

**WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES MINUTES**  
**MUNICIPAL UTILITIES AUDITORIUM**  
**OCTOBER 9, 2017**

The Municipal Utilities Commission met in its regular meeting on Monday, October 9, 2017 at 11:45 a.m. in the Municipal Utilities Auditorium with the following Commissioners present: Carol Laumer, Justin Mattern, Abdirizak Mahboub, Dan Holtz, Nathan Weber, and Bruce DeBlieck. Absent was Commissioner Ross Magnuson.

Others present at the meeting were: General Manager John Harren, Director of Finance Denise Runge, Water & Heating Supervisor Joel Braegelman, Power Production Supervisor Jon Folkedahl, Customer Service Supervisor Stacy Stien, Compliance/HR/Safety Officer Janell Johnson, Energy Services & Marketing Rep Mary Kosbab, Administrative Secretary Beth Mattheisen, City Councilmember Shawn Mueske, and City Attorney Robert Scott (via teleconference).

Commissioner Laumer (President) opened the meeting by recognizing Commissioner Mahboub as a recipient of the 2017 Virginia McKnight Binger Unsung Hero Award. The award honors four Minnesotans (two from the Twin Cities and two from Greater Minnesota) who have demonstrated an exceptional personal commitment to helping others in their community. This award is presented by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the McKnight Foundation. On behalf of the Commission, the Utility staff, and the entire community, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation for your service and dedication to the City of Willmar and its citizens. Congratulations, Commissioner Mahboub!

Commissioner Laumer continued by requesting the Commission to offer a resolution to approve the Consent Agenda. Following review and discussion, Commissioner Holtz offered a resolution to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Mahboub seconded.

**RESOLUTION NO. 37**

“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 September 25, 2017 Commission meeting; and,
- ❖ Bills represented by vouchers No. 171677 to No. 171772 and associated wire transfers inclusive in the amount of \$521,381.20.

Dated this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2017.

\_\_\_\_\_  
President

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

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

In conjunction with the payment of bills, Commissioner Laumer requested input regarding the monthly consultant fee (\$2,500) paid to David Turch & Associates of Washington, DC. This government relations firm assists with providing strategic planning while acting as an intergovernmental liaison concerning political matters which may affect the Utility. At one time, the Utility and City of Willmar shared the financial expense for these consulting services, but the City no longer has a contract with DTA. The Commission was asked to consider if this service continues to be warranted and/or beneficial for the Utility. Future discussion will be held.

Compliance/HR/Safety Officer Johnson presented the Commission with the MUC Safety Training Update for June-September 2017. Johnson presented an overview of the MMUA monthly safety training which included: 1) June: Catastrophic Event Table Top Exercise; 2) July: MMUA Safety Manual distribution & review; 3) August: Mock OSHA Building Inspection; and, 4) September: Slips, Trips & Falls, Elevated Surfaces and Housekeeping. In addition to the training sessions, additional items to note included annual flu shots which were offered to employees (in-house) on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>, and air quality testing which was conducted at the Power Plant in June. Safety statistics were presented which included 311 days of no lost time injuries to date. Johnson informed the Commission that beginning in October, the safety training program will be provided by Ridgewater College. Johnson further expressed her appreciation to the Commission and management personnel for recognizing the importance of safety by providing a strong safety program for the Utility and its employees.

Energy Services/Marketing Rep Kosbab presented a recap of the recent Customer Appreciation Open House held on October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Willmar Civic Center. The annual event is held in conjunction with APPA's Public Power Week. Once again, the Open House was a huge success with approximately 1,300 customers attending. On behalf of the Commission, Commissioner Laumer expressed her appreciation to Staff and fellow Commissioners for their time and effort involved in hosting the event. To commemorate the event, a drawing for eight \$50 Utility bill credits was held. The recipients of the \$50 credits were: 1) Wilamine DeGrote; 2) Bruce Mootz; 3) Sue Berg; 4) Linda Wittnem; 5) Phyllis Carlson; 6) Greg Kotzenmacher; 7) Seth Johns; and, 8) Les Sanders. Congratulations to all!

General Manager Harren informed the Commission that a request had been received to feature the Willmar Municipal Utilities in an upcoming issue of *Business in Focus*. While this would be a marketing opportunity, the publishing company required a vendor listing from WMU for advertising purposes. Following discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission to support the article if the vendor listing is not required. General Manager Harren will contact the publishing company to further explore this issue. (If publishing of the article is contingent on providing the vendor listing, WMU will decline the offer.)

General Manager Harren stated that two dates have been secured to begin the labor negotiating process between WMU and IBEW Local Union #160. The first session will be held on Tuesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, with the second session (if needed) scheduled for Tuesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. Both sessions will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will be held at the Willmar Conference Center (Executive Boardroom). Due to the absence of Commissioner Laumer (Labor Committee Chair), Commissioner Mattern (Vice Chair) will conduct the sessions. Commissioner Laumer continued by expressing her appreciation to Commissioner Holtz for participating in the upcoming negotiating sessions.

General Manager Harren reminded the Commissioners of two Committee meetings that have been scheduled. First, a meeting of the WMU Labor Committee will be held on Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. to discuss upcoming labor negotiations. Secondly, a meeting of the WMU Planning Committee will be held on Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon. Items of discussion will include: 1)

rates/Intergovernmental Transfer; 2) property adjacent to WMU facilities area; 3) firm gas pricing contract; and, 4) Priam Substation Wetland Mitigation update.

General Manager Harren reminded the Commission that a joint-meeting of the Commission, City Council, Mayor Calvin, and management personnel has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 31<sup>st</sup> beginning at 12:00 p.m. at the Kandiyohi Co. Health & Human Services Building, Room #0030 (Multi-Purpose Room). Topics of discussion will include: 1) Intergovernmental Transfer; 2) rate adjustments; and, 3) capital improvements and the costs associated with them.

For information: Upcoming meetings/events to note include:

- WMU Labor Committee Mtg. - October 13<sup>th</sup> @ 12:00 p.m. (WMU Conference Room)
- WMU Planning Committee Mtg. - Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup> @ 12:00 p.m. (WMU Conference Room)
- Labor Negotiations (1<sup>st</sup>) – Tues., Oct. 24<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 a.m. (Willmar Conference Center)
- Joint MUC/City Council Mtg. – Tues., Oct. 31<sup>st</sup> @ 12:00 p.m. (Kandiyohi Co. Health & Human Services Bldg., Room #0030 (Multi-Purpose Room)
- Labor Negotiations (2<sup>nd</sup>) – Tues., Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 a.m. (Willmar Conference Center)

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Laumer declared the meeting adjourned at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

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Beth Mattheisen  
Administrative Secretary

ATTEST:

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Abdirizak Mahboub, Secretary