have discussed the needs of the Utility. Rae Ann presented printouts showing projected 2017 and proposed 2018 Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position for the Electric, Water, and Sewer Departments. Staff will be looking for formal budget approval during the October 30, 2017 commission meeting.

Additionally, staff will be conducting a number of Community Engagement sessions throughout the month of October and November. The City and Utility operating needs, as well as capital needs will be highlighted. The key focus is to engage as many residents, businesses and other stakeholders through presentations, activities, social media updates and online survey's. The intent is to make the process transparent, engaging, collaborative and fun. Commission members were invited to join staff throughout the coming months as the budget is brought to the community.

Capital Improvement Plan Discussion:

An update on the Capital Improvement Plan was given by Rae Ann Ailts. During the September 30th Utility meeting, a list of projects was provided for consideration under the 2018-2022 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). These projects were identified by staff, council members, commissioners, and by the community over several months. It also included projects carried over from the previous plan. The CIP is a process which stretches over many months, but begins with the identification of projects and establishing of themes. This aids in prioritization, and then preparation of a financial plan providing a roadmap for implementation of the projects. Staff began prioritizing projects based upon a color coding methodology during the September Council work session. This will provide a quick glance into projects which are need based versus wants. Once prioritization is complete, it will be brought back to the Council and Commission to help facilitate the process. In addition, the community will be asked for their input to the Capital Improvement Plan during the community budget outreach.

Drinking Water Analytical Report:

New Richmond's Water Utility is regulated by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and as a condition of our permit to operate a municipal waterworks system, certain testing and analysis is required. In the year 2017, a wide range of testing was required for the drinking water system, including testing for lead. Staff compiled the results of the tests, and Jeremiah Wendt presented a summary of those results to the Commissioners. All tests were in the acceptable range.

Department Reports

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

Water Department continues to remain very busy. Flow-Rite is currently in New Richmond doing yearly sewer main televising, and man hole inspections. Jetting is ongoing. Locates continue, as

well as residential water and sewer inspections. Meter work and cross connection inspections continue. Pat Howell is customizing the new meter van, with completion expected this week. Cooper Motors project inspections have begun. North 4th Street project is complete, except for a few miscellaneous items. Inspections on Cassandra Drive have begun. Jon Evans has begun fall flushing.

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

Fall cleaning has begun at the wastewater treatment plant. The disinfectant season is over. The disinfectant equipment has been cleaned, and put into storage for the winter. Cleaning of tanks has begun. The bypass gate developed a breach a few weeks ago. Staff repaired the breach, but it did not hold. Consequently, a contractor was hired to do the repair. Staff continues to work on Well #3 project, involving the installation of a new generator. Trees have been removed, and stumps ground. Currently working on forming the slab, and installing the underground conduit. Transplanting the first set of trees took place today, and went well. Steve Skinner, who is on the Board of Directors for West Central Biosolids, attended a trade show in Chicago the beginning of October. The sole purpose was to research and look into options for sludge storage, such as sludge dryers. After attending the trade show, Steve concluded the current options are extremely expensive. Steve will research other technology options.

Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent:

Tom Rickard gave updates on ongoing projects. North 4th Street Project is basically done except for some cleanup. Underground work has been completed at Paperjack Bend. Staff will go back after it freezes to complete remaining work. Staff is currently working on underground work for Phillip's line relocation. This project is approximately 20% complete. A contractor is working on the overhead relocation. Lighting on Cernohous Avenue is scheduled to begin soon. Work has been completed for Best Western. Project for Johnson Ford is set to begin next week. The rebuild of the lines on the west side will be completed in 2018. Staff continues to remain busy with numerous new services, along with conversions from overhead lines to underground for existing homes. Upcoming work will include Richmond Prairie Condos on E. Richmond Way. The underground work for Hirsch sub-division has been completed. Remaining work will be completed after it freezes. A street light was installed on Pershing Avenue and Ponderosa Avenue. The Industrial Park loop is 90% complete. This is another project scheduled for completion after freeze-up. The street lights located in Willow River Bluff will be replaced. Energis completed the five year maintenance on the Highview substation. Two original reclosures are out of tolerance, requiring replacement. Staff was able to get the substation back online with repairs scheduled for 2018. Kevin Blader, who was injured earlier in the year, is back to work at full capacity. Cody Wessink is a new hire and doing well.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

An update on ongoing projects was given by Jeremiah Wendt. North 4th Street project is on schedule for completion the end of October. The design process for 125th Street has begun. This project will require minimal utility work, as it is primarily street re-construction. The project is scheduled for 2018 in partnership with Richmond Township.

Rae Ann Ailts, Finance Director:

The utility appreciation was held last week. Rae Ann extended a thank you to utility staff for their efforts in making the events run smoothly during the week. The attendance for the breakfast appreciation was low, however, there was a lot of foot traffic through out the week. Kits containing an LED light bulb and night light are available at the utility office for customers. Two shares of solar energy were given away. One to a residential customer, and one to a commercial customer. The new utility website is scheduled to go live on November 1st. Joseph Owens, Manager of Government Relations with WPPI, has arranged for a round table discussion with Shelia Harsdorf, Wisconsin State Senator, on October 23, 2017 from noon to 1:00 p.m. Invitation to attend was extended to the Commissioners. Currently Weston Arndt will be attending the round table. At this time municipalities can draw attention to any concerns, etc. they may have. The next utility commission meeting will be held at 3:30 p.m. on Monday, October 30, 2017. The annual Utility Commission Dinner will follow.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:

Customer Work

Assisted Federal Foam in evaluation of LED lighting upgrades and the submittal for energy efficiency incentives. Phillips-Medisize has applied to WPPI Energy's RFP for Energy Efficiency program in conjunction with their facility expansion. Lakeside Foods had questions about voltage and power factor. We've provided some feedback and expect to adjust the transformer taps to boost their facility voltage. Westfields Hospital expressed interest in a technical study grant through WPPI Energy to evaluate air conditioning options for their facility. There have been several hangar owners at the NR Airport that have expressed interest in LED lighting upgrades.

Wastewater Treatment Plant – BRIDGE Program

The Focus on Energy's BRIDGE program offers financial incentives for low/no-cost measures and operational/scheduling changes that reduce demand and energy consumption at participating wastewater

treatment facilities. Because of the efforts that Steve and Greg have undertaken at the plant, we expect to receive an incentive of approximately \$900 for the first 6 months of program participation. There is no cost to participate in the program.

LED Lighting

LED lighting technology costs continue to drop. For residential and small businesses, there are incentives for qualifying products provided to the retailers, who lower the sticker price of the products accordingly. For example, a box of 4 LED bulbs at Ace Hardware was listed for \$5. Each bulb is eligible for an instant discount of up to \$4. So this price is after the instant discount was applied.

CFL and LED products that are 60-watt incandescent equivalent compare as follows:

- CFL – 15 Watts, 7000 hour life expectancy, contains mercury
- LED – 9 Watts, 25000 hour life expectancy, no mercury

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

Absent.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Dan Casey to adjourn, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 4:35 p.m.

Pat Becker, President

Gerry Warner, Secretary