



WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2025

11:45 am – WMU Auditorium

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) met in its regular scheduled meeting on Monday, February 10, 2025, at 11:45 am in the WMU Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Shawn Mueske, John Kennedy, Dave Baumgart, Terrill Sieck, Carol Laumer, Patricia Elizondo, and Bruce DeBlieck.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager Jeron Smith, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, Information Systems Coordinator Mike Sangren, Executive Secretary Abby Ahrendt, Associate Attorney with Flaherty-Hood Morgan Azbill (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. General Manager Smith provided an update on the bill payment listing. First, he highlighted a billing error identified during the transition to TylerTech in April, where two accounts were inadvertently double billed. The issue has been resolved with corrected bills issued and refunds processed. An additional payment was issued to cover interest accrued on overbilled amounts. He further acknowledged the purchase of used radios from the Willmar Fire Department, which will contribute to cost savings. Finally, Smith reported that 87% of the construction contract for the new water treatment plant has been expended. The new plant has been operating for several weeks. The old plant is permanently shut down. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Kennedy offered a resolution to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Baumgart seconded.

RESOLUTION NO. 6

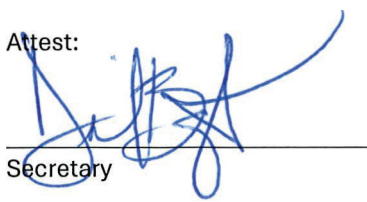
“BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the consent agenda be approved as presented which includes:

- ❖ Minutes from January 27, 2025, MUC Meeting;
- ❖ Minutes from January 27, 2025, Labor Committee Meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20250165 to No. 20250288 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$951,900.77.

Dated this 10th day of February 2025.


President

Attest:


Secretary

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of 7 ayes and 0 nays.

Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker reviewed the December 2024 Financial Reports along with a recap of December 31, 2024, Investment Portfolio. The financial information contained in the report reflects operating revenues, expenses, retained earnings, and fund comparisons for both the Electric and Water Divisions.

Associate Attorney with Flaherty-Hood Morgan Azbill 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 Azbill reviewed the information which is also available on their Utility-provided iPads. The 2025 topics highlighted for review included: 1) Commissioner Role & Duties; 2) Open Meeting Law; 3) Government Records & Data; and 4) Conflict of Interest.

In conjunction with the annual reviews, General Manager Smith offered an overview of the WMU Miscellaneous Data Listing for 2025. For their convenience and ease of access, the listed data can all be located on their Utility-provided iPads.

Both DeBliek and Smith attended the January 2025 MMUA Legislative Conference. DeBliek provided an update on the conference, noting that it lasted 2 half days in St. Paul, featured various speakers, including a political analyst from WCCO who spoke on the 2024 elections, as well as a legislative panel. DeBliek also spent time at the Capitol speaking with Dave Baker about legislative issues. He shared that the conference was overall a positive experience and that he had productive conversations with Paul Anderson, a representative from Pope County. They discussed the need for the Ortonville to Alexandria power line and identified concerns that will be addressed with MRES, a partner in the project. Smith then highlighted key items from the MMUA agenda, noting strong support for the topics discussed. While he was unable to meet with Baker and Lang at their offices Smith mentioned that Baker was present at the reception. Both Baker and Lang are well informed and expressed their support for the Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC). Overall, both DeBliek and Smith expressed their enthusiasm for a good conference.

General Manager Smith provided a reminder regarding the APPA Legislative Rally, which will take place in Washington, D.C. from February 24-26. Smith noted that DeBliek and Laumer would be joining him. Additionally, Smith reminded the commission about the upcoming Labor Committee Meeting scheduled for Monday, March 10th at 1:00 p.m. He also mentioned the APPA National Conference, which will be held in New Orleans, Louisiana from June 6th to June 11th.

Mueske suggested scheduling the commission retreat for Friday, March 21st, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. He mentioned his review of fifteen lessons from APPA’s Governance Essentials course and other miscellaneous data to identify potential topics for the retreat. After considering the options, Mueske indicated that it might be best for him to lead the session, with continued coordination alongside General Manager Smith, to finalize the details. Laumer made a motion to nominate Mueske to lead the commission retreat with the assistance of General Manager Smith. Baumgart seconded the motion which was carried by a vote of 7 ayes and zero nays. Further details and solidification of the retreat will be provided as the plans develop.

Upcoming 2025 events to note:

- APPA Legislative Rally (Washington, DC): February 24-26 (DeBliek/Laumer/Smith)
- Labor Committee Meeting Monday, March 10th, 2025, at 1:00pm
- APPA National Conference (New Orleans, LA): June 6-11

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

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES


Abby Ahrendt, Executive Secretary

ATTEST:


Dave Baumgart, Secretary