

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RICHLAND CENTER
MUNICIPAL UTILITY COMMISSION
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 4p.m., 450 S. Main Street
This Meeting was held in person and via WebEx Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Members present: Heiar (via WebEx), Collins, Nice, Sawle, Schaub (4:12), and Downs (4:32)

Members absent: Melby

Others present: Fischer, Gald, Mueller, and Krueger

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

Motion by Nice, second by Collins 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 Sawle, second by Nice to approve the Electric bills for February totaling \$681,548.67. Also acknowledges the balance for January, thus totaling \$786,464.29. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Heiar, second by Collins to approve the Water bills for February totaling \$103,627.79. Also acknowledges the balance for January, thus totaling \$104,283.54. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Nice, second by Sawle to approve the Sewer bills for February totaling \$181,266.78. Also acknowledges the balance for January, thus totaling \$221,610.41. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

For safety Gald reported that while they were trimming trees, JJ had a limb break off and hit him under the hard hat. He was standing 20 feet away and it still knocked him out for 10 seconds. They took him up to the ER and they did a CT scan, everything was clear and he went home for the rest of the day. Scott contacted Steve Eller, who came out right away to make sure everything was documented correctly.

In the past we matched WPPI for a \$2,000.00 scholarship at the campus. Since the campus closed we didn't offer a scholarship. This year WPPI has the funds available of \$1,000.00 to grant a scholarship to a qualifying applicant. The question is, do we want to match their fund? A motion by Schaub, second by Sawle to match WPPI with a \$1,000.00 to offer a \$2,000.00 scholarship to a qualifying applicant or applicants. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Electric Superintendent Gald explained that the electric department has a 2017 truck that has a steel box with 35,000 miles is starting to have rust. The plan is to replace 6 to 7 years. The lowest bid is from Jones Chevrolet for \$31,435.50 after trade. There was a budgeted amount of 35,000.00. The other two manufactures do not have the discounts right now that Chevy has. Collins made a motion to accept the bid from Jones Chevrolet for \$31,435.50 after trade in, second by Schaub. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Vanessa explained that with opening the new checking account, it is time to close out the old one. There was still over \$200,000.00 in it from interest since 1904. She would like to know if the Electric should keep earning the interest or if it should have the normal split of 50% to EL, 25% to WA, 25% to SE. Collins made the motion to keep the normal split of 50% EL, 25% WA, and 25% SE. Second by Nice, all voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

After recent discussions with the Utility Attorney, Sawle feels that there needs to be a better record for timekeeping. The superintendents are not for time clocks because that takes away the flexibility in the field. All facilities have operating cameras so there is visual record for timekeeping. Our new system does have the ability to offer time keeping, but it is more of a headache then beneficial. Commissioner Heiar asked if they could table this topic until he returns in April. Sawle agreed the topic would be back on the agenda for the April meeting.

Electric Superintendent Gald informed the commission that the Electric Utility was awarded the platinum level for RP3. The score was 92 out of 100. WPPI had a list of Smart Energy Providers and we are on the list of 27. Last Tuesday the council approved the go ahead for Panorama. It will add 90 electric meters; that will be the biggest growth for the electric utility. Randy Larson was in town last Wednesday and 19 people attended his safety training. MEUW called and asked if Scott had a crew that could go to Evansville to help after the tornado. Darren and Scott went. On Feb 21st we will be hosting a Distribution Energy Sources Workshop for Solar. At the shop they have been working on getting the inventory organized. They still have about 5 or 6 trees to help the Parks department cut, and then they will continue working on their annual tree trimming.

Water Superintendent Krueger reported that the well house maintenance is complete as well as equipment maintenance. Auditor's fieldwork was done in January and now they are working on PSC reports. There was a lead service lateral on Cedar Street that was running for 3 days before anyone called. The water crew worked on that Saturday and replaced the lead service. There was a main break on Cairns Ave. A clamp from a repair in 2017 failed. There was a plumber crew from Westby working at the old Center Café building in the Square. They called us to shut off the water but the pipe broke and Travis needed to clamp the broken pipe. There have been a few more valve boxes hit by the new street department plowing this winter. Terry is taking his ground water exam and has been studying his CDL manual. Town and Country hit a fire hydrant down at TC Autoworks. We will be sending them a bill for that. His staff has been working on meter changes and Steve has been working on mapping for the DNR. The temp for the ground at 1ft deep is 35 degrees and the 15 year average is 24 degrees.

Wastewater Superintendent Fischer reported that he and Vanessa had a zoom meeting with Town and Country for the rate case study. The last one was ten years ago. It should take 3 to 4 months and once the commission decides how to act, it will take effect immediately. There is a new industrial hauler that wants to dump at our plant. They have egg specialist waste. Todd did receive more data and wants them to dump at the old plant. The employee that has the information for the annual reports is retired. Todd had to notify the DNR that the reports will be filed late. While Todd was checking camera footage he saw a gray Ford dually emptying at the RV dump station. Todd contacted Billy and he was able to find the owner of the truck.

Office Manager Mueller reported that the auditors were here last month. While they were here, they discovered a billing error that started about 5 months ago. WPPI had us start to read a meter that they normally do and with that it affected the number of kilowatt hours for our PCAC. That made us report a wrong PCAC for the last 5 months. We were under billing for the power cost adjustment, which is the cost of purchased power that is passed onto the customer. It resulted in the electric under billing of about \$400,000.00. WPPI assisted in contacting the PSC so we can recuperate that money. The PSC approved it and we just received the letter yesterday. We are going to recoup the funds over 5 months. It will result in a \$5.00 adjustment in the power cost adjustment for the average residential customer. We will have to send out letters to all electric customers to notify them of the error. The power cost adjustment has been more negative than normal. Vanessa will send the letter that will be sent to customer to the commissioners. Vanessa will be on vacation on the date for the next meeting. She was wondering if the meeting could be moved to March 14th at 4pm. The commissioners thought that would be good.

For correspondence there was a thank you from Symons for the donation.

The mayor stopped in to the meeting quick just to see how the meeting was going. He gave an update about potential growth coming to the city.

For commissioner comments Collins noted that he would like to look at the security cameras more. He said he does walk around the shop on Robb Rd. He also feels that the well by Fillback's should be fenced in. Sawle commented on making handbook changes in April. He would like the superintendents to have any changes they would like to make or discussed then. Also maybe hold the commission meetings at the facilities. Sawle also mentioned that the employees should come to him with any concerns in the future. He is very proud with how the recent situation was handled.

A motion made by Collins, second by to Downs 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 of exercises responsibility. The purpose of closed session is to discuss and possibly approve WWTP Lead man pay. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

Closed session

A motion by Schaub, second by Nice to reconvene into open session to vote on matters discussed in closed session. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

A motion by Schaub, second by Downs to approve the \$1.00/per hour more for the WWTP Lead Man then the advance wastewater operator wage. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

A motion by Collins, second by Nice to adjourn. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried without dissent at 6:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes Submitted by:

Vanessa Mueller