

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RICHLAND CENTER  
MUNICIPAL UTILITY COMMISSION  
Wednesday, August 7, 2024 5:30p.m.,  
Council Room, Municipal Building, 450 S Main St, Richland Center WI 53581  
This Meeting was held in person and via WebEx Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic

Members present: Heiar, Collins, Downs, Sawle, Melby, and Nice

Members absent: Schaub

Others present: Mueller, Krueger, Edwards, Gald, Glasbrenner, Oliphant, Windle, and Fruit

President called the meeting to order 5:30p.m. The meeting had been properly posted.

Motion by Heiar, second by Collins 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 Nice, second by Heiar to approve the Electric Bills for August totaling \$957,294.47. Also acknowledges the balance for July, thus totaling \$1,009,633.61. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Collins, second by Sawle to approve the Water Bills for August totaling \$72,779.00. Also acknowledges the balance for July, thus totaling \$178,282.47. All voting aye upon roll call, motion carried.

Motion by Heiar, second by Collins to approve the Sewer Bills for August totaling \$131,078.35. Also acknowledges the balance for July, thus totaling \$281,339.34. All voting aye upon roll call, motion carried.

For safety Water Superintendent Krueger informed the commission that he did have a crew member get injured while checking on a house with high water. The guys were going into the basement of the customer and the bottom 2 steps gave way as the operator was stepping down. The jolt injured his back. Todd Fischer also commented on the construction crew working on the street project. They do sometimes need to be reminded about their safety equipment.

Electric Superintendent Gald informed the commission that in Feb they approved the purchase of a 2024 one ton dually truck from Jones Chevrolet. They switched model year so the 2024 is no longer available. We can get a 2025 for \$965.00 more. So it is a newer model year and still cheaper than the other bids from Fillback for Ford or Dodge.

Gald explained his guys have been asking for an on-call policy. Scott has reached out to several other utilities and drew up a policy the line crew agrees with. A motion made by Melby, second by Downs to approve the on call policy for the electric utility. All voting aye on roll call, motion carried.

It was suggested at the last commission meeting to consider changing the utility office hours to the same as the city. The hours were recently change as of May 1<sup>st</sup> to 8-4. Previous the hours were 8-4:30 to allow for a 30 minute lunch break. The staff was working through their lunch break causing the utility to pay comp time. The new hours allow for a 30 minute paid lunch break. There have not been any complaints in the office. The city staff said they do have people come into the building only to find the office closed after 4p.m. They usually instruct the customer on the drop box and maybe give them an envelope if needed. The change has only been a few months, so the customers need time to get trained/adjust to the new time. Heiar made a motion, second by Collins to retain the utility office hours of 8-4 until the first of year. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

At the last meeting the commission discussed possibly retaining our own attorney. Sawle received a recommendation for a lawyer out of Madison. Her retainer fee is \$3,000.00 and she charges \$315.00 per hour. The commission decided to table until the next meeting when more information is available.

Electric Superintendent Gald reported that the line crew is back to full staff. Darren came back July 29<sup>th</sup>. There was a need for the street project to move a few poles. The annual testing of the trucks was just completed. The line crew continues to convert over head to underground and changing out poles. The AMI meters are in but there is issue with Honeywell and the billing software that needs to get worked. The employee evaluations are completed. WPPI came out with their infrared and tested our systems for hot spots. Reminder that our Customer Appreciation Cookout is October 9<sup>th</sup>.

Water Superintendent Krueger reported that Terry will be taking his CDL August 20-22. He has passed all of his DNR training successfully. Steve completed his staff reviews. They are continuing to identify lead services on the customer side by going door to door. There was a service break by the old Lincoln School. The City Council did approve to extend the street project to Park Street. There is a vacancy in the water department. Travis gave his resignation, his last day is August 16<sup>th</sup>. There are ads out and applications are due back in the office by August 16<sup>th</sup> 1p.m.

Wastewater Superintendent Fischer reported that with all the rain, the street project has experienced a lot sediment washing into the open mains. His department went up with their equipment and vacced out the mud and cleaned the line. Todd contacted Andy for information that was needed for the North Industrial Park. Andy is working on a proposal for sewer improvements in the Allison Park area for the lift station. The Allison force main has a drop leg in it. It makes it difficult to find the bend in the main. Brad will be starting on call and weekend duty this weekend. Todd also completed his employee reviews.

Office Manager reported that she has been very busy training and this will be her last meeting. She will miss everyone. Sawle commented that we are very grateful for all that she has done.

There was nothing for correspondence.

City Attorney Windle said that a commissioner had reached out to him, asking him to attend the closed session. He wanted to make sure the commission was in agreement for him to participate in closed session. Sawle said it was allowed.

Commissioner Collins wanted to thank Scott and the electric crew for the great job restoring power. Sawle says he feels horrible that it didn't work out for Vanessa to feel comfortable to stay. Heiar thanked Vanessa for her services. Also he will be in Canada for a shuffle board tournament. Nice wanted to wish Vanessa the best. Melby said ditto. Downs also wanted to thank Vanessa for her service and he really hopes that if the sewer department helps out the water crew, they wash their hands.

The commissioners wanted to give Scott and Todd an opportunity to explain to the commission why they would be the best choice for the position of Utility Manager. Todd expressed the need to promote within the utility instead of hiring outside. He said he feels he has earned the opportunity with his years of experience. He has faith and trust in the other department heads. He feels he would be a buffer between commission and council. Scott said he agrees a lot with what Todd presented. He feels the manager has more communication with the city. Scott Sawle asked Vanessa how she felt. She stated that she feels the manager should be able to handle some of the office work as well. Scott Sawle says he agrees with everybody.

Motion made by Collins, second by Heiar to move into close 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 the closed session is hiring a utility manager, compensatory time, and superintendent reviews. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

A motion by Melby, second by Heiar to reconvene into open session to vote on matters discussed in closed session. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

Melby made a motion to promote Scott Gald as the Utility Manager per stipulations that were discussed in closed session, second by Heiar. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried.

A motion made by Collins, second by Nice to adjourn. All voting aye upon voice vote, motion carried without dissent at 6:42p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by:

Angie Edwards