

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference Room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Johnson, Doyal and Vetter. Absent were Commissioners Rossi and Zirngible. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance & Administration Olson; Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, Information Technology & Metering Baum; Manager, Facilities & Gas/Water Operations Prokopec; Manager, Human Resources Madson; Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Supervisor, Customer Care Van Esch; Supervisor, Meter Services Johnson; Executive, Communications and Administration Coordinator Schmoll; Accountant Lori Jerpbak and Accounting Specialist Shanda Meier. Also present was Rick Nymark, Q Market Research.

President Johnson opened the meeting by leading the Pledge of Allegiance. He then asked for approval of the agenda and the consent agenda items. The consent agenda items included the minutes from the April 25, 2023 OPU Commission meeting and the contributed services report as of April 30, 2023. Commissioner Doyal moved to approve the agenda and consent agenda. Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

### **Election of Officers**

A slate of officers with Commissioner Zirngible as President and Commissioner Rossi as Vice President was presented to the Commission. Commissioner Doyal moved to approve the slate as presented. Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Commissioners Rossi and Vetter will serve on the Personnel Committee with President Zirngible as an ex-officio member. Commissioners Doyal and Johnson will serve on the Finance Committee with President Zirngible as an ex-officio member.

### **Committee Reports**

Finance Committee – Commissioner Doyal reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed, and approved Vouchers totaling \$6,678,413.18. He further reported there are 63 open work orders remaining for the year. The completed work orders are 5% underbudget. One work order was approved for security cameras.

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Johnson reported the Personnel Committee met and received a staffing update. Two Meter Serviceworker positions, one Electric Design Project Coordinator position and one Associate Engineer position remain open currently. Recruitment is ongoing for all positions.

### **City Administrator's Report**

City Administrator Busse reported to the Commission on the joint meeting of the City Council, County, School Board and OPU Commission was held. She noted the committee discusses issues that each entity has joint interest in. It has had a positive impact on the community having all entities on the same page. She further reported, the State legislature approved funding \$22 million for the wastewater treatment facility and \$4.5 million to allow the city of Medford to connect to our system. This will have a positive impact on taxpayers. She concluded by providing an update on the construction of the Council Chambers and reporting the pool is opening on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Customer Survey**

Supervisor, Customer Care Van Esch introduced Rick Nymark from Q Market Research. Mr. Nymark reported the results of the most recent customer survey to the Commission. He noted, 500 surveys were mailed and 500 were emailed to customers. 119 customers responded amounting to 11.5% response rate,

which is good. He briefly explained the Net Promoter Score and noted, OPU's as with other utilities, dropped for the survey period. He noted the drop coincided with utility price increases and inflation in general and was the same across the board for other utilities. OPU's Net Promoter Score was 46.4 which is high in the "good" range. Mr. Nymark further discussed comments made and noted, despite comments regarding costs and OPU being the only utility, our customers' feelings towards us were not affected. Overall, the survey shows OPU is doing very well.

### **Discussion for Public Input at Meetings**

General Manager Warehime presented the topic regarding public comment specific to where it is placed on the agenda and if there should be a statement made before public comments begin noting their comments will be taking into consideration and a follow-up communication will be made. After discussion, the Commission decided to leave public comments at the end of the meeting, keep the 5-minute time frame and remove the restriction about items not on the agenda. General Manager Warehime will draft a statement to be read before public comments with the above listed conditions. The statement will address the purpose is to hear and take under advisement the public comments and will follow-up where necessary. A sign-in form will be drafted for customers wishing a follow-up from the Commission which will include their name, address, phone number, and email address.

### **General Manager/Staff Reports**

Supervisor, Meter Services Johnson presented to the Commission regarding the benefits already received from the AMI project as well as benefits expected to receive in the future. Benefits realized so far amount to \$103,071 annual savings:

- Minimal truck rolls for transfer orders amounting in annual savings of \$31,576
- Reduced truck rolls for monthly metering reading resulting in annual savings of \$20,794
- No truck rolls for disconnects for non-payment resulting in annual savings of \$46,209
- Limited truck rolls for verifying occupancy when disconnecting for non-payment during the Cold Weather Rule period resulting in annual savings of \$4,492

Mr. Johnson discussed other benefits to the AMI system and discussed future uses and ideas. Commissioner Vetter inquired if the reduction in truck rolls would amount to the need for less vehicles. Staff is evaluating that possibility and Mr. Johnson discussed other tasks the crew is doing to ensure meters are performing correctly.

### **Commission Roundtable**

There were not any further comments.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll  
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator