

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in rescheduled session in the Morehouse Conference Room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Johnson, Zirngible, Kottke, Rossi and Doyal. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance & Administration Olson; Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, IT & Meter Services Baum; Manager, Facilities & Gas/Water Operations Prokopec; Manager, Electric Operations Deering; Manager, Human Resources Madson; Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; OPU Employees Lori Jerpbak and Shanda Meier; and, customers Roger Wacek and Donn Robinson. Other guests included Lisa Cochran from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism.

President Johnson opened the meeting by asking for approval of the agenda and the consent agenda items. The consent agenda items consisted of Minutes of the December 27, 2022 meeting; the Contributed Services Report as of December 31, 2022; the approval recommendation of the Four Season's Building utilities; and the annual policy review of the Distributed Generation Rules. Commissioner Doyal moved to approve the agenda and the consent agenda. Commissioner Kottke seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee did not meet.

Finance Committee – Commissioner Kottke reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed, and approved vouchers totaling 11,398,689.37. He further reported 16 work orders were closed coming in approximately 10% under budget. Year to date, 40 work orders have been closed with 25 being carried over to 2023. Two work order additions were approved. Accounts receivables ended the best it has in 3 years and with AMI reporting, we will be better able to estimate and budget for unbilled revenue.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse updated the Commission on several items.

- 1) Council Members Dotson and Voss will attend the joint OPU/City Council meeting.
- 2) City of Owatonna's Culture: a culture assessment survey was conducted, and a purpose statement and core values were created. A first ever "all hands" meeting of their employees was held. The State of the City was presented including core values, purpose statements, and general information regarding the Mayor and City Council. 130 of the 160 employees were in attendance. Was well received by all in attendance.
- 3) The City attended a Coalition of Cities event at the State Capitol to discuss important topics such as LGA (local government assistance), Wastewater Treatment Plans and State Bonding.
- 4) The City of Owatonna is looking to partner with the City of Medford in their wastewater treatment. In partnering with Medford in wastewater, there could potentially be regionalized State funding available for the treatment plant Owatonna is building. The Commissioners asked Mrs. Busse several questions regarding sizing and how treatment would occur.

General Manager/Staff Report

General Manager Warehime reviewed the annual scorecard for 2022.

General Manager Warehime and Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher provided an overview presentation of the Riverfront project, as well as what OPU would be covering versus what is covered in the project and would be the responsibility of the contractor. Clarification surrounding what is considered

part of the “beautification” project budget was also provided. It was noted, the beautification budget is strictly for burying underground lines in conjunction with City of Owatonna projects for aesthetic reasons.

Commission Roundtable

Commissioner Rossi asked for consideration of ways to encourage more energy efficiency without acquiring new assets. According to the speaker at our State of the Utility meeting, energy efficiency is the source of new energy.

Commissioner Doyal shared his experiences and take-aways while at the MMUA Legislative Rally at the State Capitol. The main concern is the outstate legislators are not in the controlling party, and it is feared our concerns are not being heard regarding carbon reduction.

Audience Comments

Customer, Roger Wacek discussed the unreliability of renewable energy and encouraged everyone to contact their legislators.

Lisa Cochran, Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, addressed the Commission to say thank you for the work put into the lighting of Central Park for the Lighting of the Lights event and the Holiday Lighted parade.

Customer, Donn Robinson, expressed his concerns with the water quality in his home and asked for the Commission’s assistance in getting it resolved as he feels the suggestions and steps OPU has already taken are not adequate.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission. The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications and Administration Coordinator