

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference Room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Doyal, Rossi and Johnson. Absent was Commissioner Kottke. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance and Administration Olson; Director, Engineering & Operations Fenstermacher; Manager, Human Resources Madson; Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Supervisor, Customer Care Van Esch; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; Energy Conservation/Key Accounts Officer Hendricks; OPU Employees Lori Jerpbak and Shanda Meier. Other guests included John Raithford from The Energy Authority and Rick Naymark from Q Market Research.

President Doyal called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Doyal asked for approval of the agenda and the consent agenda items. The consent agenda items included the Minutes from the July 27, 2021 meeting as well as the Contributed Services report as of July 31, 2021. Commissioner Rossi moved to approve the Consent Agenda, as submitted. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee met and received a staffing update, had a discussion regarding moving the on-call response time from 20 minutes to 25 minutes and received an update regarding the Safety Committee's recommendation regarding COVID19 vaccinations. He noted the Committee will finalize their recommendation at their next meeting.

Commissioner Johnson reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved vouchers totaling \$5,403,542.89. He further reported there are 42 active, open work orders totalling \$15 million with approximately \$8.3 million already spent. He reported the Committee approved a work order addition to purchase approximately 270 more meters for the 5 to 50 lb. project. He noted there is a 40 week lead time on those meters so they need to be ordered early. Mr. Johnson further reported the annual audit was sent out for quotes. Three companies returned a quote for 3-years. He noted the low quoter was Abdo, Abdo, Eich and moved to approve the quote as submitted. Commissioner Rossi seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse updated the Commission on interviews for the Human Resource Director and a captain's position. She further provided an update on the Streetscape project and concluded by noting the City is beginning their budget process.

The Energy Authority (TEA) Presentation

General Manager Warehime introduced John Raithford from The Energy Authority (TEA) and noted staff is not looking for a policy change approval at this time. Mr. Raithford discussed a new strategy for ordering natural gas and new mitigation strategies to avoid a similar incident to the Natural Gas Event in February. He discussed SMS (System Management Service) noting it is a tool for risk mitigation and discussed the rationale for recommending an increased SMS volume, noting it is a critical component in protecting against several things including price spikes in the natural gas market during very volatile times.

MMUA Voting Delegations

General Manager Warehime noted this is a formality to approve Dave Olson and Christian Fenstermacher as voting delegates in MMUA matters in Mr. Warehime's absence. Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the voting delegations as submitted. Commissioner Rossi seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Renewable Energy Credit Policy

Energy Conservation/Key Accounts Officer Hendricks presented the Renewal Energy Credit (REC) policy to the Commission. He noted this policy would only cover commercial and industrial customers at this time. He explained what RECs are, why customers want them, where RECs come from, and recommended the Commission authorize OPU, in partnership with SMMPA, to create a REC Purchase Program for commercial and industrial customers. After discussion, Commissioner Rossi moved to approve the Renewal Energy Credit Policy as presented. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Steam Heat Policy Cancellation

General Manager Warehime presented a Steam Heat Policy cancellation to the Commission. He noted the current policy was approved in 1982 and steam heat quit running in the late 1980s. Commissioner Rossi moved to approve the cancellation policy. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

General Manager/Staff Reports

General Manager Warehime noted staff wanted to show the Commission the results of the Customer Satisfaction Survey before it was rolled out to the employees. He turned the presentation over to Supervisor, Customer Care Van Esch. Mrs. Van Esch discussed the history of the customer satisfaction survey, showed samples of how the survey looked and discussed the future of the survey. She then turned the presentation over to Mr. Rick Naymark of Q Market Research, the company who conducted the survey. Mr. Naymark discussed the findings of the survey and explained OPU's Net Promoter Score (NPS). The question the survey asks to get that score is "How likely are you to recommend OPU as a utility provider?" Mr. Naymark noted OPU's NPS score is 49.7. He further noted, the average for other US utility providers is -10 to +15. He discussed some other items that arose from the survey and concluded with the demographics of the respondents.

Commission Roundtable

Commissioner Doyal reported that Commissioner Keilman had turned in her resignation as a commissioner. He noted, she appreciated the opportunity, work life had become too overwhelming, and she just didn't feel she would have the time to properly devote to the Commission. Her resignation is effective immediately.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator