

## **PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

### **REGULAR MEETING**

**May 25, 2021, 10:00 A.M.**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the Regular Meeting of the Public Utilities Commission, City of Princeton, was held at the Mille Lacs County Historical Society Depot Museum in the Amdall Room, 202 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, on May 25, 2021, at 10:00 A.M.

Present: Chairman Greg Hanson and Commissioners Dan Erickson and Rick Schwartz.

Also Present: Manager Keith Butcher, Secretary Kathy Ohman, City Councilor Jules Zimmer, City Administrator Michele McPherson, Water Superintendent Scott Daniels, Electric Superintendent Jeremy Linden, Steve Downer from MMUA, Geoffrey Skeim, and Randy Hatch from the Princeton American Legion.

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Hanson at 10:01 A.M.

Chairman Hanson called for additions or deletions to the agenda. There were none.

Mr. Erickson made a motion to approve the agenda of the May 25, 2021 Regular PUC Commission Meeting. Mr. Schwartz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Steve Downer from Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) thanked Princeton Public Utilities along with General Manager Keith Butcher and staff for their support in the MMUA Scholarship Program. He went on to state the big difference between public power and other utilities is electricity is a service to be provided rather than a commodity to profit from. This service is best provided locally by those affected and served. Geoffrey Skeim was able to capture this in his essay for the Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship. Geoffrey Skeim was the local winner of the scholarship. His application was submitted to MMUA for the state level. Geoffrey Skeim took first place at the state level. Steve Downer congratulated Geoffrey and presented him with his scholarship.

Steve Downer left the meeting following his presentation.

Presented to the PUC Commission for approval were the corrected minutes from the April 27, 2021 Work Study Session, April 28, 2021 Regular PUC Commission Meeting and May 6, 2021 Joint City Council Meeting. There was a discussion on the May 6, 2021 Joint City Council Meeting with corrections being made. Mr. Erickson moved to approve the Minutes for the Corrected April 27, 2021 Work Study Session, the April 28, 2021 Regular PUC Commission Meeting, and the Corrected May 6, 2021 Joint City Council Meeting. Mr. Schwartz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Commission Chairman Greg Hanson stated the Public Comments portion of the PPU Commission Meetings is at each and every meeting. Customers have an opportunity at this time for any concerns or questions to be addressed. Comments and questions can either be made in person, e-mailed or by phone call.

Randy Hatch from the Princeton American Legion presented a letter of request to the PUC Commission asking for funding for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks display. Contributions made by individuals and businesses make this event possible. This year the event will be held on Sunday, July 4<sup>th</sup> in partnership with the Mille Lacs County Fair Board.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to place the discussion of a contribution to the Princeton American Legion on the June 2021 Regular PUC Commission Meeting agenda. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Randy Hatch left the meeting following his request.

After a discussion, Mr. Schwartz made a motion to approve the certification of accounts payable for the period of April 1, 2021 through April 30, 2021. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

## **6. REPORTS:**

- a. Both the April SMMPA Key Metrics worksheet and April 14<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting minutes were presented.
- b. The April 2021 PUC financial reports were reviewed along with Cash Reserves. The days of cash on hand as of April 30, 2021 was 131 in the Electric Department and 395 in the Water Department.
- c. General Manager Keith Butcher presented the Minnesota Department of Health Sanitary Survey report on PPU's public water system. After the annual MDH inspections, the survey is sent addressing any deficiencies or recommendations to the PUC. There were no deficiencies in this year's inspection, just reminders of records maintenance and training of staff.

## **7. UPDATES:**

- a. In the Generation Plant, Water Superintendent Scott Daniels reported Ziegler was at the PUC to inspect the Cat. #7 Engine. They sampled the oil chambers which were all fine. Employees are test running Engine #3 after repairs were made to the liner. The filtration arrived for the Jacket Water system and they will be installing that. They are still working on upgrading SCADA system.

In the Electric Department, Electric Superintendent Jeremy Linden reported the line crew has been labeling unique ID numbers on all PUC equipment. There are some small underground projects this year to get rid of overhead lines by Steinbrecher Painting and the Wayne Pike Industrial Park. The blue summer banners have been hung up downtown for the City of Princeton. They have also been working on GIS updates, doing locates and miscellaneous service orders.

- b. In the Water Department, Water Superintendent Scott Daniels reported they continue to work on the actuators at Water Treatment Plant #1. They have finished doing spring hydrant flushing. They have been working on spill containment improvements. They have also been working on installing the rolling gate openers. While they are waiting for more AMI water nodes to arrive, they will be working on lowering valve boxes.
- c. City Administrator Michele McPherson reported the City has been working on their audit. With the multiple changes in personnel at the City, the audit has been rescheduled for a couple weeks. There was a public hearing regarding annexing Sherburne Village into the City of Princeton. Baldwin Township would like to meet with the land owners of the park regarding the annexation. The Industrial Park is moving forward.

City Councilor Jules Zimmer reported on the simulcast project. This project will improve radio communications during all emergency personnel. They are working on a grant process and will be meeting with the counties regarding funding. The park dedication fees are being reviewed by city staff and will be presented to the Park Board.

- d. General Manager Keith Butcher reported the following:
  - i. Regulatory updates include the following reports being completed: The Consumer Confident Report has been completed and published. The SMMPA Load Forecast Report has been completed. We have received an updated Notification of Compliance from the MPCA regarding our Air Permit Inspection on May 17<sup>th</sup>. All engines were found to be compliant. The next reports due is the MnDOC CIP Report, EPA's Risk and Resiliency Report, and the MnDOC Electric Utility Report.
  - ii. General Manager Keith Butcher reported the auditors were at the PUC from May 18<sup>th</sup> through May 20<sup>th</sup>. Their estimated completion date is June 9<sup>th</sup> for inclusion in the City audit. There was a discussion on the auditors presenting the completed audit for the PUC Commission. This will be scheduled. We will be including a bill insert for the City of Princeton in this month's billing. DGR Engineers are planning a meeting for June 8<sup>th</sup> for the Electric System Study.
  - iii. General Manager Keith Butcher reported PUC employees have been working on a cyber-security training through SMMPA. He has been working to include the City staff in our existing cyber-security training.
  - iv. General Manager Keith Butcher reported he has continued to post pictures of participants in our rebate programs on Facebook and our website.
  - v. General Manager Keith Butcher reported the ECO bill has passed. The bill includes revisions to CIP for fuel switching guidelines, electric vehicle program account, and low income programs.
  - vi. General Manager Keith Butcher reported full disconnects resumed on May 20<sup>th</sup>. We are continuing to work with customers to help them catch up with arrears.
  - vii. PPU continues to follow CDC and MDH guidelines as it pertains to COVID protocols such as mask wearing and social distancing. We will be re-opening our facilities for tours.

## **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **a. AMI METERS**

With the AMI conversions, the Electric Department is 81.4% complete and the Water Department is 29.8% complete. Water AMI conversions are on hold until the water nodes ordered are received.

### **b. EV CHARGERS**

General Manager Keith Butcher reported the DC Fast Charger usage for the month of April was 21 sessions with 230 kWhs delivered. Funds collected totaled \$148.80. The installation of the two L2 Chargers should be within the next couple days. Host agreements have been filed with Mille Lacs County on May 20, 2021.

### **c. SERVICES TERRITORY / DEVELOPMENT**

General Manager Keith Butcher reported he is continuing negotiations with East Central Energy on the new Industrial Park.

### **d. UPDATE CREDIT CARD / ACH FEES**

After the Joint City Council Meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup>, Commissioner Dan Erickson would like to include options for a convenience fee with the 2022 budget proposal and fee structure. Until then, they would like to see the option of ACH payments promoted more.

### **e. WELLHEAD PROTECTION PLAN UPDATE**

General Manager Keith Butcher reported progress on the Wellhead Protection Plan update was delayed due to COVID and the retirement of our primary contact with the Minnesota Department of

Health. The 2021 approved budget included \$30,000.00 for contractor work and implementation of the update. The next step will be to have a meeting between General Manager Keith Butcher, Water Superintendent Scott Daniels and the Minnesota Department of Health sometime late June or early July.

## **9. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **a. COUNTY ROAD 4 / 7TH AVENUE POTENTIAL PROJECT (2022)**

General Manager Keith Butcher reported he has been working with the City of Princeton and Mille Lacs County regarding work being done on County Road 4 / 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue North. There will be discussions on whether to upgrade the sewer and water during that time.

### **b. HYDRANT ANNUAL FEE PROPOSAL**

General Manager Keith Butcher presented Memo 21-18: Hydrant Annual Fee. There has been a situations for using nearby hydrants rather than the one designated for such use. For only non-profit and governmental agencies needing to use hydrants on a regular basis, we could offer limited service. An annual non-refundable fee of \$350.00 could be paid for this service. This fee would be used to replace parts as they wear out from continual use. This service would not be available to private contractors. After a discussion, Mr. Erickson is in favor of implementing the Hydrant Annual Fee.

### **c. SEASONAL WATER SHUT-OFF DISCUSSION**

General Manager Keith Butcher presented Memo 21-19: Seasonal Water Shut-Off. PPU Policy offers shut-off services to residential customers in the fall who are away for extended period of time of one month or more during the heating season. Manager Butcher would like to modify this policy and add that PPU would offer one shut off at the curb stop per heating season. The policy will specify PPU responsibilities along with the customer's responsibilities. The shut off would need to be scheduled one full business day prior to the date required. This service is available to all customers.

### **d. SPILL PREVENTION, CONTROL, AND COUNTERMEASURE (SPCC) PLAN**

General Manager Keith Butcher reported the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan has been a multi-year effort involving SMMPA, DGR Engineers, and numerous PPU staff. The plan was developed under U.S. Environment Protection Agency rules to prevent the discharges of oil to navigable waters and the environment. PPU is committed to maintain high standards for spill prevention, control and countermeasures. Concerns would be storage tanks and transformers. This plan is to be reviewed every five years. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to accept the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **e. FIVE MEMBER COMMISSION DISCUSSION**

At the Joint City Council Meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup>, the discussion was brought up regarding changing the Three Member Commission to a Five Member Commission. To change to a Five Member Commission, it would need to be agreed upon by both the PPU and the City of Princeton. Once agreed upon, the next step would be to have it presented to the State of Minnesota Legislation for approval which would be the end of the year at the earliest.

### **f. PILOT WORKGROUP DISCUSSION**

The PILOT workgroup has met one time and had good discussions. PUC Commissioners would like to be kept up to date on discussions.

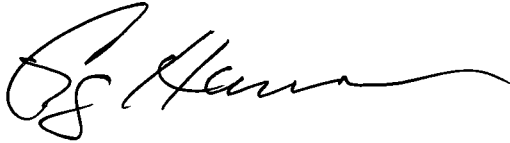
**g. UPDATE MMUA DELEGATION FORM**

Manager Keith Butcher presented Memo 21-20: MMU Delegate Form to the PUC Commission to be updated. Currently Keith Butcher is PPU representative with MMUA and Ryan Grant is the alternate. There was a discussion on updating the MMUA Delegate appointment. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to appoint Jeremy Linden, Electric Superintendent as the MMUA alternate delegate. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

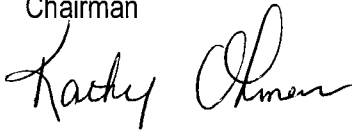
**h. NEXT MEETINGS**

There was a discussion on upcoming meetings being June 23<sup>rd</sup> and July 28<sup>th</sup> and how the dates work with summer scheduled. Chairman Greg Hanson will not be in attendance at the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. There was a discussion to appoint a vice chair to conduct meetings in the absence of the Chairman. Mr. Hanson made a motion to appoint Commissioner Dan Erickson as acting Vice Chair. Mr. Schwartz seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The consensus of the PUC Commission was to move the July 28<sup>th</sup> Regular PUC Commission Meeting from Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM to Tuesday, July 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

There being no further business, Mr. Erickson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:44 p.m. Mr. Schwartz seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Gregory Hanson  
Chairman



Kathy Ohman  
Secretary