

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session via Microsoft Teams. Present were Commissioners Doyal, Kottke, Rossi and Johnson. Absent was Commissioner Keilman. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance and Administration Olson; Director, Engineering and Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, Engineering and Special Projects Johnson; Chief Information Officer Keltgen; Manager, Human Resources Madson; Manager, Electric Operations Deering; Supervisor, Accounting Linders; Executive, Communications, & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; Key Accounts/Energy Conservation Officer Hendricks and Gas/Water Design Engineer Josh Prokopec.

President Doyal called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the agenda, including the consent agenda items. The consent agenda items included the Minutes from the September 22, 2020 meeting and the Contributed Services as of September 30, 2020. Commissioner Kottke moved to accept the agenda as presented. Commissioner Rossi seconded the motion. On roll-call, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

### **Committee Reports**

Finance Committee – Commissioner Kottke reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved disbursements totaling \$4,990,405.42. He further reported six work orders were closed out. 32 work orders are completed and are under budget by 27% on average. 34 work orders open. Director, Finance and Administration Olson presented a preview look at the 2021 budget to the Finance Committee and it was decided to have Mr. Olson also present to the full Commission. Mr. Olson gave a high-level preview of the 2021 budget including proposed rate adjustments, commodity revenue and costs 3-year trends, controllable costs, capital spending forecasts, net income forecasts, and reserves versus targets for all three utilities.

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee met all open positions have been filled with the exception of one in Engineering that is still being evaluated. Mr. Rossi further reported the COVID19 has not affected anyone at OPU directly, yet.

### **City Administrator's Report**

City Administrator Busse reported Phase 1 of the CARES grants is complete and the city was able to give out \$546,000 worth of grants. There is a round 2 extension being evaluated at this time. The County is administering a fund for non-profits. The City has to spend all their money by November 15<sup>th</sup>, but the County has until December 1<sup>st</sup> so their business grants and nonprofits are still open. Mack Hamilton will begin construction on a Marriot Courtyard in the downtown area in June 2021. He is also building a 37-unit, 4 story apartment building on the 100 block of Pearl St. The apartment building will look similar to the Vine St. building. Old Town Bagels and Jerry's Restaurant will be incorporated in to the hotel project, as well. The City is looking at ways to complete the streetscape plan downtown and will be meeting with OPU personnel to discuss the infrastructure down there. Overall, a \$25 million investment in downtown, as well as a big game changer for our Community.

### **System Health Report & Tech Roadmap**

Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher and Gas/Water Design Engineer Josh Prokopec provided a system health report to the Commission. Mr. Fenstermacher provided an overview of the electric system and discussed reliability, 2021 budget numbers, electric projects completed in 2020 as well as projects scheduled for 2021 including an upgrade to East Owatonna Substation.

Gas/Water Design Engineer Josh Prokopec provided an overview of the water and gas systems and discussed outages and duration of outages in the water department as well as hits to the gas mains. He discussed budgets for both gas and water and discussed 2021 projects including the Water Utility Network

which integrates with the GIS system to give better detail on performance and where potential problem areas are. Projects in the gas utility include continuing the 5 to 50 lb. conversion project, as well as he discussed the benefits of and how the Gas Modeling system works.

Chief Information Officer Keltgen provided an overview of the Tech Roadmap for 2021 and beyond to the Commission. Notable points included, an accelerated deployment of mobile laptops for all employees due to the pandemic, different ways to communicate with our customers including Chat/Text messaging, cyber security and compliance, physical security, disaster recovery and operational support.

### **Operations/Scorecard**

There was not anything notable to discuss on the scorecard.

### **General Manager/Staff Report**

General Manager Warehime updated the Commission on measures OPU is taking related to the COVID19 pandemic, notably not charging late fees, not performing disconnects and completely taking the language out of our late notice letter. He further noted, it is built into the budget to continue to not charge late fees until mid-2021. Despite efforts of the customer service representatives to get a hold of, and work with, customers, past due receivables have gone up considerably in the last two months. At this time, we feel it necessary to put the disconnect language back into the late notice letter to get people to get a hold of us so we can help them.

### **Commission Roundtable**

Commissioner Rossi is proud of the growth in Owatonna. Commissioner Johnson enjoyed the system health report. Commissioner Kottke also found the information from the reports very valuable. Commissioner Doyle is also proud of the growth of Owatonna and is thrilled with how everyone works together. It is the nature of our town.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Kottke moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the meeting adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll,  
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator