

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session via Microsoft Teams. Present were Commissioners Doyal, Keilman, Rossi and Johnson. Absent was Commissioner Kottke. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director, Finance & Administration Olson; Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher; Director, Engineering Johnson; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll and Key Account/Energy Conservation Office Hendricks.

President Doyal called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the agenda, including the consent agenda items. The consent agenda items include the Minutes from regular meeting of November 24, 2020 and the Contributed Services report as of November 30, 2020. Commissioner Keilman moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. On roll-call, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Personnel Committee – Commissioner Rossi reported the Personnel Committee met and received a staffing update which included a small reorganization in the Engineering Department. He further reported there has only been one OSHA recordable for the year. The committee also received a COVID19 update with 7 employees having to quarantine due to close contact but no one has contracted the virus and all employees are back to work. Staff is contemplating opening the lobby to the public in January and 9 new employees were hired in 2020 who have to meet the Commissioners still. The final thing discussed was the retirement of the Director, Engineering which will be addressed later in the agenda.

Finance Committee – Commissioner Johnson reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved disbursements totaling \$5,111,552.36. Mr. Johnson also recapped the work orders and noted year to date they are running below budget. Mr. Johnson recapped the financial statements noting overall net income should come in over budget. Accounts receivable past dues are looking better than October. Mr. Johnson concluded by noting staff requested to increase one 2021 work order for a new line truck. He noted, the price came in about \$8,000 higher than budget due to a specific type of box that is needed on it. The Finance Committee plans to approve that change.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse provided a quick update on the truth in taxation hearing noting the levy increase is 3%. She further noted, the tax capacity of the community has grown 8% so if your property evaluation stays the same, the taxes should go down. The City is looking for a Park and Rec director, and a second round of interviews has been conducted and there is a candidate they are excited about. We hope to have someone on board in January or early February. An outdoor play area has been added to Mineral Springs Park where the volleyball court used to be using natural items such as rocks, logs, etc. The fire and police department will be getting COVID vaccines later in December/early January. There were some cases of COVID that went through the Fire Department, but there have not been huge impacts to the operations.

Employment Agreement

Commissioner Rossi presented an employment agreement for the Director, Engineering noting the agreement is fair and equitable for both OPU and the current employee. After discussion, Commissioner Rossi moved the following: the commission authorizes the general manager to execute an employment agreement with the current Director of Engineering, Ronnie Johnson, to continue employment from January 10 through April 30, 2021 with a salary of \$8,719.05 per pay period. Further, the general manager is authorized to execute a second agreement on May 1, 2021 with a severance payment of \$1,000. Commissioner Johnson seconded the motion. On roll-call, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Water Rates Policy

Director, Finance & Administration Olson presented the Water Rates policy to the Commission. He noted the policy reflects the changes to water rates as approved in the 2021 budget. After discussion, Commissioner Johnson moved to accept the Water Rates policy, as presented. Commissioner Rossi seconded the motion. On roll-call all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Gas Conservation Recovery Adjustment Policy Cancellation

Director, Finance & Administration Olson presented the Gas Conservation Recovery Adjustment Policy cancellation to the Commission. He noted, it is the cancellation of a policy created when the State of Minnesota mandated a certain percentage of funds be spent on energy conservation measures. Mr. Olson explained the process for accounting for these funds in the past, and noted it will be accounted for in a different manner going forward. The new way will not change the rates, nor will it change the amount of money spent on energy conservation efforts. After discussion, Commissioner Johnson moved to approve the cancellation of this policy. Commissioner Keilman seconded the motion. On roll-call, all Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Operations/Scorecard

General Manager Warehime noted there was not anything significant to discuss on the scorecard.

General Manager/Staff Report

General Manager Warehime noted the January meeting may be longer than normal due to additional things on the agenda. Mr. Warehime also updated the Commission on a project out at Viracon, and noted it should be wrapped up this week. Mr. Warehime concluded by thanking the Commission for their support throughout the year and wished everyone Merry Christmas.

Commission Roundtable

The Commission wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Commissioner Doyal thanked Ronnie Johnson for his years of service and everything he has done for the community. City Administrator Busse thanked Ronnie, as well, for his service to the City.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator