

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES - APRIL 26, 2021
11:45 am - WMU Auditorium

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 11:45 a.m. in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Justin Mattern, Nathan Weber, Bruce DeBlieck, Cole Erickson, and Kerry Johnson. Absent were Commissioners Abdirizak Mahboub and Ross Magnuson.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Compliance/HR Manager Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator Chris Radel, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, City Attorney Robert Scott, and City Council Liaison Michael O'Brien.

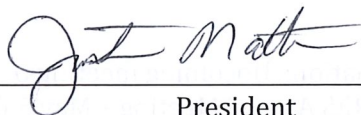
The meeting was opened by reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. Due to the absence of Commission Secretary Mahboub, Commission President Mattern appointed Commissioner DeBlieck to serve as Acting Secretary. Following the appointment, Commission Mattern asked if any revisions were needed to the agenda presented. There being none, a resolution was requested to approve the Consent Agenda. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Johnson offered a resolution to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Erickson seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 22

"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 April 12, 2021 Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20210433 to No. 20210487 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$1,941,636.67.

Dated this 26th day of April, 2021.



President

Attest:



Acting Secretary

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

Commissioner DeBlieck (PC Chair) reviewed with the Commission minutes from the April 16th WMU Planning Committee meeting (see attached). Following review, Commissioner DeBlieck offered a motion to approve the minutes from the April 16th Planning Committee meeting as presented. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

Following approval of the minutes, an agreement with David Turch & Associates to provide professional services to the Willmar Municipal Utilities was presented for approval. The agreement would provide consulting services to assist in obtaining funding for upcoming projects, specifically the Water Treatment Plant Project. The six-month agreement is at a cost of \$24,000 plus additional expenses. Following review and discussion, Commission DeBlieck offered a resolution to enter into a six-month agreement with David Turch & Associates to provide consulting services to assist with funding of the WTP Project. Commissioner Johnson seconded.


RESOLUTION NO. 23

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that a six-month service agreement between Willmar Municipal Utilities and David Turch & Associates of Washington, DC, to provide professional consulting services be approved in the amount of \$24,000."

Dated this 26th day of April, 2021.



President

Attest:


Acting Secretary

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

General Manager Harren expressed this appreciation to the WMU Staff (along with a number of family members) who volunteered their time and efforts last Thursday to participate in a community outreach project spearheaded by Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator Radel. The project consisted of picking up litter at Robbins Island which had accumulated over the winter months. The project helped to improve the appearance at the Robbins Island area. Staff's willingness to participate in the after-hours community project was greatly appreciated.

General Manager Harren noted that WMU Committee meetings will be forthcoming. Tentative agenda topics for the Planning Committee will include: employee survey, pay equity, NISC software, and Water Treatment Plant 90% review. Tentative agenda items for the Labor Committee will include: pay equity/compensation (non-union), clothing policy, succession plan, and Strategic Plan update.

For information: Upcoming meetings/events to note include:

- MRES Annual Meeting – May 5 from 1:00-4:30 pm (via webinar)
- 2021 APPA National Conference (June 20-23 in-person; July 13-14 virtual)
- 2021 MMUA Summer Conference – August 16-18 (event being developed)


There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner DeBlieck seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen
Executive Secretary

ATTEST:


Bruce DeBlieck, Acting Secretary



WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
Planning Committee Meeting Minutes
Friday, April 16, 2021
12:00 pm (WMU Auditorium)

Attendees: Commissioners Bruce DeBlieck (via Zoom), Ross Magnuson & Kerry Johnson, General Manager John Harren, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, and Administrative Secretary Beth Mattheisen.

Commissioner DeBlieck (PC Chair) called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

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1. Catastrophic Event Plan: (Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti)

Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti presented the Committee with a review of the WMU Emergency Generation Response Plan which was approved on Dec. 28, 2020.

General Manager Harren addressed two recent polar vortex experiences (Texas in 2021 and Midwest in 2019) which prompted staff to readdress Willmar's Emergency Generation Response Plan (particularly as it relates to rolling blackouts). Marti provided insight on when WMU could potentially need additional generation (i.e. mobile Ziegler units). Three options were presented for access to seven mobile units (14MW). Ownership, rental when MISO declares a Max Generation Event or pay an annual retainer for guaranteed availability was discussed. Permitting issues are an additional factor involved (major roadblocks). Fund allocation designation for catastrophic event(s) such as this was addressed.

Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti reviewed with the Committee the two most feasible recommendations for consideration: 1) maintain current Emergency Generation Response Plan; or, 2) maintain current Emergency Response Plan with the modification of reserving adequate generation as appropriate, when MISO declares a Max Generation Event.

General Manager Harren provided current statistics regarding load in relation to generation (currently WMU has 12MW generation). MISO data was reviewed including a timetable in preparation for a Max Generation Event. Reserve generation under a Max Generation Event would act as an insurance policy if MISO initiated a Max Generation Event which consists of vast power outages or anticipation of possible rolling blackouts.

Action: Following discussion, the Planning Committee concurred with the option #2 recommendation and directed Staff to modify the current policy to reflect the changes. The Planning Committee will present the recommended revisions to the Commission for approval.

2. Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) Refund: (General Manager Harren)

Due to MRES's strong financial position, they refunded \$17.2M to its members in December 2020. Willmar's share was \$316,975.25.

Since 2015, MRES has been working with FERC to resolve unjust and unreasonable transmission rates on behalf of the members. WMU was not a member during the entire period of time but was included when WMU became a member. Settlement total was \$13M with WMU's share of the settlement at \$141,299.27. Becoming a member of MRES has been beneficial in so many ways. The resources they provide for WMU is commendable.

This was for information only, and no action required.

3. David Turch & Associates (DTA) Proposal: (General Manager Harren)

WMU and Carollo have been in contact with Alexander Perez from David Turch and Associates (DTA) regarding consulting services for grant, loan and Community Project Funding (ear marks). On March 22, 2021, Mr. Turch presented his insight to Commission President Mattern and Planning Committee Chair DeBlieck. Mr. Turch stated that Community Funding Projects (CFP) (ear marks) are back, and he felt that he could obtain financial assistance for WMU's upcoming project(s). Mr. Turch noted that time was limited for submitting our application, and he would work pro bono until the Commission has had time to approve his Professional Consulting Agreement. DTA is currently focusing solely on funding of the Water Treatment Plant Project (WTP).

Mr. Perez has been in contact with Representative Fischbach and Senators Klobuchar's and Smith's offices indicating that the potential to receive \$150,000 is possible. He acknowledged that while this is minimal, it could lead to an additional \$5 million in the Infrastructure Bill (noting there are no guarantees). Carollo and WMU discussed with Mr. Perez a listing of potential grants and loans and the possibility of WMU qualifying for them. Harren had informed Mr. Perez that two years ago, we explored all of them and our project did not qualify. Mr. Perez indicated that his discussions with our legislative representatives lead him to believe that our project could qualify in the Infrastructure Bill currently being discussed. A request has been sent to Rep. Fischbach's office for \$1.5 million for the earmarks. If earmark funding is approved, this would better WMU's position for the Federal Infrastructure Bill. Potential grants/loans available were reviewed. Earmarks and the Federal Infrastructure Bill appear to be the only avenue for the funding assistance for the WTP Project.

The Consulting Service Agreement being offered by DTA is for a term of twelve months and at a cost of \$48,000 plus expenses. While retaining the services of DTA could be beneficial, Staff was recommending to ask DTA to consider a six-month contract rather than the full twelve-month agreement.

Action:

Following discussion, it was a consensus of the Planning Committee that General Manager Harren should contact DTA to inquire if a six-month agreement to provide funding/financing assistance would be acceptable rather than the twelve-month consulting agreement originally presented.

At this time, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti departed the meeting.

4. Business Opportunity/Venture: (General Manager Harren)

Per March 4, 2020 Planning Committee discussion and directive, General Manager John Harren continues to research and monitor potential business opportunities that would be advantageous to WMU. One such business opportunity has been brought to our attention for consideration. General Manager Harren is recommending the Planning Committee meet with the entity involved to further discuss the subject. The business initiating the discussion has asked if the initial discussions could be kept confidential. Harren has contacted City Attorney Scott for his opinion as it relates to Open Meeting Law requirements. Attorney Scott has provided his input regarding the request. The Planning Committee will direct General Manager accordingly.

In anticipation of attending a meeting to discuss the possible venture, a draft of suggested first meeting agenda items was presented. Committee input and comments were given. Per directive by the Committee, General Manager Harren would contact a representative of the other entity to further discuss the agenda items for a future meeting of the two parties.

Action:

Following review & discussion, Commissioner Johnson offered a motion to recommend the Planning Committee attend a meeting to further discuss the business opportunity. Commissioner Magnuson seconded the motion which carried by a vote of three ayes and zero nays.

5. Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the WMU Planning Committee, Commissioner DeBlieck offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion which carried, and the meeting was adjourned by a vote of three ayes and zero nays at 1:32 pm.

