

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES – JANUARY 23, 2023
11:45 AM – WMU AUDITORIUM

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, January 23, 2023, at 11:45 am in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Bruce DeBlieck, Shawn Mueske, Dave Baumgart, John Kennedy, and Carol Laumer.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Director of Administration Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, IS Coordinator Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, Energy Services/Safety Outreach Coordinator Amber Dale, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), Mayor Doug Reese, and WC Tribune Journalist Jennifer Kotila.


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

RESOLUTION NO. 2

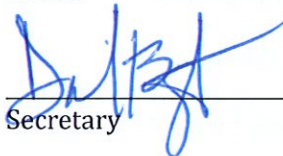
“BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the consent agenda be approved as presented which includes:

- ❖ Minutes from the January 9, 2023, Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20230054 to No. 20230130 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$2,518,715.92.

Dated this 23rd day of January, 2023.


President

Attest:


Secretary

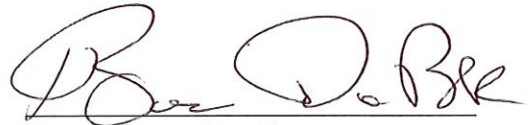
The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of five ayes and zero nays.

Commissioner DeBlieck informed the Commission that as a matter of procedural protocol, the Utility is required to annually designate an official newspaper and posting site for legal notifications. It is the recommendation of staff to designate the West Central Tribune and the City Office Building (community board) as the official sites for legal publications/notifications. Commissioner Laumer offered a resolution to designate West Central Tribune and the Willmar City Office as the designated publication sites for 2023. Commissioner Baumgart seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 3

“BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the 2023 official designated sites for Willmar Municipal Utilities legal postings and notifications be the West Central Tribune (Willmar, MN) and the Willmar City Office Building (community board).”

Dated this 23rd day of January, 2023.


President

Attest:


Secretary

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

Director of Administration Johnson presented the Commission with an annual recap of the Customer Service Department and the Energy Services/Safety Outreach Departments. Prior to presenting the departmental reports, Johnson introduced Amber Dale who joined the Utility staff in 2022 as the new Energy Services/Safety Outreach Coordinator. The presented reports include data and items of interest including:

1) 2022 Customer Service Update:

- a. Three full-time Customer Service Representatives (CRS) provide assistance to 10,247 customers.
- b. CSR and Billing Functions:
 - i. 10,247 Customer accounts billed monthly
 - ii. 5,590 E-Bill accounts 46% of our customer base, increased 8% from 2021
 - iii. 4,308 Paperless customer accounts – 36% of our custom base, increased 20% from 2021
- c. Service Order Processing:
 - i. 4,681 Service Orders processed by CSR's
 - ii. 177 New services added
 - iii. 2,361 Transferred services (people moving)
 - iv. 63 Accounts disconnected for non-payment, down from 73 in 2021
- d. Financial assistance received on behalf of customers in 2022: \$580,658
- e. Agency/method utilized to collect on accounts deemed "uncollectable" (MN Recapture Program \$26,522, Collection Agency - \$4,474, and tax lien process \$32,163)
- f. 2022 Goals Met & Ongoing:
 - i. 20% Increase in customers who transitioned to paperless billing
 - ii. Continue to encourage customers to utilize online payment options
 - iii. Continue all collection efforts to avoid customer disconnections

2) 2022 Energy/Safety Outreach Program:

- a. Energy Services:
 - i. Will resume Load Control Program in 2023 (temporarily on hold since June 2022)
 - ii. Bright Energy Solutions (BES) rebate program reimbursed 186 applications totaling \$75,263 and saved over 1,368 MW of power in 2022.
 - iii. Average cost to WMU per kWh savings was \$0.055
- b. Outreach:
 - i. Active in Chamber Connections to keep pulse in the business community
 - ii. Awarded 2 WMU scholarships to 2022 WHS seniors
 - iii. Alternative Learning Center job shadowing/employment opportunities program
 - iv. Increased social media and website communications and information
 - v. 5th Grade Energy Education Program in 3 local schools
 - vi. Participated in Willmar Fest Block Party Celebration (information booth and aerial lift line dept. truck in parade)
 - vii. Presentation to Senior Citizens (Senior Connection)
 - viii. Participated in "You Belong Here" event at WEAC (Willmar Main Street)
 - ix. In conjunction with CERTS Program, provided energy kits to mobile home park families

- x. Participated in holiday events including Willmar Holiday Parade, Celebrate the Lights, and the Barn Theatre's "Christmas Tree" display
- xi. Design and implementation of new WMU logo
- c. **Safety:**
 - i. 100% employee participation in safety training (20 sessions)
 - ii. OSHA Recordable injury/illness cases: 2
 - iii. Received APPA Safety Award of Excellence for 2021

On behalf of the Commission, Commissioner DeBleck expressed his appreciation for the fine job done by all departments/staff in 2022. DeBleck continued by acknowledging and welcoming newly appointed Mayor Reese who was in attendance.

General Manager Harren provided two updates to note. The first was an update of the ongoing process to appoint two new Commissioners. We anticipate completion of the process at tonight's City Council meeting. The second item was the weekly update provided by Jacobson Law Group on their continued legislative efforts to secure financial assistance for the NE Water Treatment Plant Project.

For information: Upcoming events to note include:

- 2023 MMUA Legislative Conference: January 24-25 (St. Paul)
- 2023 APPA Legislative Conference: February 27 through March 1 (Washington DC)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Baumgart offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Laumer seconded the motion which carried by a vote of five ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

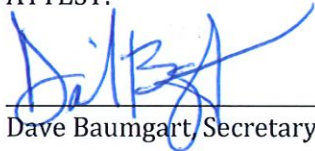
Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen
Executive Secretary

ATTEST:



Dave Baumgart, Secretary

