

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes – April 28, 2025

11:45 – WMU Auditorium

The Municipal Utilities Commission (MUC) held its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, April 28, 2025, at 11:45 a.m. in the WMU Auditorium. Commissioners present included Shawn Mueske, John Kennedy, Patricia Elizondo, Terrill Sieck, Carol Laumer, and Bruce DeBlieck. Commissioner Dave Baumgart was absent.

Also present were General Manager Jeron Smith, Director of Administration Janell Johnson, Finance & Office Services Supervisor Andrea Prekker, Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor Kevin Marti, Information Systems Coordinator Mike Sangren, Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator John Eggert, Executive Secretary Abby Ahrendt, City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference), and WC Tribune journalist Jennifer Kotila.


The meeting was called to order with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance. Commission President Mueske noted that Secretary Baumgart was absent and stated that an acting secretary would need to be appointed. Commissioner Siek volunteered to serve in that role for the duration of the meeting. President Mueske then asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda as presented. General Manager Smith provided clarification on the highlighted line items in the bill payment list. Following review and discussion, President Mueske called for a resolution on the consent agenda. Commissioner Laumer made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded by Commissioner Kennedy.

RESOLUTION NO. 15

“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 14, 2025 MUC Meeting Minutes; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 20250569 to No. 20250653 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$1,361,111.90.”

Dated this 28th day of April 2025.


President

Attest:


Secretary

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays.

Finance & Office Services Supervisor Prekker informed the Commission of the need to determine liability limits for the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust renewal. Staff recommended that Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) not waive the municipal tort liability limits established under Minnesota Statutes §466.04. Under the statute, an individual claimant is limited to recovering no more than \$500,000 per claim, with a total cap of \$1,500,000 for all claims arising from a single occurrence. If WMU were to waive these

limits and purchase excess liability coverage, a single claimant could recover up to the full amount of the coverage purchased. Following discussion, Commissioner Kennedy offered a resolution to retain the statutory liability limits, seconded by Commissioner Siek.


RESOLUTION NO. 16

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the Willmar Municipal Utilities does not waive the limits on municipal tort liability established by Minnesota Statutes 466.04."

Dated this 28th day of April 2025.


President

Attest:


Secretary

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays.

Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator Eggert recognized the 2025 WMU scholarship recipients. After reviewing seven applications, three students were selected to receive scholarships: Morghan Lorensen, Even Wallestad, and Braeden Fagerli, all from Willmar High School. The Commission congratulated the recipients for their hard work. Scholarships will be officially awarded at the Willmar High School awards ceremony on May 21 2025.

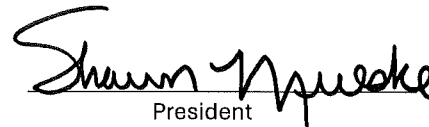
Director of Administration Johnson provided a Customer Service update, highlighting key areas including metering, service orders, financial assistance, 2024 collections, and upcoming initiatives for 2025. She commended the Customer Service team for their efforts and noted that staff are preparing for future initiatives such as prepaid metering, time-of-use billing, and the 2027 rate study.

General Manager Smith presented DGR Engineering's recommendation to award the contract for furnishing a 15 kV Outdoor Sheltered Aisle Switchgear for the Diesel Generation Project to Switchgear Power Systems, at a base bid of \$1,193,040.00, contingent upon successful negotiation of contract and payment terms.

RESOLUTION NO. 17

"BE IT RESOLVED, by the Municipal Utilities Commission of the City of Willmar, Minnesota, that the contract for furnishing a 15 kV Outdoor Sheltered Aisle Switchgear for the Diesel Generation Project be awarded to Switchgear Power Systems in the amount of \$1,193,040.00, contingent upon the successful negotiation of contract and payment terms."

Dated this 28th day of April 2025


President

Attest:


Secretary

The foregoing resolution was adopted by a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays.

Facilities and Maintenance Supervisor Marti provided an overview of the Facility Project, emphasizing the need for a new building due to ongoing issues with the existing facilities, including structural damage, water intrusion, mold, lack of fire protection, and non-compliance with accessibility standards. He reviewed the project history, noting that planning efforts began in 2010 and have included multiple facility tours and site evaluations. He also recapped several instances in which a joint facility was discussed with the City of Willmar staff and Council, highlighting each time it was determined that WMU and the City have different needs and should retain separate buildings. The goal remains to take a forward-thinking approach to meet WMU's long-term needs. WMU staff will continue to work collaboratively with City staff to secure a suitable site for the Utilities.

General Manager Smith congratulated the scholarship recipients for their hard work and dedication. He then directed a question to City Attorney Robert Scott regarding the applicability of open meeting laws to the City Council Liaison. Following discussion, it was determined that the City Council Liaison is not subject to interactive technology meeting requirements when participating remotely. Smith also reminded the Commission of the upcoming MRES Annual Meeting on May 7-8 in Sioux Falls, and the Marshall Solar Plus dedication ceremony scheduled for May 20, 2025, in Marshall, MN.

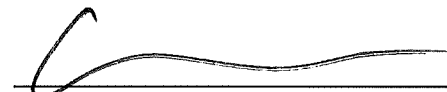
Upcoming events to note:

- ❖ MRES 60th Annual Meeting (Sioux Falls, SD) May 7-8, 2025
- ❖ MRES Solar Dedication (Marshall, MN) May 20, 2025 from 2-4 pm
- ❖ APPA National Conference (New Orleans, LA) June 6-11, 2025
- ❖ MMUA Summer Conference (Rochester, MN August 18-20, 2025

There being no further business, Commissioner Kennedy moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Laumer seconded the motion, which carried unanimously with a vote of 6 ayes and 0 nays. The meeting was adjourned at 12:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES


Abby Ahrendt, Executive Secretary

ATTEST:


Terrill Sieck, Acting Secretary