

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**May 27, 2020, 1:00 P.M.**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Regular Meeting of the Public Utilities Commission, City of Princeton, was held via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic, on May 27, 2020, at 1:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Greg Hanson and Commissioner Dan Erickson.

Also Present: Manager Keith Butcher, Bookkeeper Kathy Ohman, City Councilor Jenny Gerold, Electric Superintendent Ryan Grant, Water Superintendent Scott Daniels, City Administrator Bob Barbian, Princeton Mayor Brad Schumacher, and Union Times Reporter Tim Hennagir.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Hanson at 1:00 P.M.

Chairman Hanson called for additions or deletions to the agenda. Chairman Hanson deleted from the agenda New Business H. Staffing and I. General Manager Annual Review. Addition: New Business: J. E-mail for PUC Utilities.

Mr. Erickson moved to approve the Minutes for the April 22, 2020 Regular PUC Commission Meeting. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

There was no Public Comments.

Mr. Erickson made a motion to approve the agenda with changes of the May 27, 2020 Regular PUC Commission Meeting. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Erickson made a motion to approve the accounts payable listing for the period of April 1, 2020 through April 30, 2020. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

General Manager Butcher reported the following:

- A. Princeton Mayor Brad Schumacher addressed a few items. Items he addressed was the annual packet from SMMPA that included a discussion on the listing of voting members of each utilities and the SMMPA Representative for the PUC. His other items he brought up for discussion included General Manager Keith Butcher being on the screening committee for North Branch Light and Power for the hiring of their new general manager. Mayor Brad Schumacher stated his list of items included a PUC employee who is on the Princeton Fire Department, water pumped by the Princeton Fire Department, and a PUC calendar or white board that lists when PUC employees including General Manager Keith Butcher are out of the office or on vacation. General Manager Keith Butcher provided his cell phone number to Mayor Schumacher. He also brought up the discussion of working with the engineer on the Golf Course Clubhouse, PUC staffing and customer meter deposits for homeowners required by the PUC. Union Times Reporter Tim Hennagir requested a copy of the list of items Mayor Schumacher was reading from and copies of all emails regarding issues with the PUC that were sent to council members and PUC employees. There was a discussion following each item addressed.

- B. The SMMPA Board Meeting was held May 7 via video conference. The Key Metrics were provided to the PUC Commission on how operations are changing over time. SMMPA has passed an invoice deferral resolution. SMMPA is expected to be back in their office on June 1. Impacts due to Covid-19 were presented to the board.
- C. In the Generation Plant, they are replacing a pump. They are also replacing a voltage regulator on Engine #5. We have completed our inspection of the 20,000-gallon fuel tanks. We have not received the final reports on the inspection.

In the Electric Department, the line crew is continuing to do some underground work on West Branch Street and some additional underground service for new home construction.

- D. In the Water Department, they have been working on the 5<sup>th</sup> Street North water main realignment project which went smoothly. We have received final notice for compliance with the 2019 Consumer Confidence Report. Spring flushing is completed. KLM Engineers completed the warranty inspection on the Middle Water tower. They will be doing some touch up painting under the maintenance warranty. Verizon Wireless is working on their upgrade.
- E. City Administrator Bob Barbian reported they are evaluating the impact on sewer due to Covid-19. The City of Princeton is working on the finalization of the Federal EDA application on the industrial park. They are working on the Riebe Park and Riverside Park project converting the parks into a destination area. They will be applying for a grant through SMMPA for pollinator plants. General Manager Keith Butcher will help look into this grant.
- F. General Manager Keith Butcher reported auditors were at PUC from May 19 through the May 21 and everything went very well. He is currently working on the Minnesota Department of Commerce Conservation Improvement Report. An allegation was filed against Princeton Public Utilities with the Princeton Police Department. The PUC cooperated with the Police Department with the investigation. The allegations were deemed unfounded and the case has been closed. Roof inspections have been completed with no repairs being needed. There was an infrastructure meeting held with City Administrator Bob Barbian and Bob Gerold on May 26. The primary topic was a discussion on the City of Princeton's process with building permits as it relates to the typical residential buildings and how this information is shared with the PUC. CW Technology is working on the e-mail migration. On June 1 we will start doing AMI meter conversions again. Currently the PUC Commission Meetings are streamed online through Facebook. With the meeting in June, Keith Butcher would like to switch the video conferences to a You Tube channel. PUC's expired AED pads were donated to the Princeton Fire Department to be used for training purposes.

There was a discussion on the appointment of the SMMPA Alternate Representative Assignment. General Manager Keith Butcher is the primary representative for Princeton Public Utilities and the Alternate Representative was Commissioner Mindi Siercks who has recently retired from the PUC Commission Board. Mr. Hanson made a motion to appoint Electric Superintendent Ryan Grant as Princeton Public Utilities Alternate Representative. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

General Manager Keith Butcher updated the PUC Commission on PUC policy changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Late fees have continued to be been waived and the PUC is doing payment plans for customers. Disconnections are still being suspended. The minimum charge for small commercial customers has been waived. Compared to last year, uncollected accounts and payment plans are up. The consensus of the PUC Commission was to continue waiving late fees for the next month and review at that time. The Princeton City Council will review their late fees and advise the PUC what their decision would be.

City Administrator Bob Barbian has requested the PUC provide a quote for electric services to the Princeton Business Park which is not within the PUC service territory. The City of Princeton is not asking the PUC to start the process of acquiring this service territory. The quote would be to complete a Federal EDA Grant application. To provide an accurate quote, the PUC will need to know the specifics of what is needed there.

General Manager Keith Butcher is continuing to have discussions with the owners of the Princeton Golf Club regarding the new Clubhouse and Brewpub. Discussions have been very good with a mutual agreement to place the water main in the southern route. This project is significant for the developer and they has asked for some assistance from the PUC. This project will remove a large dead end in the system.

The Class of 2020 Graduation Banners were put up on May 26 recognizing the senior class. They will be taken down on June 15. This was a great project with everyone working together. The City of Princeton Public Works trimmed the trees so the banners were visible. Feedback on the project has been very positive. Mr. Hanson made a motion to provide the Senior Party with a donation of \$2,000.00 from the PUC. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

General Manager Keith Butcher reported on the PILOT work group. The City of Princeton created the work group consisting of City Councilor Jules Zimmer, City Administrator Bob Barbian, City Finance Director Steve Jackson, and PUC General Manager Keith Butcher. Mr. Erickson made a motion for PUC Commission Chair Greg Hanson to serve on the PILOT work group. Mr. Hanson seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The first meeting of the PILOT work group will be on Friday, May 29 at 10:00 AM.

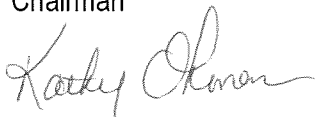
There was a discussion regarding the PUC Utility Billing. To change the public's perception of the PUC, Commissioner Erickson would like to see the billing separated into three separate bills. The discussion included different ideas on how best to change the public perception and billing of the PUC. PUC utility bills include three separate services electric, water and sewer which is included for the City.

There was a discussion regarding PUC Commissioners using their personal e-mail for PUC business versus having a PUC e-mail account to be used for business. Each councilor on the City of Princeton board is given a City e-mail account to be used for business. Once the e-mail conversion is completed this will be done.

There being no further business, Mr. Hanson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:14 p.m. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Gregory Hanson  
Chairman



Kathy Ohman  
Secretary