

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RICHLAND CENTER MUNICIPAL UTILITY COMMISSION
Wednesday, July 10, 2024 4p.m.,
Council Room, Municipal Building, 450 S Main St, Richland Center WI 53581
This Meeting was held in person and via WebEx

Members present: Schaub, Heiar, Collins, Downs, Sawle, Melby (WebEx 4:02p.m.) and Nice (WebEx 4:06p.m.)

Members absent: None

Others present: Gald, Mueller, Krueger, Angie Edwards, Andy Zimmer (WebEx), Jasen Glasbrenner, Ashley Oliphant, Karin Tepley, Michael Windle (WebEx), Melony Walters (WebEx)

President Sawle called the meeting to order at 4p.m. The meeting had been properly posted.

Motion by Collins, second by Schaub to approve the minutes of the last meetings as printed. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

Treasurer's report was received and filed.

Motion by Heiar, second by Schaub to approve the Electric Bills for July totaling \$980,485.67. Also acknowledges the balance for June, thus totaling \$887,144.76. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Collins, second by Sawle to approve the Water Bills for July totaling \$139,160.28. Also acknowledges the balance for June, thus totaling \$104,899.98. All but Melby voting aye on roll call. Melby abstained from voting. Motion carried.

Motion by Schaub, second by Heiar to approve the Sewer Bills for July totaling \$218,775.05. Also acknowledges the balance for June, thus totaling \$181,307.92. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

There was nothing for safety.

Electric Superintendent has written up an on-call policy that he would like the commission to look at. His crew has been asking for one to be implemented. He would like it to be put on the agenda for next month because a lot depends on what happens later on in the meeting with the new hire.

Mayor Coppernoll would like to attend our meetings so asked if we could change our meeting time. Commission President Sawle said that 5:30p.m. on Wednesday would work better for him. A motion by Downs, second by Collins to change the commission meeting time to 5:30p.m. on the second Wednesday of the month. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carries.

Sawle mentioned that he has talked with the superintendents regarding the vacant position of office manager. There has been discussion to consolidate the office manager position with utility manager. Vanessa feels that if we hire a utility manager, then we could get rid of the personnel committee. Scott Gald has already reached out to other utilities for job descriptions. If the position gets reposted as a utility manager, we can reach out to the current applicants to see if they would like to be considered for that position. As soon as the descriptions are drawn up they should be sent out to the commissioners so they can look them over. Once they have been able to review them, there will be a special meeting to get the position posted.

President Sawle would like to set-up a meeting with the Personnel Committee in the next couple of weeks for the superintendents' yearly evaluations.

During the last few months Sawle has reached out to our attorneys for advice and he has been told they cannot answer him. The attorneys also represent the city so it is a conflict of interest. He is wondering if we should seek an outside attorney, mostly for consulting. Collins said it would be a good idea to reach out to other utility

commissions to see what they do. Scott Gald explained that he can put the question in Listserv through WPPI. It will go to the other members to see what they do.

Mr. Zack drafted an independent contract agreement between Vanessa Mueller and the City Utilities for consulting of office duties. Vanessa set her resignation date of September 3rd and would like the contract to start September 4th. The contract allows for up to 10 hours a month. A motion by Collins, second by Melby to approve the independent contract for Vanessa Mueller for office duties up to 10 hours a month starting September 4th. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Electric Superintendent Gald reported that during the street project, they did have some conduit get hit. Also once the storm sewers go in then they will put the street light wire underground up 8th street and down 9th. The storms that rolled through on June 22nd caused flooding but no outages. The next day there was a tree down and the meter at the Symons sign was in high water. There were 17 applicants for the lineman position. Scott went to a meeting at WPPI. Aliant and WPPI are talking for territory agreements. Basically a circle would be drawn around Richland Center and anything annexed into the city, we would serve. The 836 2S meters that we received today need to have a patch from Honeywell to communicate with Northstar. Scott did get the o.k. from the city for the loan from WPPI to pay for the meters.

Water Superintendent Krueger reported that he hasn't ordered water AMI meters yet. The water meters talk through the electric meters. Steve wants the electric to get their meters up and going before he orders his. The crew did get the water main flushing completed. Valve exercising is almost complete as well. The application for the customer side lead service replacement was submitted by MSA, thank you to the city staff that helped with that. Later this month, Terry will be here for a year. He has completed all of his required DNR exams. Terry will be going to Iowa for the 2 day CDL class. He has been practicing with Travis around town. Last summer they had a SCADA drop out, with his fix there has not been any so far this summer. With all the rain we have received the ground water level has risen 2 ft. Steve also reported that G-Pro is making good progress. Monday they started to put the water main in the ground.

Andy Zimmer from MSA gave a quick update for Sewer street project. Last month Todd reported that G-Pro was having some issues removing transfer drains out of the streets. They were removed and sewer construction has begun. There was a design plan grade to lower the sewer to avoid conflict with water main and storm sewer. G-Pro realized their laser needed to be recalibrated because the sewer grade was off. They quickly came up with a new design plan for the water and storm sewer grades. The man holes will have to be adjusted to the new grades. There will be no cost increase to the project.

Wastewater Superintendent Fischer was unable to attend the meeting. Sawle reported that Todd had nothing new to report and if any commissioners had questions, they can reach out to him.

Office Manager Mueller reported that she has been busy training Grant and Angie. Before the software upgrade, she had started cross training them to do parts of her job in case something would happen. She has started again in case someone is not hired before her last day.

There was nothing for correspondence.

Melony Walters thinks it would be very beneficial if the commission would reinstate the previous hours of the utility office to match the hours of city hall. The feedback that she has been getting back from city hall staff is that customers are coming in after the utility office is closed to pay with cash and do not feel comfortable putting it in the drop box. Also if they can stagger their lunch hour so there is always someone there in the office that would be helpful. Scott Sawle noted that they will put it on the agenda for next month. Rod Perry also spoke. He said that it had been quite the couple of weeks. He wanted to congratulate the commission for hitting the ground running. Rod feels that they addressed a couple of issues with this agenda and we are always willing to make changes. It could have been done with a lot less tomfoolery and it was not the commission's fault. Keep up the good work.

Commissioner Collins noted that it would be nice if the commissioners had an online presence. He is not sure if they could have contact information on the city web site. Vanessa did inform the commission that they do have that information on the utility website. The city website has a link to ours. The commission also had emails but no one was using them so they cancelled them. They would need to consent to personal emails and phone numbers being out there. Jim Heiar talked about how there was a lot of people in the council room last Tuesday. Everyone there was in favor of the commission. There was a council person that said they wanted to hear more about the commission. Everything that was said Tuesday night is a reflection of the commission. We respect our utility workers. They also respect us as a commission. It is translated by boots on the ground and feet in the office. They were praised Tuesday night by the citizens that showed up in support. Commissioner Downs thanked the commission for changing the meeting time. He is sure we will miss Vanessa. He concurs with Melony Walters that the office hours should be the same. Commissioner Nice commented that he feels like a third grader going into fourth grade after 3 years on the commission. The knowledge that Sawle, Heiar, Schaub and Collins bring is like they have exceeded high school. Nice has so much respect for the superintendents. We need to come together and make this thing work and head in the right direction. Melby just wanted to say that this meeting shows the willingness of the commission to change and accept new ideas. He also noted that when he first joined the commission the superintendents approached him and told him that if he had any questions or wanted a tour to let them know. He would like them to extend that to the council as well. Scott Sawle wanted to apologize to Council person Tepley for his behavior at the council meeting last Tuesday. It was unprofessional and it should not have been done. Sawle and Heiar will not be at the next scheduled next meeting. They are looking to possibly changing the date of the next meeting to August 7th.

There was nothing for audience requests

Motion by Collins, second by Heiar to move into closed session pursuant to Wis. Stat, sec,19.85 (1)(c) to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility. The purpose of closed session is to discuss applicants for the electric department vacancy. All voting aye upon roll call, motion carried.

Closed session.

Motion by Downs, second by Heiar to reconvene into open session. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

Motion by Collins, second by Downs to hire Darren Mott with the stipulations stated in closed session. All but Collins voted aye on roll call. Collins voted no. Motion carried.

Mayor Todd Coppernoll stopped in and thanked the commission for changing the time of the commission meetings. He said he will be sure to attend. He also feels that this is a good thing for the city and commission. He said he heard we are looking at hiring a utility manager and feels that is a great move. Coppernoll would also like to see a joint session of the council and commission.

A motion by Heiar, second by Schaub to adjourn. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried without dissent at 5:51p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Vanessa Mueller