

March 4, 2015

The regular meeting of the New Richmond Utility Commission was held on March 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, Gerry Warner, and Pat Becker.

Members Absent: Dan Casey

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

A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2015 meeting, and approve bills and disbursements, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

Public Comment – None

Capital Improvement Plan Update – Reviewed some of the capital projects presented at the previous Utility Commission Meeting. Most of the projects will involve funding from New Richmond Utilities and the City. Four options for funding the capital projects were presented to the City Council. Option three being the best option from a staffing perspective. It is a Design/Build, two year, 4.3 million dollar capital improvement project. Looking at 2015 as the year of design, with completion of the larger projects in 2016. Staff continues to work on the funding of these projects, with the goal being to reduce the amount of borrowing.

South Water Tower Reconditioning Update – Jeremiah met with SEH for a preliminary design update. Final version of plans and specs are expected by March 19, 2015 for submittal to DNR. Bidding expected to be completed in early April with a July 1st completion deadline. Discussion took place concerning the logo. New Richmond Schools expressed interested in funding a logo to represent the school. A motion was made by Bob Mullen to approve the advertising for bids for the South Water Tower Reconditioning, with the logo design as a line item, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

Ordinance No. 473: Cross Connection Control & Backflow Prevention Ordinance: – Attorney has reviewed the ordinance. A few minor changes were made. Motion made by Gerry Warner to approve Ordinance No. 473 as presented, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

Cross Connection Control Plan: - DNR is requesting an official Cross Connection Control Plan be in place stating procedures and policies for implementing and enforcing Ordinance No. 473. Motion was made by Bob Mullen to officially adopt the Cross Connection Control Plan, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

Ordinance No. 474: Well Abandonment & Well Operation Permit Ordinance: - DNR is requiring a means of permitting and tracking private wells within our service area to prevent contamination of our wells. Property owners would be required to obtain a permit every five years if they have a private well. There would be a \$25.00 application fee to cover administrative costs. All private wells would need to be inspected at the expense of the property owner. A motion was made by Pat Becker to adopt Ordinance No. 474, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Well Operation Permit Form: - A motion was made by Pat Becker to adopt the Well Operation Permit Form to track private wells, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

T-Mobile Lease Amendment: - The lease amendment reflects T-Mobile is back to the original project, and the rent increase. A motion was made by Gerry Warner to approve the T-Mobile lease agreement, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried.

Scott Newby Land Update: - Based on a completed survey, the hydrants were not placed in the right away. Moving the hydrants is not a good option. Mike recommended contacting Scott Newby to have him put in

writing what he is asking for. This will be brought back at the next Utility Commission meeting under closed session to discuss negotiations.

New Hire Introduction: - There were really good candidates for the Wastewater Treatment Plant positions. Steve Skinner was promoted to Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator. The new waste water operator will start on March 23, 2015. His name was withheld per his request, allowing him time to notify his current employer.

Department Reports:

Bob Meyer, Water Superintendent, gave the following report: - Bob was involved with the interview process for the Waste Water Treatment Plant positions, and stated it went well. Tower projects are ongoing. Greg attended an emergency awareness meeting. Working on completing the PSC reports. Meter conversions and cross connection inspections continue. Flushing was completed at Power Sports, and safe sample results are back. There was a freeze up at Noble's Lift Station. The Water Department was able to get it up and running without any damage. Bob reported that our DNR representative has moved on, and that there is currently no true DNR representative for our area.

Steve Skinner, Lead Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator, gave the following report: - Last day of work for Dennis Holtz was February 20, 2015. Operations continue to run smoothly. Water Department continues to help as needed. Steve is working on finishing up the monthly report, and once completed will submit to state.

Tom Rickard, Electric Superintendent, gave the following report: - Tree trimming should be completed within two days. Street light conversion to LED lights will continue through the year. The Sensus meter conversions have all been completed. The Itron meter conversion continues. The electric department is currently shorthanded with employee, Dean Anderson leaving, but hopes to make it through the year without filling the position. The electric department will be hosting a combined safety meeting with River Falls. The outfitting of the electric employees with the new OSHA fire retardant clothing is in process.

Jeremiah Wendt, Director of Public Works, gave the following report: - Jeremiah has been working on staffing. Work on the water tower, and telecom projects continue to move forward. Jeremiah attended a Government Affairs Seminar in Madison. Received updates from DNR, EPA, and some federal funding information.

Nancy Petersen, Finance Director, gave the following report:

Preliminary Audit Work – We have been busy getting ready for the arrival of our auditors the week of March 23 as well as preparing information for the Public Service Commission reports.

Finance Team Assessment – With the approval at the last Utility Commission meeting to hire a Utilities Office staff position, we have been working on a draft of the job description and a title, which at this time we are proposing it to be Utility Accounting and Customer Service Representative. We hope to get the job description finalized and posted within the next couple weeks.

Applegate Running Water Issue – Mid February we became aware of tenants of Applegate who were instructed by them to run water. There are only two properties that we notified Applegate to instruct to run water. Nick Vivian, City Attorney, reviewed a draft of a letter which we finalized and then mailed certified to Casey Rubrecht at Applegate as well as to the owner of Applegate, T J Wilson. The letter recommends that given their error that they reimburse its tenants for the extra water and sewer usage charges on their bills. We have been instructing customers calling regarding this to contact Applegate.

Grace Place Shared Savings Loan Program – The Shared Savings Funding Agreement and Promissory Note have been signed and the funds in the amount of \$8,000 have been received from WPPI and remitted to The Salvation Army Grace Place for an efficient lighting retrofit project. Their first payment was included on their February 28 statement due March 15. The term of the loan is 60 months.

MEUW Collections Conference – Diane and Jill attended MEUW's Collections Seminar on February 25. The agenda included:

- **2013 Wisconsin Act 274 – Implementing Provisions in 2015.** The seminar provided an overview of the new law, provisions currently in effect and an update on the new tax roll and lien reporting

procedures effective in 2015. The seminar also examined the benefits of amending deferred payment agreement offerings to residential customers that are tenants, in accordance with MEUW's docket that was approved by the PSC.

- **MEUW Model Written Billing Procedures** – It is not a matter of “if” we will be audited by the PSC, it is now a matter of “when” we will be audited. MEUW has a model of written billing procedures for each utility to use as a guide to develop their own procedures and which address the PSC's initial information request.

We will be having a staff meeting today to discuss next steps and will report back next month.

Retirement Party – Dennis Holtz – We are planning a retirement party for Dennis on Friday, March 20 at 4:30 pm at Gibby's. Expect to receive invitations within the week.

Weston Arndt, WPPI Energy Services Rep, gave the following updates: - Work continues with Phillips-Medisize regarding their expansion and energy efficiency opportunities. Working with Wisconsin Lighting on energy efficient lighting, as well as evaluating changing their service voltage. Working on scheduling school visits for electrical safety, water, and wastewater presentations. St Croix Press has been approved for a Focus on Energy incentive for a heat recovery project. Because of the timing of the National Night Out event in August, we are considering a move of the Utility customer appreciation picnic to June 16. We are planning to include other city departments to provide additional information to attendees.

Mike Darrow, Utility Manager, gave the following updates: - Mike did a drive around with the meter reader to get a better understanding of the meter reading process. Time was spent on financial road maps to determine if some of the projects could be funded through other avenues. Mike was also involved with the interview process for the wastewater treatment plant positions.

Communications and miscellaneous correspondence – None

Closed session per State Statute 19.85 (1)(e)

- a. Staffing updates

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

A motion was made to enter into open session by Pat Becker, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried.

Open Session – Action on Closed Session agenda – A motion was made to enter into open session by Pat Becker, seconded by Gerry Warner, and carried. A motion was made by Pat Becker to approve the public works position as outlined, with New Richmond Utilities funding the position 100% for a minimum of two years, seconded by Bob Mullen, and carried.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Bob Mullen to adjourn, seconded by Pat Becker, and carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Jerry Frey, President

Bob Mullen, Secretary