

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference Room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Doyal, Johnson, Kottke, and Rossi. Absent was Commissioner Zirngible. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, Finance & Administration Olson; Director, Information Technologies & Meter Services Baum; Manager, Human Resources Madson; Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; Energy Conservation/Key Accounts Officer Hendricks; and OPU employees Lori Jerpbak and Shanda Meier.

Commissioner Doyal opened the meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Doyal asked for approval of the agenda and the consent items. The consent agenda included the Minutes from the November 23, 2021 Commission meeting and the Contributed Services report as of November 30, 2021. Commissioner Kottke moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee – Commissioner Kottke reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed, and approved Vouchers totaling \$5,235,781.88. He noted two work orders closed under budgeted. 31 work orders remain open with the expectation that half of those will close in December. The forecast for all three utilities remains positive.

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee met and received a staffing update. He noted, three open positions had been filled. He noted, the IT Systems Administrator positions remains open. The Committee discussed Succession Planning and the Tuition Reimbursement program. Days without an OSHA recordable are at 616.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse reported the City Council passed the 2022 budget and levy. She reported the levy increased 9.5% noting over the past three years the levy increase has been less than the capacity increase. She further reported they are actively recruiting for an Assistant City Engineer due to a retirement and negotiating with bargaining units. 2021 ended with 40 new single-family homes which is the most in several years.

Rate Policies

Director, Finance and Administration Olson presented several policies to the Commission for approval. He noted, three (ER99, EC99 and Water Rates) are directly related to the budget and the rates approved therein. The PGA and EAA policies were revised to use clearer terminology and the two Gas Transportation policies were revised to be consistent with our natural gas policies regarding how the 1.5% energy conservation requirement is billed. After discussion, Commissioner Rossi moved to approve the policies as presented. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

General Manager/Staff Update

General Manager Warehime reminded the Commission of a resolution they approved in 2019 regarding the natural gas prepay. He noted after the resolution was signed, the market went down so they agreement was not executed. Once again, the market is right where it makes sense to move the agreement forward. He noted two different approvals will be needed. One approving the resolution, similar to 2019 and the other to approve a bylaw change for the Minnesota Municipal Gas Agency. The Commission agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss this on January 12, 2022.

Director, Finance & Administration Olson informed the Commission staff is working with Bushel Boy to revamp their electric rate, so it is beneficial for OPU and Bushel Boy. Once an agreement is reached, Mr. Olson will report back to the Commission.

Commission Roundtable

The Commission wished everyone a happy New Year.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 4:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator