

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 27, 2021
11:45 AM – WMU AUDITORIUM

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, September 27, 2021, at 11:45 a.m. in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Justin Mattern, Abdirizak Mahboub, Bruce DeBlicke, Cole Erickson, and Shawn Mueske. Absent were Commissioners Kerry Johnson and Nathan Weber.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Compliance/HR Manager Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, IS Coordinator Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, Staff Electrical Engineer Jeron Smith, Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator Chris Radel, City Attorney Robert Scott, and WC Tribune Journalist Shelby Lindrud.


The meeting opened with reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Commissioner Mattern (President) asking if any revisions were needed to the presented agenda. There being none, a resolution to approve the consent agenda was requested. Following review and discussion, Commissioner DeBlicke offered a resolution to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Mueske seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 49

“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 September 13, 2021, Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20211171 to No. 20211223 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$1,844,230.67.

Dated this 27th day of September 2021.



President

Attest:



Secretary

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

Commissioner Mahboub (LC Vice Chair) reviewed with the Commission the minutes from the September 14th WMU Labor Committee meeting (see attached). Following review, Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2021, WMU Labor Committee meeting as presented. Commissioner DeBlicke seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

In conjunction with the approval of the LC meeting minutes (Sept.14th), the Commission was asked to approve data associated with the Emergency Succession Plan. Previously, the Commission and Labor Committee had requested staff to create a plan in the event of a short or long-term absence of the General Manager. This plan would establish a “chain of command” to meet both the staffing and operational needs of the Utility. Reviewed along with the 2021 Emergency Succession Plan was the N-1 & N-2 Staffing Scenarios which illustrates the normal (“N”) staffing minus 1 lead position (N-1) and normal staffing minus 2 lead positions (N-2). This document provides clarification of the staffing coverage in all areas of the Utility. The final document presented was the Labor Committee’s proposed updated Organizational Chart. It was noted that the N-1 & N-2 Staffing Scenarios and the updated Organizational Chart are considered “living documents” and therefore may be revised as required. Following discussion, Commissioner Mahboub offered a motion to approve the 2021 Emergency Succession Plan, the N-1 & N-2 Staff Scenarios, and the updated 2021 Organizational Chart as presented. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

Staff Electrical Engineer Smith presented the bid award recommendations (6) for the furnishing of materials for the Downtown Substation Relocation Project (previously Power Plant Substation). DGR Engineering has received and reviewed the bids for accuracy and compliance and has made the following recommendations:

- 1) Bid #1: Lightning Arresters to WESCO Distribution in the amount of \$4,508.64;
- 2) Bid #2: Circuit Switcher to Irby Utilities in the amount of \$76,850.00;
- 3) Bid #3: Steel Structures to Galvanizers, Inc., in the amount of \$91,929.45;
- 4) Bid #4: 69 kV Switches to Southern Electrical Equipment Co., Inc. in the amount of \$38,210.08;
- 5) Bid #5: 69 kV PT's to WESCO Distribution in the amount of \$32,725.00; and,
- 6) Bid #6: 69 kV Fused Disconnects to Irby Utilities in the amount of \$19,950.00.

Smith informed the Commission that he was in complete agreement with the recommendations of DGR and that the recommended bid awards were all within the required delivery timeframe for targeted completion date of the project. In all, the total value of all the contracts will be \$264,173.17. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Mueske offered a resolution to approve the bid award recommendations (6) to furnish materials for the Downtown Substation for the total amount of \$264,173.17 be approved as presented. Commissioner DeBlieck seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 50

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the six contract bids for the furnishing of materials for the Downtown Substation Project be awarded as follows:

- Bid #1: Lightning Arresters to WESCO Distribution of Fargo, ND, in the amount of \$4,508.64;
- Bid #2: Circuit Switcher to Irby Utilities of Eagan, MN, in the amount of \$76,850.00;
- Bid #3: Steel Structures to Galvanizers, Inc., of West Fargo, ND, in the amount of \$91,929.45;
- Bid #4: 69 kV Switches to Southern Electrical Equipment Co., Inc., of Charlotte, NC, in the amount of \$38,210.08;
- Bid #5: 69 kV PT's to WESCO Distribution of Fargo, ND, in the amount of \$32,725.00; and,
- Bid #6: 69 kV Fused Disconnects to Irby Utilities of Eagan, MN, in the amount of \$19,950.00.

Dated this 27th day of September 2021.


President

Attest:


Secretary

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

Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator Radel reviewed with the Commission the WMU Cost of Power Report for July 2021. This report is illustrated using a rolling year-to-date format and provides the overall cost of power for the year (.064 per kWh twelve-month rolling average). Additional data reflecting the month-to-date cost (.080 per kWh) was also presented for review.

Commissioner Mattern informed the Commission that a Letter of Resignation had been received from Commissioner Nathan Weber. On behalf of the Commission and staff, Mattern expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Weber for his years of service and dedication and best wishes on his new endeavor. (It was noted that a plaque commemorating his years of service will be delivered to Commissioner Weber.) Commissioner Mattern offered a motion to accept Commissioner Weber's Letter of Resignation effective immediately. Commissioner Mahboub seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

Commissioner Mattern informed the Commission that Willmar Municipal Utilities will be celebrating Public Power Week, Oct. 3-9, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric utilities that provide electricity to 49 million Americans. Public power puts the people of Willmar first, and Public

Power Week gives us the chance to emphasize the advantages of locally-owned power to our citizens and remind them of the reliable and safe services WMU provides. Commissioner Mattern recited and recommended approval of the resolution designating October 3-9, 2021, as Public Power Week. Commissioner DeBlieck seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 51

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

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that the process to refinance the 2012A Revenue Bonds for the CapX 2020 Project with CMMPA is currently underway. These bonds funded the Brookings-Southeast Twin Cities Transmission Project of which Willmar is considered a major participant. Official Commission signatures were recently obtained and submitted for completion of the process.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that MN House Bonding Committee will be visiting Willmar on October 19th (MinnWest Technology Campus). This visit will provide an opportunity to present a brief pitch to the Committee to emphasize our need for funding assistance for the proposed Northeast Water Treatment Plant Project. Harren expressed his appreciation to Rep. Dave Baker for his support throughout this process. Letters of support from area officials will be included in an informational packet to be distributed to the Committee members.

General Manager Harren shared with the Commission a news release recently received from Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). Items to note included: MRES Board of Directors have approved a 5% decrease in its members' wholesale power supply rates beginning in 2022, and MRES does not anticipate the need for a rate increase through the year 2026.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that a meeting of the WMU Labor Committee will be scheduled soon. Agenda items for the LC meeting will include the General Manager pay equity/market adjustment, union fatigue MOA, and clothing policy. Tentative agenda items for the next WMU Planning Committee meeting (TBD) will include NISC software, Time of Use electric rates, and water treatment plant.

For information: Upcoming meetings/events to note include:

- WMU to host "Chamber Connection" – Friday, Oct. 8th @ 7:30-8:30 am (WMU Auditorium)
- 2021 MRES Fall Meeting: Nov. 9 & 10 (Sioux Falls Convention Center)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Mahboub 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 12:20 pm.

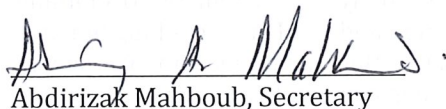
Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen
Executive Secretary

ATTEST:



Abdirizak Mahboub, Secretary



WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
MUC Labor Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, September 14, 2021 @ 12:00 pm
WMU Conference Room

Attendees: Commissioners Abdirizak Mahboub, Cole Erickson & Justin Mattern, General Manager John Harren, HR/Compliance Manager Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, and Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen.

Commissioner Mahboub (LC Vice Chair) called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm. General Manager Harren reminded those in attendance that the two main topics of discussion (Emergency Succession Plan and Clothing Policy) are a continuation of previous Labor Committee meeting discussions.

1) Emergency Succession Plan:

Per directive of the Commission and Labor Committee, General Manager Harren and staff had been requested to create an Emergency Succession Plan. This plan would be essential in the event of a short or long-term absence of the General Manager. This plan would establish a “chain of command” taking into consideration the various positions and duties involved in keeping the Utility operational and functioning as required. In conjunction with the Emergency Succession Plan, an update to the current Organizational Chart would be required.

General Manager Harren provided overviews of associated data which included:

a) N-1 and N-2 Staffing Scenarios

Note: “N” indicates normal staffing. N-1 would be normal staffing minus 1 lead position and N-2 would be normal staffing minus 2 lead positions. The presented scenarios provide benchmarks to meet all required staffing needs. This is a living document and updates would be ongoing as needed.

b) Organizational Chart Options (4 options)

These options were designed to better reflect the current structure of the Utility staff and their talents. Descriptive verbiage of each option was presented.

Following review and discussion by the Labor Committee, it was unanimously agreed upon that Option #4 was deemed as the best option. Being the structure is in place and working cohesively, it was felt this option provides the best support and structure for the Utility.

Recommendation:

Following additional input and discussion, Commissioner Mattern offered a motion to recommend that the Commission approve Option #4 to replace the current Organizational Chart at the September 27th MUC meeting along with the appropriate revisions to the Emergency Session Plan. The new Organizational Chart along with the N-1 and N-2 Staffing Scenarios are to be considered “living documents” and updated annually to reflect staffing changes. Commissioner Erickson seconded the motion which carried by a vote of three ayes and zero noes.

2) Clothing Policy Discussion:

Per directive of the Labor Committee, Staff had been requested to modify the current WMU Clothing Policy prior to 2022. This policy not only pertains to FR/AR (Fire Rated and Arc Flash) clothing but also to apparel which can easily be identified by the public. General Manager Harren provided an overview of previous clothing policy discussions including clothing allowances, departmental requests, and various options.

Facilities & Maint. Supv. Marti presented to the Committee the current WMU Clothing Policy along with modifications for consideration. These revisions were specific to the three “outside” employee groups. The departments are Facilities/Maintenance, Water, and Line/Meter. The options take into

consideration safety and the various needs and requirements of each group. Approximate total annual costs were provided.

Current and past issues pertaining to the clothing policy necessitated the need for modifications (i.e. tracking of FR washings, abused spending practices). First and foremost, the Utility's priority is to provide safe and reliable apparel for its employees. Conformity along with comfort will also reflect professionalism among staff. Limiting clothing options will provide more safety/quality control for all and limit liability exposure for WMU. The changes would provide a more equitable clothing policy among employees.

At the March 16th LC meeting, union stewards were asked to attend to provide input regarding clothing concerns and requests. Following today's discussion, a meeting will once again be held with union stewards to discuss the recommended clothing policy modifications.

Following review and discussion, it was the consensus of the Labor Committee to recommend a hybrid of options with restricted clothing selections as the proposed policy of choice. Included in the proposed policy would be the following factors:

- 1) WMU purchased clothing must be turned in yearly when new clothing is issued.
- 2) All clothing purchased by WMU must be from the approved clothing list for uniformity.
- 3) All WMU logo clothing is to be returned upon separation of employment.
- 4) Staff is encouraged to refrain from wearing WMU issued clothing outside of work and FR clothing is not worn during situations that may compromise the integrity of the clothing.

Action:

Following review and discussion, it was a consensus of the Labor Committee that staff will update the proposed WMU Clothing Policy as recommended incorporating a hybrid of components as identified. A meeting to present the updated policy to union stewards will be held after which the revised WMU Clothing Policy will be presented to the Commission for approval.

3) Miscellaneous:

Staff had received a request to consider updating the current safety eyewear policy. Following review, it was a consensus of the Labor Committee that no changes to the current eyewear policy were warranted at this time.

4) Adjournment:

There being no further business to come before the Labor Committee, Commissioner Mattern 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 1:13 pm.

RESOLUTION NO. 51

**2021 PUBLIC POWER WEEK
IN APPRECIATION OF WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES,
OUR HOMETOWN ELECTRIC UTILITY**

WHEREAS, we, the citizens of Willmar, place high value on local control over community services and therefore have chosen to operate a community owned, locally controlled, not-for-profit electric utility and, as consumers and owners of our electric utility, have a direct say in utility operations and policies;

WHEREAS, Willmar Municipal Utilities provides our homes, businesses, farms, social service, and local government agencies with reliable, efficient, and cost-effective electricity employing sound business practices designed to ensure the best possible service at not-for-profit rates;

WHEREAS, Willmar Municipal Utilities is a valuable community asset that contributes to the well-being of local citizens through energy efficiency, customer service, environmental protection, economic development, and safety awareness;

WHEREAS, Willmar Municipal Utilities is a dependable and trustworthy institution whose local operation provides many consumer protections and continues to make our community a better place to live and work, and contributes to protecting the global environment;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that Willmar Municipal Utilities will continue to work to bring low-cost, safe, reliable electricity to community homes and businesses just as it has since 1891, the year when the utility was created to serve all the citizens of Willmar; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the week of Oct. 3-9 be designated Public Power Week to recognize Willmar Municipal Utilities for its contributions to the community and to educate consumer-owners, policy makers, and employees on the benefits of public power;


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that our community joins hands with more than 2,000 other public power systems in the United States in this celebration of public power, which is best for consumers, business, the community, and the nation.

Dated this 27th day of September 2021.



President

Attest:



Secretary