

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Commission Room. Present were Commissioners Emanuelson, Stansberry, Mayhew, Schreiner and Ihrke. Also present were General Manager Shurts; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance & Administrative Services Bruno; Manager, Energy Management & External Relations Warehime; Manager, HR, Safety, Risk & Loss Control Madson; Supervisor, Gas, Water, Buildings & Grounds Bendorf; and Executive/HR Assistant Schmoll.

Commissioner Schreiner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

The Minutes from the rescheduled meeting of February 26, 2009 were presented to the Commission. Commissioner Mayhew moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Commissioner Ihrke seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Schreiner reported the Personnel Committee met and discussed Union Negotiations. Mr. Schreiner reported the General Manager’s review will be held in the next few weeks, as well.

Finance Committee – Commissioner Mayhew reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved the balance sheet, variance analysis for all utilities, cash flows, vouchers in the amount of \$6,655,781.26, and the financials. Mr. Mayhew reported there was nothing unusual.

City Administrator’s Report

City Administrator Busse reported the City Council held a study session to discuss the City’s budget, sizable LGA cuts, potential shortfalls, department reductions and plans on how to deal with these cuts.

Contributed Services

The Contributed Services report as of February 28, 2009 was presented to the Commission. The Commission signed the report. General Manager Shurts reported he is working with the City, County and School District on a list of projects that have been done collaboratively to reduce costs for the residents of Steele County. This list will be used in a letter to the Governor from Mayor Kuntz. Manager, Energy Conservation & External Relations Warehime commented on the possibility of stimulus money being available to local governments in the form of grants for energy conservation and noted this is something he will be keeping an eye on and will work with the City to try to go after some of those rebates.

General Manager/Staff Report

General Manager Shurts reported the Owatonna Partners for Economic Development are in contact with the Bio Business Alliance to try to attract Bio Energy projects to the Owatonna area.

Mr. Shurts reported he will be attending the MMUA Legislative Rally in St. Paul along with Mayor Kuntz.

Mr. Shurts further reported the arbitrator decision on the union matter has been returned and the arbitrator has denied the union's grievance on the basis of a di minimus effect on the union.

Manager, HR, Safety, Risk & Loss Control Madson reported Debra Barnett has been hired as the new Credit/Customer Service Representative. She reported Deb brings 19 years of customer service, with 4 years in management and will be starting on March 23rd.

Supervisor, Gas, Water, Building & Grounds Bendorf reported a feasibility study has been conducted, by Barr and Associates, on OPU's water system to determine problem areas related to flooding and the wellhead protection program. Wells #2 and #4 have been identified as problem areas. OPU will work on getting grant money to raise these wellheads out of the flood zone. Commissioner Emanuelson inquired on the cost of this project. Mr. Bendorf discussed what would need to be done to each well head and noted the cost could be as much as \$250,000 on Well #2 and \$1 million on the other. Mr. Bendorf added, we anticipate grant money to cover the whole cost of the project, because issues relating to flooding are a high priority.

Mr. Bendorf further reported a recall of hydrants installed between 1999 and 2004 has occurred. We are doing an inspection of all our hydrants and will determine how many of them need to be replaced, as well as if we will do the work in house or hire a contractor.

Commissioner Roundtable

Commissioner Schreiner – Nothing.

Commissioner Stansberry – Nothing.

Commissioner Mayhew – Nothing.

Commissioner Ihrke – Nothing.

Commissioner Emanuelson – What is the status of the SMMPA litigation? General Manager Shurts replied, a letter has been sent to the judge asking for a decision regarding the litigation.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Mayhew moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Ihrke seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive/HR Assistant