

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in special session in the Morehouse Room to discuss the general usage guidelines for OPU's conference rooms and possible uses for the top floor of the plant. Present were Commissioners Kottke, Cosens, Schreiner and Stansberry. Absent was Commissioner Simon. Also present were General Manager Fritsch; City Administrator Busse; Director, Financial & Administrative Services Fondell; Director, Engineering Johnson; Director, Operations & External Relations Warehime; Manager, HR, Safety, Risk & Loss Control Madson; and Executive/HR Assistant Schmoll.

General Manager Fritsch distributed an agenda for the meeting. He noted two different areas will be discussed; general use of conference rooms and use of the top floor of the building.

General Use

General Manager Fritsch noted the building was designed to allow public access to the Morehouse Conference room, B&W Conference room, and the Riley Conference room. He noted current practice is to allow non-profit organizations to use the rooms during business hours only; or if an employee is involved with a group and will be present at the event it may be used after hours. Currently, alcohol is prohibited on the property. Staff's recommendation is to keep the current practices, regarding alcohol, the same. He noted insurance, liability, safety, security and public perception as the primary reasons for continuing to prohibit alcohol on the property.

After an extensive discussion, Commissioner Cosens moved to keep the current practice of not allowing alcohol on the property for events being held in the conference rooms. Commissioner Stansberry seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Top Floor Use

General Manager Fritsch noted the top floor was designed as expansion space for OPU's future growth. He noted there is 4,000 square feet with a maximum occupancy load of 150 people. Currently 30% of the space is used for OPU's storage purposes. Under current building codes, the top floor is viewed as a fourth floor and would require extensive fire protection including insulating the beams from the top floor to the bottom of the building which would significantly change the aesthetics of the building. Also, due to being considered a fourth floor, the occupancy capacity is limited to 49 people. To have it viewed as a third floor, the basement would have to be filled in, which would require different configurations for pumps and equipment that are housed in the basement. Anyone wishing to rent the space would be required to present plans as to how the space would be used. OPU would have certain specifications that would need to be included and would have to sign off on the design. The renter would also be responsible for the cost of any build out.

Other items discussed included allowing alcohol use on the third floor, square foot pricing, signage and if the use of the roof is permitted. After discussion, none of the Commissioners felt they could make a recommendation one way or the other regarding the items discussed until they have seen proposals for usage. It was decided all proposals will be considered at this time and the potential space will be listed on the City's website as available and the word will be spread through the Chamber.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the special Commission meeting, the meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy Schmoll
Executive/HR Assistant