

November 4, 2015

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on November 4, 2015 at 7:30 a.m. at the Civic Center.

Jerry Frey called the meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

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

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

A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2015 meeting, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve bills, and disbursements, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

Public Comment – None

2016 Draft Budget Review and Discussion – Nancy Petersen presented the first draft of the 2016 Electric, Water, and Sewer Budgets. Some changes are anticipated. We would like to have the 2016 Electric, Water, and Sewer Budgets as well as Capital Budget Plans approved at the December 2, 2015 Utility Commission meeting. Going paperless at the Utility Commission meetings was again discussed, and the consensus was to convert to iPads in 2016 for those Utility Commissioners interested in this option. This expense was included in the first budget draft.

Election of Officers – The annual election of officers occurred. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to elect Pat Becker for President, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried. A motion was made by Jerry Frey to elect Gerry Warner for Secretary, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

Department Reports:

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent:

The flushing of fire hydrants and jetting continues. Numerous inspections have been taking place. The Water Department is involved with issues at Short Dance Studio. Marty Powers continues to be involved with street projects. Pat Howell was completing an exam for distribution of ground water. Water disconnections have begun in November, taking the place of electric disconnections.

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator:

Steve Skinner was absent. Jeremiah Wendt gave the following report in his absence. Steve Skinner and David Pufall were taking Lab Certification tests. A new radio was ordered for the main lift station, and will be installed as soon as it is delivered. The annual tank cleaning was completed. This process included draining the tanks, cleaning, and visually inspecting all equipment. An electrician was brought in to repair the electrical issue with one of the clarifiers. Steve is currently working on the 2016 Budgets. Asphalt patching will be done on the access road to the WWTP. The annual Biosolids meeting will be held on November 17, 2015.

Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent:

The extension to Culvers, as well as the Madison Avenue Lighting Project, have been completed. The Electric Department is currently working to complete electric service to Goodwill. The service to Dance Studio has been changed to come from Arch Avenue. Tom Rickard made courtesy calls to new construction contractors asking if foundations could be marked. By doing this, power could be run to the building before the ground freezes, resulting in less expense for the contractors. Kevin Blader will be off in December due to surgery.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works:

Jeremiah gave a brief update on the street and utility projects. Other than some restoration work to be completed in the spring, High Street, 115th Street, and 175th Street should be completed early next week. Grant Way is scheduled to be paved late this week. We are finishing up the storm sewer on Roosevelt Drive. Roosevelt Drive will be brought up to grade before winter. The application submitted for the Safe Water Drinking Loan for the Water Tower Project, resulted in New Richmond Utilities receiving \$70,000.00 in grant funding. Last week we filled out the Intent to Apply forms for the 2016 projects. We can apply for the Safe Drinking Water Fund for water main replacement, and the Clean Water Fund for sewer replacement. This puts us on a list for next year. We are not committed to using these loan programs. However, it does enable us to see how we rank, which will help us determine if the program is beneficial for us.

Nancy Petersen, Finance Director:

Collecting Unpaid Utility Bills – Towns of Richmond and Star Prairie – Both the Towns of Star Prairie and Richmond approved the Resolutions Authorizing the Town of Richmond and Star Prairie to Impose a Special Charge under Wis. Stats. §66.0809. An Agreement for Assessment between the Towns and the City was also signed. We can now utilize the same tax roll process as we do in the City limits of New Richmond for those utility bills past due as of September 30 in those Towns.

Lien Processing (Tax Roll) – 2015 – On October 15, 2015 we mailed:

OCT 15-LETTERS MAILED PAST DUE AS OF 9/30							
	LANDLORDS			OWNERS			
	Amt Owed	Ltrs		Amt Owed	Ltrs	TOTALS	
						Amt Owed	
						Ltrs	
10/15/2015	\$ 19,249.15	109	*	\$ 14,857.23	85	\$ 34,106.38	194
10/15/2014	\$ 25,097.63	96		\$ 12,692.57	93	\$ 37,790.20	189
10/15/2013	\$ 40,053.99	194		\$ 17,170.61	108	\$ 57,224.60	302
10/15/2012	\$ 47,738.83	251		\$ 24,582.62	136	\$ 72,321.45	387
* Mailed to Landlords AND Tenants - Act 274							

On November 2, 2015 accounts that have remained unpaid were assessed the 10% penalty and the balances owed are now:

NOV 2 -UNPAID WITH 10% PENALTY ADDED							
	LANDLORDS			OWNERS			
	Amt Owed	Ltrs		Amt Owed	Ltrs	TOTALS	
						Amt Owed	
						Ltrs	
11/2/2015	\$ 9,808.77	33	*	\$ 3,997.70	19	\$ 13,806.47	52
11/2/2014	\$ 5,711.88	22		\$ 1,070.94	5	\$ 6,782.82	27
11/2/2013	\$ 11,493.19	33		\$ 2,320.92	12	\$ 13,814.11	45
11/2/2012	\$ 14,289.01	48		\$ 1,850.59	5	\$ 16,139.60	53
* Mailed to Landlords AND Tenants - Act 274							

These customers now have until November 15 to pay before they are sent to the tax roll by the City Clerk.

2015 Northstar User Conference – Debbie Powers attended the 2015 Annual Northstar User Conference on October 21-23rd in Atlanta, GA. This is a full scholarship to attend the conference paid by WPPI. Once caught up from being gone, we will meet and see what she’s learned!

Baker Tilly Utility University – Nancy attended Baker Tilly’s Utility University on October 20. While numerous topics were presented on, the most noteworthy to us are the changes to the electric and water PSC reports that need to be incorporated into our 2015 reports and GASB 68. This requires employers to recognize their proportionate share of the collective net pension liability on the face of the financial statements. We will be able to complete this calculation internally without the need to hire an actuary.

Community Solar Garden – The groundbreaking for our Community Solar Garden was held on Monday, October 12 at 4 p.m. at the site. We had about 50 to 75 people in attendance. Thanks to Bob Mullen for attending and for buying a panel!! To date we have sold 5 panels. During the Community Trick or Treat Day (October 30) our mascot Sunny handed out about 334 Sun-Maid Raisins with flyer invitations to the two information sessions we are holding on November 5, one from 8-9 a.m. and the other from 5-7 p.m. It is planned that Mike and Wes will be personally visiting businesses in town, starting with the larger businesses and working their way down in hopes of selling panels to them.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep:

Shared Savings Loan – Domain, Inc.

Domain, Inc chose to request \$25,000 from the WPPI Energy Shared Savings loan program for their compressed air and lighting energy efficiency improvements. This level of funding does not require a full financial review. Based on Domain’s utility payment history, staff will proceed with entering the shared savings agreement at the level of \$25,000.

Community Solar Update

Community Solar outreach has included letters and emails to Renewable Energy Program participants, customers who have signed up for the interest list, ads in the New Richmond News, and postcards to commercial and industrial customers. The next step is to meet with area businesses, as well as reaching out to churches and non-profits. A camera has been installed to create a time lapse video of the construction. Work will begin the week of November 9 and is expected to be completed around the first week of December.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager:

Mike met with WPPI representatives when they were present for the Solar Garden project. Discussion took place on the advantages of extending our contract with WPPI. We have until March of 2016 to make a decision. This will be discussed again at the next Utility Commission meeting in December.

Communications and miscellaneous correspondence – None

Closed session per State Statute 19.81 (1)(c)(f)

A motion was made to go into closed session by Pat Becker, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried.

Open session – Action on Closed Session Agenda - None

There being no further business, a motion was made by Pat Becker to adjourn, seconded by Dan Casey, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:13 a.m.

Jerry Frey, President

Bob Mullen, Secretary