

**WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES – MAY 22, 2023**  
**11:45 AM – WMU AUDITORIUM**

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, May 22, 2023, at 11:45 am in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Bruce DeBlieck, Shawn Mueske, Dave Baumgart, Carol Laumer (arrived @ 11:55 am), John Kennedy, and Terrill Sieck. Absent was Commissioner Patricia Elizondo.

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, Information Systems Coordinator Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), City Councilman Michael O'Brien, and WC Tribune Journalist Jennifer Kotila.

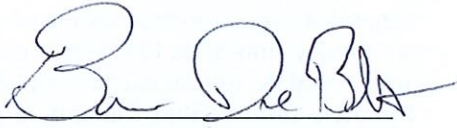
The meeting opened by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Commission President DeBlieck continued by asking if any revisions were needed to the presented agenda. There being none, a resolution to approve the consent agenda was requested. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Mueske offered a resolution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

**RESOLUTION NO. 17**

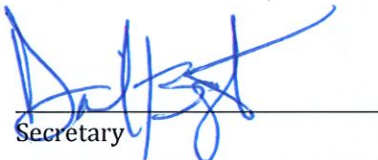
“BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the consent agenda be approved as presented which includes:

- ❖ Minutes from the May 8, 2023, Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20230609 to No. 20230707 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$2,409,409.09.

Dated this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of May, 2023.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

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

Staff Electrical Engineer Smith provided a summary of a recent power outage. On May 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:40 am, WMU's protection system detected a fault and de-energized Feeder #21. WMU Linemen patrolled the area and determined the cause of the outage as a squirrel located near a riser on Benson Avenue SW. Crews restored the power at 7:40 am with approximately 870 customers out of electricity for 60 minutes. Under normal circumstances, the outage would have affected approximately 600 customers. Upon completion of the new substation located to the north of the WMU Office (June 2023), this will lessen the number of affected customers in the future.

Facilities & Maintenance Supv. Marti reviewed with the Commission the latest WMU Strategic Plan update. Eight primary goals have been identified and prioritized along with actions and timelines required to achieve these goals. This format streamlines both short-term (one year) and long-term (2-5 yrs.) timelines. Marti presented a review of the tasks and timeline updates as of May 2023. The current WMU Strategic Plan is in the third year of the original five-year plan (approved in 2021). The Strategic Plan is considered a “living” document and is continually updated by Staff.

General Manager Harren introduced the 2022 MRES Year-in-Review video. This informative video presents an overview of the valuable assets, achievements, and strong financial stability of Missouri River Energy Services (MRES). Topics reviewed included: time-of-use rates, debt service coverage, positive bond ratings, various transmission projects, increase pay for member-owned generation, creation of an alternate operations site, and funding of WAPA capital projects for clean reliable energy. The presentation illustrates the continued commitment by MRES to deliver affordable, reliable energy and energy services to its 61 member communities including Willmar.

In conjunction with the MRES review, a recap of the 58<sup>th</sup> MRES Annual Meeting was presented. Attending the May 10-11 meeting were Commissioners DeBlieck, Laumer, Kennedy and Elizondo, and WMU Staff members Harren, Johnson, Marti and Prekker. Presentations included the following: Renewable, Hydrocarbons and the Future of the Electric Grid; Rethinking Reliability: Short and Long-term Actions; Western Area Power Administration Update; and, Federal Legislative Updates. In addition to these topics, Commissioner DeBlieck was honored with the Community Leader Award for his years of dedicated service to our community, utility, MRES and public power. Congratulations, Bruce!

MRES is once again offering member tours of the Red Rock Hydroelectric Project (RRHP) this summer. RRHP (near Pella, IA) began operating in June 2021 and is the newest clean, renewable, and reliable power supply resource for MRES. Tour dates are scheduled for June 28<sup>th</sup>, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, and August 17<sup>th</sup>. Tours are limited to 30 people and pre-registration is required.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that MMUA is offering a workshop to visit with area commissioners, city officials, and others about power and the importance of municipal utilities. The event is entitled *Interacting on the Issues: protecting, promoting, and strengthening your hometown utility*. MMUA government relations team and peers will discuss the implications of new laws, explore solution opportunities, and provide networking opportunities. The area workshop will be held on June 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:00-7:00 pm in Litchfield (Eagles Club). There is no charge for the event, but advanced registration is required.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that a meeting of the WMU Planning Committee will be held on Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm. Topics of discussion will include generation (main topic) along with a building project update. Additional meetings of both the WMU Labor and Planning Committees will also be forthcoming. Tentative future Labor Committee agenda items will include a purchase agreement for the sale of WMU property and union negotiations. Tentative future Planning Committee agenda items will include generation, new building, water treatment plant funding, and SunRay Water System.

For information: Upcoming 2023 events to note include:

- APPA National Conference: June 18-21 (Seattle, WA)
- MMUA Summer Conference: August 21-23 (Duluth)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner DeBlieck offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen  
Executive Secretary

ATTEST:



Dave Baumgart, Secretary