

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

**September 25, 2019, 1:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Regular Meeting of the Public Utilities Commission, City of Princeton, was held in Commission Offices, 907 1<sup>st</sup> Street, on September 25, 2019, at 1:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Mindi Siercks and Commissioners Dan Erickson and Greg Hanson.

Absent: None

Also Present: Manager Keith Butcher, Bookkeeper Kathy Ohman, City Councilor Jack Edmonds, Electric Superintendent Jon Brooks, Water Superintendent Scott Daniels, City Administrator Bob Barbian, Union Times Reporter Tim Hennagir, and PUC customers Kevin and Anita Gerrard.

Meeting was called to order by Chair Siercks at 1:00 P.M.

General Manager Keith R. Butcher swore in newly elected PUC Commissioner Greg Hanson.

Chairman Siercks called for additions or deletions to the agenda. Additions: New Business: G. Appointment of a Wellhead Protection Plan Manager for Princeton Public Utilities; H. Pollinator Effort Along the Rum River; and I. Emergency Action Plan.

Mr. Erickson made a motion to approve the agenda of the September 25, 2019 Regular PUC Commission Meeting with the additions stated. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Erickson moved to approve the Minutes for the August 28, 2019 meeting. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

During Public Comment, PUC customer Kevin Gerard who lives at 411 North Rum River Drive had asked for information on Project No. 14846.000 and Project No. 01799.00 which were the water main that went under the West Branch River and the water main that went under Highway 95 on Kevin's property. Kevin Gerrard asked if the PUC has in their stored files or current files a complete file on each of these projects. He would like a date and time which he could come to the PUC and review these files. He stated he would also like to review the files for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Water Main realignment project. He stated he felt he should have access to these files within 10 days. Kevin Gerrard also stated he would like to review only what specifically is in the PUC building, not any records from the city, county, state, DNR or wetland sources. He stated he wants to know what is in the PUC building and wants to review everything that is in the PUC building including General Manager Keith Butcher's e-mails, documents and files.

Mr. Hanson made a motion to approve the accounts payable listing for the period of August 1, 2019 through August 31, 2019. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

General Manager Butcher reported the following:

- A. The SMMPA Board Meeting was held September 11<sup>th</sup> in Litchfield, Minnesota. SMMPA shows a slight decline in load. SMMPA rates will remain unchanged in 2020. The Badger-

Coulee financing project is moving forward. The EV Charger project is progressing. SMMPA is working on a post 2030 plan which includes the retirement of Sherco 3. SMMPA is having long-term strategic discussions on what the membership wants SMMPA to be.

- B. General Manager Keith Butcher attended the APPA Business and Financial Conference on September 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> in Minneapolis. He attended sessions on cash reserve policies, AMI implementation and other financial matters.
- C. In the Generation Plant, Engine #4 has been off line for an oil change. The Cat. #7 Generator is still down due to coolant leaking into the oil. Ziegler has been doing the repair work on the Cat. #7 Generator under the warranty service agreement. All of the other engines will be running tomorrow.

In the Electric Department, the line crew has been installing new services and doing Right-Of-Way maintenance. They have been working on the Great Northern Trail project removing some street lights and moving one street light. They have been working with the contractors on the Great Northern Trail on issues as they arise. There was a theft from our storage facility south of the line shop. A police report has been filed. We are looking into security options to prevent future theft.

- D. In the Water Department, they will begin fall flushing on September 30<sup>th</sup>. They have completed painting and re-numbering the fire hydrants. On October 1, 2019 they will be conducting a Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) survey in the South Water Tower to verify the status since paint has been chipping on the outside of the tower. Warranty on the restoration done in 2013 on the exterior was only one year, the interior warranty was five years.
- E. City Administrator Bob Barbian reported on the 33<sup>rd</sup> Street and 83<sup>rd</sup> Avenue road project in Princeton Township, the City of Princeton has requested for Princeton Township to take the lead on the project. The project will be done jointly with the City of Princeton and Princeton Township. The Great Northern Trail has been moving along. He would like a street light looked into at the intersection of Old Highway 18 South and 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue South as it is poorly lit in that area. West Birch Apartments should be moving forward soon. There was a discussion on the \$8,000.00 difference on the WAC fees. WAC fees for this property for the 6" water service should have been \$12,000.00. The City of Princeton has an agreement with the builder of West Birch Apartments quoting a WAC fee of \$4,000.00 signed at the time the project was initiated. The City of Princeton has a policy to give credit on the SAC fees on re-development. Princeton Public Utilities does not have a policy to allow for a credit on WAC fees for re-development. Funds will possibly be paid to the PUC through TIF funds. There was a discussion to set up a joint meeting between PUC and the Princeton City Council to discussion communications between the City of Princeton and the PUC.
- E. General Manager Keith Butcher gave an update on the AMI meter upgrade, there has been some communication issues between the electric and water meters. They are also working on defining the reading file to be imported into Power Manager. Once the communication issues have been resolved, we will start installing the AMI meters. General Manager Keith Butcher has received four applicants for the Journeyman Lineman position. Interviews will be conducted over the next couple weeks. The Electric Superintendent position has been posted. Applicants will have until the end of October to apply. Keith Butcher has been working with the Princeton Police Chief and Fire Chief on an Active Shooter Training for the entire PUC staff in November. The office will be shut down for this training.

General Manager Keith Butcher did a re-cap on the Conflict of Interest Policy along with the Purchasing Policy. The PUC currently has a Purchasing Policy as follows. For projects over \$175,000.00, the consulting engineer would be handling the bid process. Projects below \$175,000.00 but more than \$25,000.00 would go out for a minimum of two direct quotes. Any purchases or projects below \$25,000.00 would go out for direct quotes when possible. Purchasing on the open market is acceptable. With the second PUC policy, Conflict of Interest Policy, a Resolution is brought to the PUC Commission for approval with any interested officer recusing themselves from the voting process.

PUC Commissioner Dan Erickson brought up a discussion that a joint meeting was requested by Mayor Brad Schumacher between the Princeton City Council and the PUC to discuss communication. Mayor Schumacher had requested Commissioner Dan Erickson and General Manager Keith Butcher to attend this meeting. Commissioner Dan Erickson is requesting all PUC Commissioners attend the meeting, PUC Commissioners are requesting this meeting remain civil. Specific problems with communication will be addressed. After a discussion, the consensus of the PUC Commission and City Administrator Bob Barbian was to schedule a tentative meeting on October 24, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

Past due utility bills as of August 31, 2019 was presented to the PUC Commission for approval to be assessed to 2020 property taxes. When a customer becomes delinquent on their utility bill or does not pay their final bill, PUC office staff attempts to contact the appropriate parties and if left unpaid the past due amount will be sent to the Minnesota Department of Revenue Recapture Program or a collection agency. Staff also work with lenders and title companies to collect past due utility bills at closing when a property is sold. This year the PUC will assess one account in the amount of \$81.24. Mr. Erickson made a motion to approve the past due assessments to the 2020 property taxes. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The MMUA Safety Management Contract for 2020 has been received with a \$350.00 increase for monthly safety training. General Manager Keith Butcher made the recommendation to continue running the PUC safety management program through MMUA. Mr. Hanson made a motion to approve the 2020 MMUA Safety Management Program for the period of 10/1/19 to 9/30/20. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Resolution 19-10 RESOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PRINCETON REGARDING AUTHORIZING THE SERVICES OF MINUTEMAN PRESS, PRINCETON, MN for the use of their services for printing and web design/upgrades in the amount of \$56.25 through September 25, 2019 was presented. Mr. Hanson made a motion to accept Resolution 19-10. Mr. Erickson seconded. Ms. Siercks abstained from voting.

General Manager Keith Butcher has received a letter of on-going engagement from McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb for legal services. A letter was received by Manager Keith Butcher from Dove & Freitland stating they could not adequately serve both the City of Princeton and Princeton Public Utilities, recommending we continue working with McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb. No retainer fee is required. Mr. Hanson made a motion to accept the letter of on-going engagement for legal services from McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

At the request of PUC Commissioners, there was a discussion on having Work Session Meetings temporarily to discuss budgets, policies, and other issues that may arise. Work Sessions will be publicly posted. It was the consensus of the Commission to hold monthly Work Session meetings the second Wednesday of every monthly with the first Work Session to be held Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.

There was a discussion on the videotaping of PUC Commission Meetings. Currently the PUC Commission Meetings are being videotaped by a private citizen and posted on social media that is not a PUC page. To be consistent and in the interest of transparency, the discussion was on videotaping the meetings in-house and posting the recordings on the PUC website. Cost to set up videotaping is approximately \$1,500.00. There was a discussion on the length of time recordings are to remain stored. General Manager Keith Butcher will look into this further and bring back at a later date.

Resolution 19-11 RESOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF PRINCETON REGARDING APPOINTMENT OF WELLHEAD PROTECTION MANAGERS FOR THE UTILITY for the primary point of contact to facilitate the development and administration of a Wellhead Protection Plan; appointing Keith R. Butcher, General Manager, and Scott Daniels, Water Superintendent to act as Wellhead Protection co-managers on behalf of the utility. Mr. Hanson made a motion to accept Resolution 19-11. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

The Department of Natural Resources and the City of Princeton are placing a pollinator area by Riebe Park and the Rum River. SMMPA will contribute \$1,500.00 towards the cost of \$3,500.00 for seeds and planting. There was a discussion of the PUC contributing the balance of \$2,000.00 towards the seeds and planting. At this time no final decision was made. The wild flower gardens will be planted in 2020-2021.

General Manager Keith Butcher presented the PUC Emergency Action Plan to the PUC Commission for approval. This was tabled until October 2019 PUC Commission meeting.

SMMPA will be running the Be Bright campaign again this year. LED light bulbs can be purchased at participating local and area retailers at a discount. Marv's True Value will be participating locally in the campaign. LED bulbs purchased at the discounted rate are not eligible for a rebate through the PUC.


Public Power Week is October 7<sup>th</sup> through the 11<sup>th</sup>. The PUC will be serving cookies during the week along with handing out gifts.

The September 2019 Connector Newsletter was included. The Connector Newsletter included information on the Cold Weather Rule, recycling, rebates, Gopher State One Call and fall water hydrant flushing.

There being no further business, Mr. Hanson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:40 p.m. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Mindi Siercks  
Chairman



Kathy Ohman  
Secretary