

**WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES - FEBRUARY 13, 2023**  
**11:45 AM - WMU AUDITORIUM**

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, February 13, 2023, at 11:45 am in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Bruce DeBlieck, Shawn Mueske, Dave Baumgart, Carol Laumer, Patricia Elizondo, and Terrill Sieck. Absent was Commissioner John Kennedy.

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, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), and WC Tribune Journalist Jennifer Kotila.

The meeting opened by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance followed by Commission President DeBlieck welcoming newly appointed Commissioners Patricia Elizondo and Terrill Sieck. Both Elizondo and Sieck shared with the Commission brief background summaries of themselves. Commissioner DeBlieck next inquired if each would be willing to serve as committee members (WMU Labor and Planning Committees). Following their acceptance, Commissioner DeBlieck appointed Commissioner Elizondo to serve on the Labor Committee, and Commissioner Sieck to serve on the Planning Committee. We appreciate Commissioners Elizondo's and Sieck's willingness to serve and look forward to their involvement as valued members of the Willmar Municipal Utilities Commission.


Commissioner DeBlieck continued by 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 Laumer seconded.

**RESOLUTION NO. 4**

"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 23, 2023, Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20230131 to No. 20230221 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$2,408,600.42.

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

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

Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker reviewed with the Commission the December 2022 Financial Reports along with a recap of the December 31, 2022 Investment Portfolio, and December 2022 Cost of Power Report. The data presented included analyses of the Electric, Water, and Combined Divisions. Information contained in the reports reflects operating revenues & expenses, operating income, and retained earnings. Graphs depicting the 2022/2023 monthly year-to-date revenues, expenses, and retained earnings were also included with the financial data.

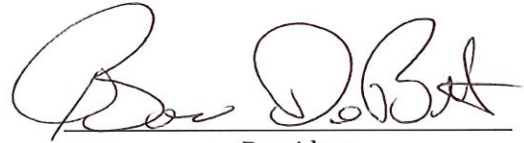
Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti presented the Commission with the January 2023 Wind Turbine Report. Turbine availability for the month of January was at 99.3% for Unit #3 with Unit #4 (south tower) currently being inoperative due to a blade pitch failure. The monthly production total for Unit #3 was 229,638 KWh. Maintenance staff continue to work on the repairs while delivery of the essential materials continues to be a challenge.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that a 2023 fee/charge waiver request had been received for the "Celebrate the Light of the World" community event. These charges would be for the tear down (January) and set-up (November) for the holiday event. The estimated cost including equipment and labor is \$3,887. Following review, Commissioner Mueske offered a resolution to approve the fee waiver for charges associated with the tear down and set-up of the "Celebrate the Light of the World" community event for 2023 up to \$3,887. Commissioner Baumgart seconded.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 5

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the fee/charge waiver request for the "Celebrate the Light of the World" for 2023 be approved in an amount not to exceed \$3,887.00."

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

  
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President

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

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

City Attorney Scott presented the annual "Commissioner 101" data training and review. This information is presented to the governing board annually as a "refresher" to assist in promoting understanding of roles/responsibilities, address potential board conflicts, clarify member's expectations, and to assist in providing guidance and directive to meet the goals and expectations of the Commission and Utility. To ensure that all Commissioners are kept well-informed, Attorney Scott reviewed the information which is also available via the Utility-provided iPads. The 2023 topics highlighted for review included: 1) Commissioner Role & Duties; 2) Open Meeting Law; 3) Government Records & Data; and, 4) Conflict of Interest.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that an inquiry had been received from the owners of the SunRay Water System. The question posed was if there was any interest by WMU to acquire the SunRay Water System. Staff will compile data for further discussion at an upcoming Planning Committee meeting. This was for information only.

Commissioners DeBlieck & Laumer and General Manager Harren provided a recap of their recent attendance at the 2023 MMUA Legislative Conference held on January 24-25. In conjunction with the annual conference, meetings with area legislators (Rep. Dave Baker and Sen. Andrew Lang) were held to further discuss issues directly affecting WMU. Among key legislative issues and talking points discussed during the conference were: clean energy bill for carbon-free electricity by 2040 and its impact on utilities and customers; IJA/IRA funding opportunities (i.e. grants, subsidies, tax incentives); grant writing assistance; and, bridging areas of interest between municipals and cooperatives (common concerns and

efforts). All expressed their appreciation to the Commission for allowing their attendance at this valuable and informative conference and encouraged others to attend in the future.

General Manager Harren provided two weekly updates provided by Jacobson Law Group on their continued legislative efforts to secure financial assistance for the NE Water Treatment Plant Project (January 27<sup>th</sup> and February 3<sup>rd</sup>). Harren further reminded the Commission that due to the upcoming APPA National Legislative Conference, the next regular MUC meeting will be held on Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:45 am.

For information: Upcoming events to note in 2023 include:

- APPA Legislative Conference: February 27 through March 1 (Washington DC)
- MRES Annual Meeting: May 10-11 (Sioux Falls, SD)
- MMUA Summer Conference: August 21-23 (Duluth)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Mueske offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Baumgart seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen  
Executive Secretary

ATTEST:

  
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Dave Baumgart, Secretary

