

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, January 22, 2024, at 11:45 am in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Shawn Mueske, John Kennedy, Dave Baumgart, Terrill Sieck, Bruce DeBlicek, Carol Laumer, and Patricia Elizondo.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Director of Administration Janell Johnson, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, Systems Coordinator Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, City Councilman Michael O'Brien, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), and WC Tribune Journalist Jennifer Kotila.

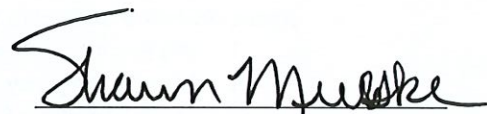
The meeting opened by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Commission President Mueske continued by asking if any changes to the agenda were needed. There being none, a resolution to approve the consent agenda was requested. Following review and discussion, Commissioner DeBlicek offered a resolution to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

RESOLUTION NO. 5

"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 8, 2024, MUC Meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20240048 to No. 20240138 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$2,264,837.17.

Dated this 22nd day of January 2024.


President

Attest:


Secretary

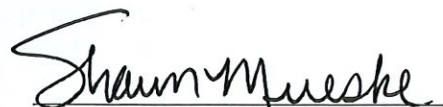
The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of seven ayes and zero nays.

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that as a matter of procedural protocol, the Utility is required to annually designate official posting sites for legal notifications. It is the recommendation of staff to designate West Central Tribune (newspaper), Willmar City Office Building (community board), and the WMU website as the official posting sites for legal publications/notifications. Commissioner Laumer offered a resolution to designate West Central Tribune, Willmar City Office, and WMU's website as the designated publication sites for 2024. Commissioner DeBlicek seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 6

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the 2024 official designated sites for Willmar Municipal Utilities legal postings and notifications be West Central Tribune (Willmar, MN), Willmar City Office Building (community board), and WMU website (www.wmu.willmar.mn.us)."

Dated this 22nd day of January 2024.


President

Attest:


Secretary

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of seven 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/Marketing Departments. The 2023 reports include the following data and items of interest:

1) 2023 Customer Service Update:

- a. Three full-time Customer Service Representatives (CRS) provide assistance to 10,460 customers.
- b. CSR and Billing Functions:
 - i. 10,147 Customer accounts billed monthly
 - ii. 5,151 E-Bill accounts (50% of our customer base)
 - iii. 2,275 Paperless customer accounts (22% of our custom base)
- c. Service Order Processing:
 - i. 3,686 Service Orders processed by CSRs (avg. 15/day)
 - ii. 259 New services added
 - iii. 2,549 Transferred services
 - iv. 59 Accounts disconnected for non-payment (decrease of 66 since 2022)
- d. Financial assistance received on behalf of customers in 2023: \$441,996
 - i. Electric: \$343,849
 - ii. Water: \$41,320
 - iii. Sewer: \$56,827
- e. Agency/method utilized to collect on accounts deemed "uncollectable":
 - i. MN Recapture Program: \$35,054 (\$8,500 increase from 2022)
 - ii. Collection Agency: \$1,118
 - iii. Tax lien process: \$16,454
- f. 2023 Goals Met & Ongoing:
 - i. Learning new software to assist customers
 - ii. Transitioning all customers to new Tyler Tech Incode 10 billing software and help to setup new online access, Municipal Online Payments
 - iii. Encourage customer to transition to paperless billing
 - iv. Encourage customers to utilize bank draft payment option to avoid credit card fees
 - v. Continue all collection efforts to avoid customer disconnections

2) 2023 Energy/Safety/Marketing Departments:

- a. **Energy Services:**
 - i. Bright Energy Solutions (BES) rebate program reimbursed 96 applications totaling \$58,372 and saved over 1,000 MW of power in 2023 (enough energy to power 100 avg. homes for a year).
 - ii. Saved over 5,420 MWh of electricity over the past 6 yrs. in energy efficiency program (enough electricity for an electric vehicle to travel almost 16 million miles)
 - iii. MRES provided WMU a rebate for 1700 LED light bulbs distributed to our customers
 - iv. Load Share A/C Program was suspended in August 2023 and will not be reenergized utilizing the current equipment/software
 - v. Water Heater and In-Floor Heat Program continues to run daily
- b. **Safety:**
 - i. Ridgewater College Customized Training Program for staff included:
 1. 11 safety training session covering 25 training topics
 2. 8 Safety Committee meetings
 3. Additional employee training:
 - a. MMUA Job Training and Safety Program
 - b. HazWoper Training (for hazardous materials)

- ii. Safety Stats:
 - 1. OSHA Recordable injury/illness cases: 0
 - 2. First Report of Injuries: 2 (no medical assistance was sought)
 - 3. Lost time due to injury: 0 days
- iii. Safety Recognition:
 - 1. APPA Certificate of Excellence in Reliability for 2022
 - 2. 2023 APPA RP3 Diamond Designation Award (2023-2025)
- c. 2023 Marketing Outreach:
 - i. Received BES WattSTAR Award for "Utilities that Never Stop" for WMU's contribution to the community and participation in various local events.
 - ii. Rolled out new logo
 - iii. Willmar Fest Block Party and parade
 - iv. Children's Corner Touch a Truck event
 - v. Offered MRES 5th Grade Energy Education Program in local schools
 - vi. Donated "Magic School Bus" books to local schools
 - vii. Scholarship programs (WMU, MMUA, MRES)
 - viii. Celebrate the Light – assisted with in kind donation for electrical work
 - ix. Participated in Willmar Holiday Parade and Christmas tree display at Barn Theater
 - x. MRES contributed \$5800 cost share for advertising and logo merchandise

On behalf of the Commission, Commissioner Mueske expressed his appreciation for the successful efforts and commitment exhibited by all departments/staff in 2023.

American Public Power Association (APPA) is offering a new 15-part on-demand training course entitled "*Public Power Governance Essentials*". This new series offers a convenient way to get "up-to-speed" on governance requirements, such as complying with charters/bylaws, reporting conflicts of interest, understanding duties and legal obligations, and facilitating an effective board meeting. The videos, which range from 12-25 min., are led by an expert in the field and designed to help build the skills necessary to become a successful board member. As a member of Missouri River Energy Services (MRES), WMU is provided with this training tool at no cost (\$600 non-member cost). WMU will present the videos at future MUC meetings as time permits. Lesson #1 entitled "*Public Power Governance Models*" was presented at this time (25 minutes).

Meetings of both the WMU Labor and Planning Committees will be forthcoming. Tentative future Labor Committee agenda item(s) will include new building land acquisition and Strategic Plan update. Tentative future Planning Committee agenda items will include new building, new generation, transmission projects, and water treatment plant.

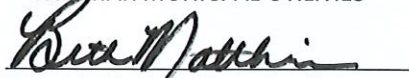
Upcoming 2024 events to note:

- APPA Legislative Rally (Washington, DC): February 26-28
- MMUA Legislative Conference (St. Pau): March 26-27
- APPA National Conference (San Diego, CA): June 7-12 (general session: June 10-12)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Baumgart offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Kennedy seconded the motion which carried by a vote of seven ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES


Beth Mattheisen, Executive Secretary

ATTEST:


Dave Baumgart, Secretary

