

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RICHLAND CENTER
MUNICIPAL UTILITY COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 11, 2023 4p.m., 450 S. Main Street
This Meeting was held in person and via WebEx Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Members present: Sawle, Nice, Schaub, Heiar, Collins, Melby (4:15p.m.) and Downs (4:15p.m.)

Members absent: None

Other present: Krueger, Fischer, Gald, Mueller and Andy Zimmer (MSA)

President Sawle called the meeting to order at 4p.m. The meeting had been properly posted.

For the election of officers, a motion made by Nice, second by Collins to keep the officers as follows: Sawle is President, Schaub is Vice President, Heiar is Secretary, and Nice is Vice Secretary. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Heiar, second by Sawle to approve the minutes of the last meeting as printed. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

Treasurer's report was received and filed.

Motion by Schaub, second by Heiar to approve the Electric Bills for October totaling \$937,730.27. Also acknowledges the balance for September, thus totaling \$1,278,162.30. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Nice, second by Schaub to approve the Water Bills for October totaling \$76,967.93. Also acknowledges the balance for September, thus totaling \$150,637.15. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Schaub, second by Collins to approve the Sewer Bills for October totaling \$145,903.64. Also acknowledges the balance for September, thus totaling \$273,201.17. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Gald reported that for safety Steve Elhers came out and they had confined space training. He also did a filed evaluation on his new lineman.

President Sawle explained that one of the council reps is a bus driver and is not able to make it to the commission meeting at 4p.m. The issue with moving the time later is all the department heads would have to stay even later and if it would be earlier then some of the engineers and members that work would not be able to attend. A motion by Nice, second by Schaub to keep the meeting time the same. All vote aye on roll call, motion carried.

Wastewater Superintendent Fischer explained that the last step of the fixed rate charges table was never implemented in 2018. He feels that if the last step would be implanted now it would generate more revenue for the wastewater. This was already approved in 2014. This last step will only affect customers with 1" meters and commercial customers. A motion made by Collins, second by Schaub to approve implementing the last step of the fixed charges rate table. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Vanessa explained that with the old accounting software, it was pretty simple to split up payroll with different wages. However, with the new software it is not as easy. She would like the commission to implement employee raises after the last payroll of each year. Motion by Melby, second by Downs to implement employee raises after the last payroll of each year. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Andy Zimmer from MSA explained the benefits of having a Contractor Prequalification Questionnaire for Phase 3 of the 7th, 8th, and Cedar Streets project. A motion made by Collins, second by Sawle to approve the Prequalification Questionnaire for Phase 3 of the 7th, 8th, and Cedar Streets Improvement Projects. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

With that motion Andy explained that the commission needed to appoint a Qualification Statement Review Committee. Schaub made a motion for the Finance & Personnel Committee and the Public Works committee be the Review Committee. It was second by Sawle, all voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

The next step is to set a date for a closed session to review the Qualification Statements. The date set is Thursday November, 9, 2023.

The commission reviewed the list of tentative Contractor invitees. Steve and Todd agreed that they didn't feel that Ewers Excavating would not be able to handle a job this size and with their history did not want them to be invited to prequalify to bid.

Electric Superintendent Gald explained more about the recent outage. Vanessa did a great job representing the utility with the PSC rate case. For Public Power Week Scott was on the radio last Tuesday and Wednesday was our cookout. He feels that the cookout went very well. There have been 2 cameras installed. Randy Larson was in town Wednesday and they did some training. Gald is taking Scott and John next Wednesday to the MEUW Day at the Capital. Rowin will be in Eau Claire for school next week. Scott has been working on his budget for 2024.

Water Superintendent Krueger reported that for the street projects, GPro just has a short punch list to work on. The water crew replaced 5 more lead services since last meeting. The total is 15 for the year. There are 28 unknowns that they will have to jet vac. On September 19th there was a conference call with the DNR that MSA was in on regarding the corrosion control study. They are recommending testing 40 sites. Round 2 of PFAS sampling will be next week. The open house last week went well. There was a meeting for the HWY 14 east project for Bohman Dr to Cty O in 2026. There has not been any real news on the hospital. Terry completed his groundwater and distribution classes and took his test. The large meter testing company is in town until Friday. Travis is on vacation next week. On September 21st to the 23rd Foremost came onto our system. They have a new maintenance crew and didn't realize they were supposed to call and let us know. Steve has been working on his budget for 2024. The seasonal meters have been pulled and starting to work on winterizing hydrants. The DNR came and did his every 3 years survey. There were zero deficiencies, 2 recommendations, and 2 non-conforming issues. Marty Richards has mention that the new reservoir would be a good place to do some advertising for the city. Steve just thought he would mention that to the commission.

Wastewater Superintendent Fischer reported that along with the Hwy 14 project, there has been paperwork for Hwy 80 as well. Todd said his update will be all about Schreibers so if any of the commissioners had any other question they should ask now. Heiar did ask all three department heads with winter coming and the city being short staffed if they have been asked to help. The water department has helped in the past because the street department helps with concrete work for lead replacements. Steve said that they should be about square now and he tells his staff that they do not have to help, it is up to them. Heiar just doesn't want our guys to get wore out helping out the city and not be able to perform in case of an emergency. After the special meeting that was held regarding the Schreibers situation, the valve has been turned and they have been flowing to us from the east plant since September 22nd. So far there has been no ill affect at the plant. As of the last week of September, phosphorous went down. Schreibers East will be billed at least \$1,661.80 per day. However they are requesting to see 20% reduction in volume going to RCRE. That would be a million gallons a day. We are taking on average 25,000 a day. The plant manager and head of maintenance would like us to also take 100,000 gallons from Schreibers west too. We told them that we have to have a standby agreement in place. Todd talked with the lawyer and they are working on a new agreement. Things have not improved at RCRE, their digester is failing.

Office Manager Mueller said she had nothing new to report.

There was nothing for correspondence.

There were no public comments.

Commissioner Collins asked if the USDA fund could also be moved to another bank to earn more interest. Vanessa said she would look into it. Heiar just wanted to let everyone know he will be gone for the next 5 months but will join the meetings on the phone. Downs arrived late so he asked about moving the meeting time. Sawle informed him that the time will remain the same.

Motion made by Heiar, second by Schaub to move into close session pursuant to Wis. Stat. sec 19.85 (1)(c) to consider employment, promotion, compensation of performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. The purpose of closed session is to discuss and possibly approve wages for the Utility Employees for 2024. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Closed session

Motion by Heiar, second by Melby to reconvene to open session to vote on matters discussed in closed session. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Sawle, second by Schaub to give all Utility Employees a 6% raise for 2024. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

A motion by Melby, second by Sawle to adjourn. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried without dissent at 5:55 P.M. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Vanessa Mueller