

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 22, 2021

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, March 22, 2021 at 11:45 a.m. in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Justin Mattern, Abdirizak Mahboub, Nathan Weber, Bruce DeBlieck, and Cole Erickson. Absent were Commissioners Ross Magnuson and Kerry Johnson.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Compliance/HR Manager Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Administrative Secretary Beth Mattheisen, IS Coordinator Mike Sangren, City Attorney Robert Scott, City Council Liaison Michael O'Brien, and CPA Justin McGraw of Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP.

The meeting was opened by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Commissioner Mattern (President) asking if any revisions were needed to the agenda presented. There being none, a resolution was requested to approve the Consent Agenda. General Manager Harren informed the Commission that included on the bill payment listing was the reallocation of \$5 million of investment funds. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Mahboub offered a resolution to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner DeBlieck seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 15

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the Consent Agenda be approved as presented which includes:

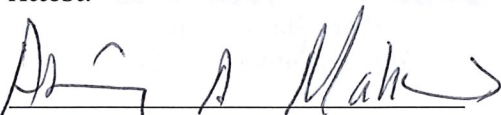
- ❖ Minutes from the March 8, 2021 Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20210272 to No. 20210351 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$7,227,135.60.

Dated this 22nd day of March, 2021.



President

Attest:



Secretary

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

At this time, Commissioner Mattern introduced CPA Justin McGraw from the accounting firm of Conway, Deuth & Schmiesing, PLLP. Mr. McGraw was in attendance to present the Commission with a report summarizing the 2020 Financial Statements & Accountants' Report for the Willmar Municipal Utilities. He informed the Commission that following a thorough review of the financial statements and reporting records of the Willmar Municipal Utilities, it was determined that WMU is in total compliance with the provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and agreements. Mr. McGraw further expressed his appreciation to Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker and WMU staff for the competent accounting practices being demonstrated and the leadership being provided. Following discussion, Commissioner Mahboub offered a motion to accept the 2020 Financial Statements & Accountants' Report as presented. Commissioner Weber seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

Commissioner Weber (LC Chair) reviewed with the Commission minutes from both the March 10th and March 16th WMU Labor Committee meetings (see attached). Following review, Commissioner Weber offered a motion to approve the minutes from the March 10th LC meeting as presented. Commissioner Mahboub seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays. Following further review, Commissioner Weber offered a motion to approve the minutes from the March 16th LC meeting as presented. Commissioner Mahboub seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that a Strategic Planning Session will be held on Thursday, March 25th from 12:00-3:00 pm in the WMU Auditorium. Marcy Douglas from MRES will serve as Facilitator for the event. The session will be divided into three one-hour segments. The WMU Labor Committee has been requested to participate in the first portion of the session (12:00-1:00 pm). A second meeting will be scheduled at a later date to review and finalize the results of the data compiled.

General Manager Harren noted that WMU Committee meetings will be forthcoming. Tentative agenda topics for the Planning Committee will include: Water Treatment Plant funding/financing, MRES refunds, employee survey, pay equity, and NISC software. Tentative agenda items for the Labor Committee will include: clothing policy, employee survey, employee retention history, succession plan, pay equity/compensation schedule, and Strategic Plan update.

For information: Upcoming meetings/events to note include:

- 2021 APPA National Conference (June 20-23 in-person; July 13-14 virtual)

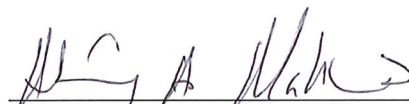
There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mahboub seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:19 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES


Beth Mattheisen
Administrative Secretary

ATTEST:


Abdirizak Mahboub, Secretary



WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
Labor Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 10, 2021
12:00 pm (WMU Auditorium)

Attendees: Commissioners Nathan Weber, Abdirizak Mahboub & Cole Erickson, General Manager John Harren, Compliance/HR Manager Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, and Administrative Secretary Beth Mattheisen.

Commissioner Weber (2020 LC Chair) called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. The first order of business was to establish the 2021 Chair and Vice Chair positions for the WMU Labor Committee. Commissioner Mahboub nominated Commissioner Weber to serve as Chair for the WMU Labor Committee for 2021. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion which carried by vote of three ayes and zero nays. Commissioner Weber next nominated Commissioner Mahboub to serve as Vice Chair for the WMU Labor Committee for 2021. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion which carried by vote of three ayes and zero nays.

1) Strategic Planning Update:

Following the WMU Strategic Initiatives update presented to the Commission on November 23, 2020, the Commission concurred with Staff's recommendation to update the current Strategic Initiatives in 2021 (current plan was last updated in 2019).

Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti prepared a document informing the Committee that MRES offers Strategic Planning facilitation services to its members. The service includes review of WMU's existing plan and facilitation of a new plan. Staff has secured the MRES services and also provided preliminary data to assist with the process. Marcy Douglas from MRES will facilitate the session which will be held on Thursday, March 25th. The planning session will consist of three one-hour segments as follows:

- 1) WMU Supervisory/Lead Staff
- 2) WMU Strategic Initiatives Team
- 3) WMU Commission (Labor Committee members)

Following conclusion of the meeting, Ms. Douglas will compile a draft Strategic Plan to be reviewed and discussed for consideration by the Commission/Labor Committee after which a second meeting will be scheduled.

Action:

Following discussion, the Labor Committee concurred with Staff's recommendation to proceed with the Strategic Planning Session and to utilize the facilitating services provided by MRES to assist in the process.

2) Clothing Policy Discussion :

During the 2020 union negotiations, the union requested modifications to the clothing policy. It was the consensus of the group to address the clothing policy separately at a later date (i.e. FR/AR, PPE) as it is not part of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Therefore, General Manager Harren led the clothing discussion which included background, current clothing policy, general concerns, and options for consideration.

The current approved WMU Clothing/PPE Purchase Guidelines (Jan. 2020) was provided for information. Liability and OSHA standards were discussed relative to our current practice.

Options for consideration are:

- 1) Continue current clothing policy as is.
- 2) Utilize uniform company to supply 100% of outside staff clothing.

Action:

Following lengthy discussion, it was a consensus to schedule a Labor Committee meeting next week and invite the three Union Stewards to further discuss the issue.

3) Pay Equity/Wage Scale Discussion:

General Manager Harren and Compliance/HR Manager Johnson reviewed with the Committee the 2019 Pay Equity Report. In an effort to eliminate any gender-based inequities in compensation, state law requires all public jurisdictions complete the report every two years. WMU files the report jointly with the City of Willmar to the department of Minnesota Management & Budget. Johnson informed the Committee that WMU is in compliance with the pay equity laws per the 2019 reporting. Johnson provided a review of the process involved in conducting the report (i.e. establishing ranking & point value and the equation of the data). Pay equity point value clarifications and comparable point values were addressed. Market values and additional complexities were discussed.

At this time, the 2021 Wage Scale was presented for review. To further discuss, labor-related matters (i.e. pay scale, wages), Administrative Secretary Mattheisen was excused from the meeting at 12:50 pm.

Action:

Following lengthy discussion, it was the consensus of the Labor Committee to approve the pay scale as presented including market adjustments to two positions identified and to concur with modifications to two job descriptions as noted.

Administrative Secretary Mattheisen returned to the meeting at 1:35 pm

4. Updated General Manager Goals for 2021:

As requested, General Manager Harren provided the Committee with an update to the 2021 General Manager Goals. The amended goals addressed issues relating to personnel. Harren stated that a number of steps have been taken to expand communications and encourage a positive work environment among staff (i.e. Joe Schmit's monthly inspirational videos, "Partners in Leadership" presentations). Harren briefly touched on the positive feedback received from the recently completed employee safety survey.

Due to time constraints, it was the decision of the Committee to table agenda Items #4 and #5 ("2020 WMU Management/Employee Engagement in Safety Survey Results" and "Staff Retention") and bring them back for review at a future Labor Committee meeting along with exempt position compensation.

5) Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the WMU Labor Committee, Commissioner Weber offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mahboub seconded the motion which carried, and the meeting was adjourned by a vote of three ayes and zero nays at 1:52 pm.



WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
WMU Labor Committee Meeting Minutes
Clothing Policy Discussion
Tuesday, March 16, 2021
12:00 pm (WMU Auditorium)

Attendees: Commissioners Nathan Weber, Abdirizak Mahboub & Cole Erickson, General Manager John Harren, Compliance/HR Manager Janell Johnson, Administrative Secretary Beth Mattheisen, and IBEW Union Stewards/Delegate Matt Krupa, Matt Kaderlik & Jordan Stulen.

Commissioner Weber (LC Chair) called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. Union reps joined the meeting at 12:15 pm.

Preface: WMU Labor Committee met on March 10th with one of the agenda items being WMU's Clothing Policy. Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to schedule an additional meeting and invite WMU's Union Stewards to attend so they may provide input on the topic. Representing union employees were: Matt Krupa (Facilities/Maintenance Dept.), Matt Kaderlik (Water Dept.), and Jordan Stulen (Line Dept.). Discussion was held regarding WMU's Clothing Policy relating to FR/AR and PPE apparel. Staff presented two options for consideration: remain with current Clothing Policy as is, or utilize a uniform company to supply 100% of outside staff clothing

Commissioner Weber requested input from the union members regarding the current Clothing Policy while keeping in mind OSHA safety requirements. Weber stated the intent is to emphasize safety in the work environment while maintaining a professional look and positive presence in the community.

Line Dept.: Annual maximum allowance of \$1,000/per employee for required FR/AR clothing (not including outer wear). Outer wear consists of FR/AR winter coat, insulated coveralls, vest and non-insulated coat. Employees are aware of the laundering procedures and limits set for FR clothing through regular company training (52 washes per year for FR clothing). Previously uninsulated coveralls were provided. Request: Increase maximum allowance \$1,200.

Water Dept.: Annual allotment of 12 shirts/sweatshirts, insulated coveralls and Class 3 reflective jacket as needed. Request: Add pants/jeans to the mix. Wear and tear on the clothes is excessive in this department due to the effects of mud, chlorine, water issues, etc.

Facilities/Maintenance Dept.: Annual allotment of 12 shirts/sweatshirts, insulated coveralls and Class 3 reflective jacket as needed. Request: Addition of pants/jeans to the mix. Wind turbine work is extremely dirty (grease/oil in the turbines) as is outdoor maintenance at times. Wind Turbine Operators have jeans provided and laundered through an outside service. (In the past Power Plant clothing/uniforms provided by a service company were heavy and extremely irritating.)

LC Concerns:

1. Mitigating issues regarding laundering and recording keeping requirements.
2. Employees are expected to present a professional image. Attire should be comfortable while meeting all safety standards/OSHA requirements.
3. Labor Committee has financial and safety considerations that will affect their decisions.

At 1:00 pm, Krupa, Kaderlik & Stulen were excused from the meeting to allow additional discussion by the Labor Committee.

Following brief discussion, the three union-staff members returned to the meeting. Weber informed them that at this time the policy will remain "as is". Therefore, the \$1,000 provision for the Line Department will remain in effect, and no changes will be made to the Water and Facilities/Maintenance Departments at this time. While there will be no changes to the current Clothing Policy in 2021, the Labor Committee and management will be on task to move forward with an amended policy in place for 2022. Therefore, modifications to the policy will be completed by November so that required apparel orders can be completed in a timely manner. If time permits, the Labor Committee would like to proceed with each department separately (Water Dept. and Facilities/Maintenance Dept. may be combined).

To assist in future discussions, the Labor Committee requested data regarding clothing policies from comparable organizations be gathered. Johnson responded that this task has already been completed and will provide the Committee with the additional information (i.e. Kandiyohi Power Coop, MnDot, etc.).

Closing comments:

If we do not go with uniforms, staff must be made accountable with purchasing and tracking of their laundering cycles.

Historic background information was presented on how the clothing policy has evolved over the years. The Committee agreed that an updated Clothing Policy must be cost neutral with appropriate limitations established while meeting all safety requirements/OSHA regulations.

To do:

1. Survey other utilities/like-companies and provide LC with the data;
2. Contact uniform company(ies) to provide apparel samples; and,
3. Labor Committee will meet with individual departments prior to finalizing the clothing policy update.

Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the WMU Labor Committee, Commissioner Weber offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mahboub seconded the motion which carried, and the meeting was adjourned by a vote of three ayes and zero nays at 1:35 pm.