

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Rossi, Johnson (virtually), Vetter and McLane. Absent was Commissioner Zirngible. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance & Administration Olson; Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, Information Technologies & Metering Baum; Manager, Human Resources Madson; Manager, Electric Operations Enright; Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Supervisor, Information Technologies Trom; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; employees Caden Sorenson; Anthony Lance; Lori Jerpbak and Shanda Meier. Other guests included City Council member Dan Boeke and customer, Roger Wacek.

Vice President Rossi called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then asked for any changes to, and/or approval of, the agenda and consent agenda. The consent agenda items consisted of the September 24, 2024 Commission meeting minutes and the contributed services report as of September 30, 2024. Commissioner Vetter moved to approve the agenda and consent agenda items. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee did not meet in October.

Finance Committee – Commissioner Vetter reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved vouchers totaling \$6,136,849.27. He further reported 62 work orders remain open for the year. 41% of the budgeted work order amount has been spent. Net income in all three utilities is above budget.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse reported the City Council approved an 8% preliminary levy for 2025. She noted once the preliminary levy is approved, they cannot go higher. The City is working to get the final levy closer to 7.5% or below. She further reported a new Finance Director, Emily Burns, has been hired to replace Rhonda Moen. The Community Center task force has begun meeting, and the Public Safety task force has met and toured a number of facilities and began reviewing possible recommendations on moving forward.

Financial Reserves Policy

Director, Finance & Administration Olson presented a revised Financial Reserves policy, noting changes discussed at the last meeting have been incorporated including wording clarifications. After discussion, Commissioner Vetter moved to approve the policy as presented. Commissioner McLane seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

System Health Reports

Caden Sorenson, Associate Electric Engineer, presented the electric system health to the Commission. He discussed the system specifics such as how many square miles OPU's electric territory consists of, how many meters, distribution substations, transmission lines, and circuits make up the system, and total generation available. He discussed reliability and reliability indices, major outages and causes, and details of the two largest outages. He discussed the proposed 2025 Operating, Maintenance and Capital budgets, recapped projects completed in 2024 and updated the Commission on projects planned for 2025.

Anthony Lance, Gas & Water Design Engineer, presented the water and natural gas system health to the Commission. He provided system overviews for both the water and natural gas systems including miles of distribution mains, number of hydrants, wells & storage tanks, meters, regulator stations, and supply points. He discussed water main breaks and gas line hits as well as provided a status update on the Water Service Line Protection program. He discussed the Operations, Maintenance and Capital budgets for both the water and natural gas systems. He provided the Commission an update on the Lead & Copper rule revisions and discussed the impact to OPU. He concluded each section by reviewing projects completed in 2024 and highlighted projects scheduled for 2025.

Damian Baum, Director, Information Technologies & Metering, and Peter Trom, Supervisor, Information Technologies presented the technology & security system health report to the Commission. They discussed metrics related to email phishing and spam, simulated and non-simulated system attacks, and threats that were stopped. They discussed the proposed 2025 budget including capital items and concluded by recapping projects completed in 2024 as well as projects proposed for 2025.

General Manager/Staff Report

Staff did not have anything further to report.

Commission Roundtable

Commissioner Johnson offered feedback pertaining to being remote. He noted he could see the presentations very well, and anyone sitting around the table with the table mics he could hear very well, but anyone with a handheld, he could not hear. Staff will reach back out to the vendor working on the AV system in the room and will report back to the Commission.

Commissioner McLane enjoyed the presentations, found them enlightening and overwhelming and stated she is looking forward to her orientation.

Audience Comments

There was not anything additional from the audience.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator