

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioner Johnson, Kottke and Zirngible (virtually). Absent were Commissioners Rossi and Doyal. Also present were Director, Finance and Administration Olson; City Administrator Busse; Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, Information Technologies & Meter Services Baum; Manager, Human Resources Manager Madson (virtually), Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Executive, Communications and Administration Coordinator Schmoll; Key Accounts & Energy Conservation Officer Hendricks; and customer Roger Wacek.

Vice President Johnson called the meeting to order and asked for a motion to approve the agenda, as presented. Commissioner Kottke moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Zirngible seconded the motion. On rollcall, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed. The consent agenda items included the Minutes from the January 25, 2022 Commission meeting and the Contributed Services report as of January 31, 2022. Commissioner Kottke moved to approve the consent agenda items. Commissioner Zirngible seconded the motion. On rollcall, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Commissioner Kottke reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed, and approved Vouchers. He further reported three work orders were completed slightly under budget leaving 61 still open with 45 of those being new for 2022. Commissioner Kottke further reported the majority of the funds from the February 2021 natural gas event have been recovered after 11 months versus the anticipated 12 months. The Committee recommends discontinuing the cost recovery program so customers will not see the 12th month charge on their bill.

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Zirngible reported the Personnel Committee met and received a staffing update. He noted the IT Systems Administrator position is filled and interviews are being conducted for the Meter Serviceworker. The Committee also received a COVID19 update in regards to OPU and Steele County.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse reported the City is heading into their strategic planning sessions with the City Council and discussed the process and focus areas. She gave a staffing update and discussed the Waste Water Treatment plant expansion noting, in addition to the funds put aside already for this project, the City has requested some State funding.

Water System Access Charge

Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher presented to the Commission regarding increasing the Water System Access fees. He noted, staff is not looking for an approval at this meeting. Mr. Fenstermacher noted the policy has not been updated for several years. He discussed the background and purpose of the policy; proposed policy changes and gave comparisons to where other utilities are at with their fees. After discussion, the Commission directed Mr. Fenstermacher to revisit the changes with several different options including a longer phase in process, and larger increases in the water commodity fees.

ES05 – Winter Time-of-Use Policy

Director, Finance & Administration Olson presented the ES05 Winter Time-of-Use policy to the Commission. He discussed the background of the rate and the proposed changes to it. After discussion, Commissioner Kottke moved to approve the policy as presented. Commissioner Zirngible seconded the motion. On rollcall, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Electric Vehicle Charging Policy

Key Accounts and Energy Conservation Officer Hendricks presented an Electric Vehicle Charging policy to the Commission. He discussed the background regarding Level 2 chargers which OPU owns, noted the purpose of the policy is to set a common rate for OPU owned and operated public use Level 2 electric vehicle chargers and noted a \$2.00 per hour charge is being proposed. After discussion, Commissioner Kottke moved to approve the policy as presented. Commissioner Zirngible seconded the motion. On rollcall, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

General Manager/Staff Report

Changes in the operations section of the scorecard were discussed.

Commission Roundtable

There were not any further comments from the Commissioners.

Audience Comments

Customer, Roger Wacek, encouraged the Commission and City of Owatonna to purchase electric fleet vehicles.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Kottke moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Zirngible seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator