

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – April 22, 2024

11:45 am – WMU Auditorium

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

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, Information Systems Supervisor Mike Sangren, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, 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. Due to the absence of Commission Secretary Baumgart, Commission President Mueske appointed Commissioner Sieck to serve as Acting Secretary. Following the appointment, Commissioner Mueske asked 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 Laumer offered a resolution to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Sieck seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 16

"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 April 8, 2024, MUC Meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20240405 to No. 20240444 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$1,256,971.50.

Dated this 22nd day of April 2024.


President

Attest:


Acting Secretary

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

Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker reviewed the February 2024 Financial Reports along with a recap of the February 29, 2024 Investment Portfolio, and the February 2024 Cost of Power Report. The financial information contained in the report reflects operating revenues, expenses, retained earnings, and fund comparisons for both the Electric and Water Divisions.

Staff Electrical Engineer Smith reviewed with the Commission a proposal received from DGR Engineer to provide engineering services for the development of a Geographical Information System (GIS) for Willmar's electric and water systems in accordance with DGR's proposal dated February 2024. The proposed services would include base system setup, electric and water systems mapping conversion, and training. The fee for the all-inclusive services is in the amount of \$64,500.00. Following review and discussion, Commissioner DeBlieck offered a resolution to approve DGR's proposal to develop the GIS for Willmar's electric and water systems as presented. Commissioner Laumer seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 17

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that DGR Engineering of Rock Rapids, Iowa, be authorized to provide professional engineering services for developing a Geographical Information System (GIS) for WMU's electric and water systems for the total amount of \$64,500.00 ."

Dated this 22nd day of April 2024.


President

Attest:


Acting Secretary

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

General Manager Harren provided a recap of recent developments associated with the SW Wellfield area (Swansson Field south of Willmar Avenue) along with associated data. The information presented included a letter from the Minnesota Dept. of Health (MDH) which addressed legally enforceable requirements and standards for well construction and sealing, as well as water quality testing. MDH further summarized WMU's previously approved Wellhead Protection Plan (Oct. 2016), Minnesota State Well Code and other requirements, stormwater management, and WMU's proactive approach to developing its wellfield to meet the future needs of the community. WMU has made considerable investment of financial and human resources to ensure that options are in place to continue to provide high quality drinking water to the residents of Willmar. Additional data presented included: joint correspondence between WMU and the City addressed to Mayor Doug Reese stating additional evaluation at Swansson Field would be needed prior to any new development; WMU/City Sharing Listing (mutually agreed upon in 2012); and an executed Joint Use Agreement between WMU/City regarding use of wellfield/recreational areas (December 1988). In addition to the data reviewed, the question was raised as to who would be fiscally responsible for any future expenses incurred at the wellfield such as drilling additional test wells, abandoning and/or sealing of wells, additional testing requirements, etc. This is yet to be determined.

It was further reiterated that the main objective of the Commission and Staff is to preserve the southwest wellfield and to protect its aquifers against contamination, which are critical to meet the needs of Willmar's water supply. On behalf of the Commission, President Mueske applauded the efforts of General Manager Harren and WMU Staff for their continued efforts to provide the additional work to secure the preservation of Willmar's water supply now and in the future.

General Manager Harren was pleased to share with the Commission two recent awards received by Willmar Municipal Utilities for accomplishments in 2023 from the American Public Power Association (APPA). The first award presented was the *Certificate of Excellence in Electric Reliability*. This award is presented for achieving exceptional electric reliability (based on over 2,000 not-for-profit, community-owned electric utilities nationwide). In fact, WMU's average annual outage time per customer was 40 minutes a year, while the average U.S. electric outage was 148 minutes a year. The second award presented was the *Safety Award of Excellence*. This award was presented to 145 utilities for their safe operating practices in 2023. Recipients were recognized for their outstanding safety records and commitment to safety culture. In addition to these awards, WMU has also recently been named as recipient of the 2024 Minnesota State Governor's Workplace Safety Award. WMU received the "Diamond Award" for having an incidence rate better than the 97th percentile of both the state and national averages.

American Public Power Association (APPA) has a 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 informational video entitled "*Board Development: Establishing a High Performing Board*" (lesson #8) was presented.

General Manager Harren reminded the Commission that a meeting of the WMU Labor Committee will be held on Tuesday, April 30th at 12:00 pm. The main topic of discussion will focus on the process to purchase property for the new WMU facility. Additional WMU Planning and Labor Committees meetings will be forthcoming. Tentative future Labor Committee agenda item(s) will include new building land acquisition, Strategic Plan update, and MUC Self-Survey. Tentative future Planning Committee agenda items will include new building, new generation, transmission project, and water treatment plant.

Upcoming 2024 events to note:

- WMU Strategic Planning Session: May 1 beginning at 8:00 am (MUC/WMU Mgmt. Staff)
- MRES Annual Meeting (Sioux Falls., SD): May 8-9 (Elizondo/Laumer/Harren/Johnson/Smith)
- MMUA Utility Leader Workshop (Alexandria): June 27 (3 additional sites & dates are available)
- APPA National Conference (San Diego, CA): June 7-12 (Kennedy/Laumer/DeBleck)
- MMUA Summer Conference (Fargo, ND): August 19-21

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Kennedy offered a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Laumer seconded the motion which carried by a vote of six ayes and zero nays, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:47 pm.


Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES



Beth Mattheisen, Executive Secretary

ATTEST:



Terrill Sieck, Acting Secretary

