

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference Room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Kottke, Doyal, Simon, Rossi and Keilman. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Engineering Johnson; Supervisor, Accounting Brase; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; and Energy Conservation/Key Accounts Officer Hendricks.

Commissioner Doyal led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes

The Minutes from the regular meeting of August 27, 2019 were presented to the Commission. Commissioner Doyal moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Commissioner Rossi seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee: Commissioner Simon reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved Vouchers totaling \$4,500,913.55. He further reported the financial statements, overall, look good. Water is slightly under budget due to the wet weather and people not needing to water their lawns but electric and gas are well above.

Personnel Committee: Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee met and discussed recruiting for the Gas/Water Engineering Tech as well as annual management wage increases. Two personal days have previously been granted for the management staff and we agreed to continue that as part of the management team package. The amount of the wage increase will be part of the annual budget process and will be discussed further at that time.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse discussed the strategic plan developed by the Owatonna Partners for Economic Development (OPED). She noted OPED consists of leaders from the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, Owatonna Public Utilities, City of Owatonna, Steele County and the Owatonna Area Business Development Center who focus on economic development in the Community. The areas of focus for the next three years will include attracting/educating a quality workforce, Marketing & Communications, Mainstreet Development for a vibrant downtown area; development of Commercial/Industrial economics; Increased usage of grants; and working with Owatonna Forward group so as not to duplicate work. The plan covers action items for 2019, 2020 and 2021. Mrs. Busse noted several items for 2019 have already been completed. Discussion ensued surrounding the outdoor seating policy and businesses relocating to or expanding in Owatonna.

Contributed Services

The Contributed Services report as of August 31, 2019 was presented to the Commission. The Commission signed the report.

Operations/Scorecard

There was not anything unusual to report.

General Manager/Staff Report

General Manager Warehime updated the Commission on proposed rate increases for 2020. He noted, the proposed budget, along with system health reports will be presented at the next meeting. Preliminary numbers indicate a 1% increase in electric rates; 4.9% increase in water rates based on the cost of service study in 2018 and anticipated large capital projects; and, no change in natural gas rates.

Commission Roundtable

Commissioner Rossi inquired as to who is responsible for cleaning up the mess left in yards surrounding the 5-50lb. conversion project. General Manager Warehime noted, the contractor. He continued, conversations have been held with the contractor expressing our unhappiness with restoration thus far.

Commissioner Kottke thanked staff for the assistance give on a call he received from a customer. He further inquired regarding a house fire and OPU's involvement. Mr. Warehime replied, OPU responded to disconnect the electricity and the natural gas but have not heard what caused the fire. Close to the same time, we also had a pole on fire from a lightning strike.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Simon moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Doyal seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the meeting adjourned at 4:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator