

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

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Director of Administration Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Staff Electrical Engineer Jeron Smith, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, Information Systems Supervisor Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Beth Mattheisen, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), Mayor Doug Reese, City Administrator Leslie Valiant, City Planning & Development Director Christopher Corbett, Willmar Planning Commissioners Christopher Buzzeo & Jonathan Marchand, City Councilman Carl Shuldes, 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 Kennedy offered a resolution to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Baumgart seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 9


“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 23, 2024, MUC Meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20240277 to No. 20240326 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$1,420,725.11.

Dated this 11th day of March 2024.


President

Attest:


Secretary

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

Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker reviewed the January 2024 Financial Reports along with a recap of the January 31, 2024 Investment Portfolio. Due to WMU’s new software conversion, the fiscal data presented was in a newly developed format. The financial information contained in the report reflects operating revenues, expenses, retained earnings, and fund comparisons for both the Electric and Water Divisions. The Commission agreed favorably on the new format used to present the monthly financial data.

Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Marti presented the Commission with the February 2024 Wind Turbine Report. Turbine availabilities for the month of February were 79.2% (Unit #3) and 98.8% (Unit #4) with a total monthly production of 626,503 kilowatt hours. The 2024 total production through February is 1,188,552 kilowatt hours.

Staff Electrical Engineer Smith presented the Commission with a bid award recommendation for the annual 2024 Underground Construction. Two bids had been received to conduct the underground construction work. Following review of the submitted bids, it was the recommendation of Staff to award the 2024 Underground Construction contract to O & S Construction for their estimated total bid amount of \$228,565.00 (estimated total cost is based on bid prices). Following review and discussion, Commissioner DeBlieck offered a resolution to approve the bid award

for the 2024 Underground Construction to O & S Construction for their estimated bid of \$228,565.00. Commissioner Baumgart seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 10

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the bid for the annual 2024 Underground Construction be awarded to O & S Construction of Bird Island, Minnesota, for the estimated bid amount of \$228,565.00. "

Dated this 11th day of March 2024.


President

Attest:


Secretary

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

Water System Supv. Neer presented the 2023 Year-End Review of the Water Department. The departmental report and noted items of interest included:

- 1) Capital Improvement Projects review:
 - i) NE Water Treatment Plant Project:
 - (1) Total project budget: \$19.25M (payments to date \$14.13M)
 - (a) Approx. 65% complete with project completion est. March 2025
 - ii) Well 15 total costs: \$80,548 (completed July 2023)
 - iii) Water Main Replacement: \$1.77M
- 2) Water Main and Service Repairs costs: \$62,495
- 3) Annual water usage: 1.423BG (billion gallons)
- 4) 2024 Water Dept. preview (NE Water Treatment Plant, water main replacements, replace Truck #32, shared SCADA projects, and bulk fill station)

Commissioner DeBleck and General Manager Harren provided a recap of their recent attendance at the 2024 APPA Legislative Conference held in Washington, DC (Commissioner Laumer also attended). Among key legislative issues and talking points discussed were sustainable public power, supply chain issues, modernizing public finance tools, protecting resource adequacy, permitting process reform, protecting grid security, and municipal tax issues. Following the recap, both DeBleck and Harren 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 informed the Commission that the City had made an official request for the Commission to consider rescinding a correspondence that had been submitted to the City Planning Commission at their March 6th meeting regarding the South Swansson Well Field property. While WMU supports growth and development in the city, the multiple projects planned for this area could compromise the integrity of the well field area. WMU's number one goal is to preserve the Swansson Field South area to meet the current and future water supply needs of the City of Willmar. Therefore, WMU needs to maintain land use that protects the water quality of the aquifers and minimizes potential contamination. Staff contacted its wellhead consultant to request input on the issues at hand. This information will be shared with the City once it is received.

At this time, Commissioner Mueske allowed those attending the meeting to address the Commission (2 min. allotment). City Planning & Development Director Corbett stated he had requested the Commission to rescind the correspondence since he felt it was not procedurally presented. City Administrator Valiant also voiced her opinion on the timing of the memo. City Planning Commissioner Buzzeo expressed his support of the Commission and urged them not to rescind the document due to the importance of the information it contained. Following additional input, it was a consensus of the Commission to not rescind the document and to have it remain on record. General Manager Harren added that water sources to meet the needs of our community are rare with only 4 identified areas in town that can supply the needed water. If you must go out of the city, the costs associated would be in the multi-millions of dollars.

American Public Power Association (APPA) has a new 15-part on-demand training course entitled "*Public Power Governance Essentials*". This 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. At this time, the fourth informational training video entitled "*Duty of Care, Loyalty and Obedience*" was presented.

General Manager Harren reminded the Commission that a meeting of the WMU Planning Committee will be held on Monday, March 18th at 12:00 pm. Agenda items will include bid recommendation for diesel generating equipment and security update. Additional 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, and transmission projects.

Upcoming 2024 events to note:

- WMU Planning Committee Mtg.: Monday, March 18th @ 12:00 pm
- MMUA Legislative Conference (St. Pau): March 26-27
- MRES Annual Meeting (Sioux Falls., SD): May 8-9
- APPA National Conference (San Diego, CA): June 7-12

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Baumgart offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Sieck seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:56 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES


Beth Mattheisen, Executive Secretary

ATTEST:


Dave Baumgart, Secretary

