

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – MARCH 14, 2022
11:45 AM – WMU AUDITORIUM

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, March 14, 2022, at 11:45 a.m. in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Bruce DeBlicek (via teleconference), Cole Erickson, Kerry Johnson, Shawn Mueske, Carol Laumer, and Kadar Abdi. Absent was Commissioner Dave Baumgart.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Director of Administration Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, Staff Electrical Engineer Jeron Smith, Water Department Supervisor Alan Neer, IS Coordinator Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), City Councilman Michael O'Brien, and WC Tribune Journalist Shelby Lindrud.

Commissioner Erickson (Vice President) presided over the meeting and opened by introducing newly appointed Commissioner Abdirahman Kadar Abdi. Commissioner Kadar is the Executive Director of the Kandiyohi Academy. Kadar presented a brief background summary of himself to the Commission. We appreciate Commissioner Kadar's willingness to serve and look forward to his involvement as a member of the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission.

Following the introduction, the meeting continued by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Commissioner Erickson inquiring 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 Johnson offered a resolution to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Mueske seconded. As a matter of procedure, let the minutes reflect that all resolutions and motions were conducted by verbal roll call.

RESOLUTION NO. 10

"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 February 25, 2022, Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20220273 to No. 20220368 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$1,416,142.12.

Dated this 14th day of March 2022.



Vice President

Attest:



Secretary

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

Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker presented the Commission with the January 2022 Financial Reports along with a recap of the January 31, 2022 Investment Portfolio, and the January 2022 Cost of Power Report. The data presented included analyses of the Electric, Water, and Combined Divisions. Information contained in the reports reflect operating revenues & expenses, operating income, and retained earnings. Graphs depicting the 2021/2022 monthly year-to-date revenues, expenses, and retained earnings were also included with the financial data.

Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti presented the Commission with the February 2022 Wind Turbine Report. Turbine availabilities for the month of February were at 92.9% (Unit #3) and 95.9% (Unit #4) with a total monthly production of 828,786 kilowatt hours.

Staff Electrical Engineer Smith presented the Commissioner with two bid award recommendations for consideration. The first bid award recommendation was for the 2022 Annual Underground Construction. Two bids had been received to conduct the annual underground construction. Following review of the submitted bids, it was the recommendation of Staff to award the 2022 Annual Underground Construction contract to O & S Construction for their estimated total bid amount of \$222,845.00 (estimated total cost is based on bid prices). Following review and discussion, Commissioner Laumer offered a resolution to approve the bid award for the 2022 Annual Underground Construction to O & S Construction for their estimated bid of \$222,845.00. Commissioner Johnson seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 11

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the bid for the 2022 Annual Underground Construction be awarded to O & S Construction of Bird Island, Minnesota, for the estimated bid amount of \$222,845.00."

Dated this 14th day of March 2022.



Vice President

Attest:



Secretary


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

The second bid award recommendation presented was to furnish control panels for the Power Plant Substation. One bid submitted by Electrical Power Products, Inc. (EP2) had been received for the project. Following review for accuracy and compliance, it was the recommendation of DGR Engineering and Staff to award the bid for the control panels for the Power Plant Substation to EP2 for a total price of \$127,199.00. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Johnson offered a resolution to approve the bid for Furnishing Control Panels for Power Plant Substation to EP2 for the total bid amount of \$127,199.00. Commissioner Mueske seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 12

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the bid for the Furnishing Control Panels for Power Plant Substation be awarded to Electrical Power Products, Inc., of Des Moines, Iowa, for their total bid amount of \$127,199.00."

Dated this 14th day of March 2022.



Vice President

Attest:



Secretary

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

For information, two annual departmental updates were presented for discussion and review. The departmental reports and items of interest included:

- 1) 2021 Customer Service Year-End Review: (Director of Administration Johnson)
 - a. Customer Service Representatives (3) provide assistance to 10,080 customers
 - b. CSR and billing functions data
 - c. CSR service order activity (4,918) and history (2017-2021)
 - d. Financial assistance received on behalf of customers (\$606,076)
 - e. Agency/method utilized to collect on accounts deemed "uncollectable" (MN Recapture Program \$26,178 and tax lien process \$14,550)
 - f. 2022 Customer Service Goals
- 2) 2021 Water Department Year-End Review: (Water Dept. Supervisor Neer)
 - a. Capital Improvement Projects review
 - i. NE Water Treatment Plant Project
 - ii. New pump and motor replacements (SW Booster Station & Well 18)
 - iii. Prep work for 2nd Street SE reconstruction
 - b. Water Main Break Repair (26 mains & 3 service lines)
 - c. Annual water usage (1,503 million gallons pumped in 2021)
 - d. 2022 Water Dept. preview (NE Water Treatment Plant funding, water main replacements, prioritizing 5-yr. project with City, etc.)

Following the annual updates, Commissioner Erickson expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Commission for the presentations and staffing efforts of both the Customer Service and Water Departments throughout the year.

Staff Electrical Engineer Smith provided an update to the Commission on a recent power outage. On February 28th at 3:11 a.m., a piece of metering equipment failed at the Willmar Substation. Protection systems automatically de-energized a portion of the transmission grid to prevent further damage. WMU isolated the fault and restored power. Approximately 3,622 customers were without electricity for 37 minutes (127,408 total customer minutes). WMU removed the damaged equipment and returned the transmission line to service. The customer notification process was reviewed for potential future improvements.

Commissioner Laumer and General Manager Harren provided a recap of their recent attendance at the 2022 APPA Legislative Rally in Washington, DC. In conjunction with the Legislative Rally, meetings with Minnesota legislators (Rep. Michelle Fischbach, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Sen. Tina Smith) were held to further discuss issues directly affecting WMU including the request for support of the \$3.5 million Congressional Directed Spending (earmark) to assist with financing of the NE Water Treatment Plant. Among key legislative issues and talking points discussed during the Legislative Rally were: grid security, energy infrastructure, cybersecurity, finance/bonding, pole attachment control, and climate change. General Manager Harren and Commissioner Laumer expressed their appreciation to the Commission for allowing them the opportunity to attend the APPA Legislative Rally which provides valuable networking for our Utility and the electric power industry

As a matter of organizational business, Commissioner Erickson asked Commissioner Kadar if he would be willing to fill the current vacancy on the WMU Labor Committee. Following his agreeing to serve in the position, Commissioner Mueske offered a motion to appoint Commissioner Kadar to serve on the WMU Labor Committee. Commissioner Laumer seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six ayes and zero nays.

As a member of Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), the Utility is provided a monthly update of the MRES and Western Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (WMMPA) Boards of Directors meeting. The update provides a brief overview of the topics discussed by the Boards and the actions taken. At this time, a video summary from the February 2022 MRES and WMMPA Boards of Directors meeting was presented.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that state funding for the NE Water Treatment Plant has been introduced to both the Minnesota House and Senate (H.F. #3993/S.F. #3681).

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that meetings of both the WMU Labor and Planning Committees would be forthcoming. Tentative future Labor Committee agenda item(s) will include software options for accounting & billing, new logo, and rate study. Tentative future Planning Committee agenda items will include water modeling & water treatment plant, agreement with David Turch & Associates (DTA), and new building.

For information: Upcoming meetings/events to note include:

- APPA National Conference (Nashville, TN) June 10-15
- MMUA Summer Conference (Madden's Resort) August 22-24

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Erickson offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Mueske seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen
Executive Secretary

ATTEST:



Carol Laumer, Secretary