

January 21, 2015

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on January 21, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. at the Civic Center.

Jerry Frey called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

Members Present: Bob Mullen, Jerry Frey, Gerry Warner, Pat Becker, and Dan Casey

A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the agenda, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the minutes of the December 2, 2014 meeting, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

A motion was made by Pat Becker to approve the updated November bills, disbursements, and the December bills, and disbursements, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

Public Comment – None

WWTP Retirement Announcement – Mike Darrow announced that Dennis Holtz, Wastewater Treatment Plant Superintendent would be retiring on April 3, 2015. Mike spoke highly of Dennis, his accomplishments and the asset he has been to the city. Dennis is wished the best in retirement.

Approval of 2015 Budget, Wages and Salaries – Mike Darrow and Nancy Petersen presented an overview of the 2015 budgets. Mike Darrow stressed that New Richmond Utilities is committed to the safety of employees and customers. The budget reflects where safety measures will be updated. Budgets include a 3% wage increase for all New Richmond Utility employees. Short and long term staffing needs will be analyzed by Mike Darrow, Jeremiah Wendt, Nancy Petersen, and Kari Kraft and presented to the commission at an upcoming meeting. An ICMA Fellowship position was included in the 2015 budget. Nancy Petersen presented the detail of the 2015 Utility Budgets and the Electric, Water, and Sewer Departments 5 year capital budget plan. A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the 2015 Budget, Wages and Salaries, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

CIP Presentation – Mike Darrow presented a number of capital improvements. The first one being the Airport Expansion. This would involve extending water and sewer to the airport. Cost projected at 2.5 million dollars. This is not feasible for just one business. Need to look into possibility of this area becoming an aviation technical park and whether it would be sustainable. Working with Sean Lentz from Ehlers & Associates and others on feasibility and necessary funding. Three other major projects include North 4th Street, Paperjack, and North Starr Ave. Discussion followed on repair and reconstruction needs. Favorable projections were given by Sean Lentz for the Electric, Water and Sewer Departments assuming additional debt. Funding the projects would come from grants, assessments, and loans. Motion was made by Bob Mullen to request design costs from SEH and Cedar Corp for the North 4th Street, Paperjack, and North Starr Ave projects, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Cross Connection Ordinance/Plan – DNR is requiring changes to the City Ordinance 441 which pertains to the Comprehensive Cross Control Program. Marty Powers gave an overview of cross connection inspections and compliance. Policy needs to be in place stating consequences for non-compliance by residential and commercial customers. Jeremiah Wendt also presented changes to the private well regulation ordinance and the permit application. These documents are with the City's attorney for review. Recommended that the ordinances be approved at the next meeting.

WWTP Structural Engineering Approval – For safety reasons, Jeremiah Wendt presented the need for some structural work at the main lift station, including aluminum grating. They would like a Structural Engineer to give a rough design for the replacement of existing double-doors in the digester building with an overhead door in order to use the space more efficiently. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve entering into a contract with SEH, not to exceed \$4,000.00, to cover design costs for the structural components, aluminum grating, and overhead door, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Scott Newby Land Update – Scott Newby is questioning the placement of three fire hydrants on his property. Jeremiah Wendt met with the surveyor Jim Rusch and with SEH. Results are still pending.

Department Reports:

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent, gave the following report:

The new welder has been mounted on a trailer. Meter and cross connection inspections continue. DNR reports are due to go out by the end of March. A transducer was installed in Well #6. Water department continues to monitor frost levels which are currently at 4 feet.

Dennis Holtz, Wastewater Treatment Superintendent, gave the following report:

Annual Wisconsin Emergency Management forms for the Street Department and Wastewater Plant were filled out and sent in. The annual Biosolids report is done and sent in. Hearing tests for the Fire Department and city staff will be January 26th and 27th. They had a quarterly safety meeting and will be working on a yearly safety calendar. They are also splitting samples with Commercial Testing labs to try and get the new Hach meter certified.

Mike Darrow gave the following report for Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent:

Tom Rickard is currently on vacation. Three fourths of all city lights will be converted to LED lights by the end of the year. Any outages are to continue to be reported to Mike Darrow to handle communication with customers. They are looking into plans to beautify sub-station fencing with inexpensive vines.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works, gave the following report:

Dennis Holtz organized the class on the CMOM program which deals with maintaining sewers. This program needs to be in place by 2016. Jeremiah presented the Executive Summary of the STH 64 Corridor Communities stormwater/wastewater coalition Phase I report, to look at funds we have and what we want to accomplish. An update was given on the Telecom projects. Verizon needs to come back and replace black cable with white cable. This needs to be completed by the end of March. Jeremiah is working on finalizing the lease with T-Mobile. There will be a rent increase once upgrades are completed and the lease finalized. AT&T is no longer pursuing telecom negotiations for Tower 1 and have requested the remainder of their escrow be returned. Water tower RFP went out to SEH and MSA for reconditioning on the South Tower. Requesting design costs and a schedule for completion.

Nancy Petersen, Finance Director, gave the following report:

Preliminary Audit Work – the auditors were here on January 8 doing preliminary audit field work. The auditors are scheduled to be here starting March 23 for about a week so we are very busy preparing all the paperwork necessary for the audit of the 2014 financials, Public Service Commission reports, and state reports.

Iron Meter Conversion Project – Billing staff have been busy keeping up with the necessary paperwork and billing system work related to setting ITRON electric and water meters.

Finance Team Assessment – With the departure of our Accounting and Office Assistant, we are taking some time to evaluate the needs of our department and will be reporting back at a future date regarding this.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep, gave the following updates:

Wes provided a memo with Mike Peter's Guest column discussing WPPI Energy's 2014 year in review. Wes gave an update on the community solar garden project. He is working on a mailing for all customers that include usage history, with space for helpful tips, and program information. Wes is working on finalizing 2014 Focus on Energy numbers. 2015 efforts will focus on multi-family and targeted home performance.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager, gave the following updates:

The city is in the process of updating the employee handbook. The first all staff meeting will be held on Feb 13 located at WITC. The meeting will host a key note speaker and will be packed with information. Mike proposed that the February Utility Commission meeting be held on January 28th at 7:30 a.m.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Pat Becker to adjourn, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Jerry Frey, President

Bob Mullen, Secretary