

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

### REGULAR MEETING

August 25, 2021, 1:00 P.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 August 25, 2021, at 1:00 P.M.

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

Absent: None.

Also Present: Manager Keith Butcher, Secretary Kathy Ohman, City Councilor Jules Zimmer, City Administrator Michele McPherson, and Electric Superintendent Jeremy Linden.

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

Chairman Hanson called for additions or deletions to the agenda. Commissioner Rick Schwartz added to the agenda:

Updates:

- a. 1: #2 Backup

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

Mr. Schwartz moved to approve the minutes for the July 27, 2021 Regular PUC Commission Meeting and the August 19, 2021 Closed PUC Commission Meeting. Mr. Erickson 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.

Mr. Hanson read a letter submitted by customer Hans Papenhausen regarding his customer meter deposit. Mr. Papenhausen had stopped in the utility office on August 12<sup>th</sup> and requested the Commission to discuss the Deposit Policy. He is asking the Commission to reconsider that policy and refund deposits sooner. He is requesting to have his deposit returned.

After a discussion, Mr. Schwartz made a motion to approve the certification of accounts payable for the period of July 1, 2021 through July 31, 2021. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **6. REPORTS:**

- a. The August SMMPA Key Metrics worksheet and July 14<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting minutes were presented.
- b. The July 2021 PUC financial reports were presented.

## 7. UPDATES:

- a. Commissioner Rick Schwartz brought up the discussion if an electric and water superintendent is unable to attend the PUC Commission Meetings an alternate employee would attend.

In the Generation Plant, General Manager Keith Butcher reported they did a test run on Engine #3 which went well. The monthly test runs on the engines is being done today. Coolant was found in Engine #7 air box samples. We are working with Ziegler to replace the intercoolers. Parts are back ordered with unknown delivery time. The engine remains in service but will only be run if absolutely needed. Ziegler is planning on having one of Caterpillar's engineers come. Battery maintenance was performed. They are reviewing inventory counts and process to ensure appropriate parts are on hand to minimize down time. They have verified plant projects with SMMPA for 2022. The boiler rehab is complete and back in service. APEC has pulled jacket water samples on Engine #3 to ensure proper jacket water protection. Preventative maintenance was performed on the cooling fan motors.

In the Electric Department, Electric Superintendent Jeremy Linden reported AMI installations are done. There are six remaining AMR meters to be converted. The underground on 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue is almost complete. With the new apartments that are going in on 1<sup>st</sup> Street, he is working on getting developer costs which includes transformers. Lead time to receive the transformers is approximately 6 months to receive them. He is waiting for additional quotes before ordering. A small project on Highway 95 will be starting to reroute and go underground with lines. They continue working with DGR on the system study, supplying information to them. They have also been doing service installs, service orders and locates.

- b. In the Water Department, General Manager Keith Butcher reported the water line has been installed and the fire hydrant relocated at Taco John's. Two water lines were installed for a twin home in Pondview. Monthly filter testing has been completed. Ground and building maintenance has been done at the Water Treatment Plants. A deep well was discovered on the new apartment site. We are working with the construction crew to seal it. They continue working on valve box repairs and curb stops. Spill containment volumes have been verified.
- c. City Administrator Michele McPherson reported there is a city council meeting tonight regarding annexation of property formerly owned by Shipwreck. She anticipates the second reading will take place in approximately two weeks. It will then go to the state for remodeling. Budget discussions are beginning with all department supervisors. One item that will potentially affect the city is the Mille Lacs County budget difficulties and with no reserves, the City of Princeton is planning conservatively. 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue is proceeding with bid opening being on Thursday. Applications have closed for the position at the Waste Water Treatment Plant and interviews will begin. Rivertown Apartments are moving forward. The city is searching for funds to install the simulcast radio system on the AT&T tower. They will be meeting with local county and township boards regarding investments into the radio system. The grant program they originally were working on through the State of Minnesota is no longer available. American Rescue Funds are coming in.

City Councilor Jules Zimmer reported the city has started having discussions with the local township boards regarding possible orderly annexations. Mr. Zimmer stated since City Administrator Michele McPherson joined the city, city staff has been working together and working very hard.

- d. General Manager Keith Butcher reported the following:
- i. Regulatory updates include the MPCA DRF-2 Air Permit report has been submitted as has the MPCA Hazardous Waste report.
  - ii. The office staff have designed a process for meeting the new Cold Weather Rule timelines. Per the Department of Commerce at the MMUA conference, we anticipate the reporting requirements to be minimal. Our required Cold Weather notice will go out in the September Connector.
  - iii. General Manager Keith Butcher reported progress is being made on the credit check in lieu of deposits. We are hoping to launch this on October 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - iv. As part of our five year IT capital improvements plan we are replacing four of our oldest computers.
  - v. The next round of Big Check pictures are scheduled for September 16<sup>th</sup> with Nancy Kelly, our SMMPA ESR, Chairman Greg Hanson, and General Manager Keith Butcher.
  - vi. After one of the last AMI meter change outs, there was a customer equipment failure. General Manager Keith Butcher and Chairman Greg Hanson attended the MMUA Summer Conference. The conference was very good with a lot of information presented on current changes and updates. Public Safety Day is scheduled for September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

### **a. AMI METERS**

With the AMI conversions, the Electric Department is 99.8% complete with six meters left to convert. In the Water Department, they are 30.1% complete. We are still expecting a shipment of AMI water nodes in September as they did not arrive in August.

### **b. ACH DISCUSSION**

General Manager Keith Butcher stated a sign has been posted in the utility lobby promoting ACH. It has also been posted on the PPU Facebook page. There was a discussion on how to promote ACH more.

### **c. MINI-MANHOLE REQUIREMENT**

General Manager Keith Butcher presented Memo 21-24: Mini Manhole Cover Requirement. Memo 21-24 was presented for discussion in July 2021. Going forward the requirement would be if any curb stop is located in the driveway or sidewalk, contractors will be required to place a mini-manhole cover over the curb stop. After a discussion, Mr. Schwartz made a motion that property owners would be required to place mini-manhole covers on the curb stop if it is located in the driveway or sidewalk. Mini-manhole covers would be purchased from Princeton Public Utilities at a cost of \$125.00 plus applicable taxes. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **d. DEPOSIT POLICY**

General Manager Keith Butcher presented Memo 25-25: Application Fees. With using a credit check in lieu of a customer meter deposit there was a discussion on charging an application fee to the customer. There was a discussion on how much to charge, reviewing the procedure in one year and how to handle existing deposits. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to charge residential customers only a \$10.00 application fee when applying for service in Princeton. Any existing customer requesting their deposit be returned will be required to pay a \$10.00 fee to run a credit check prior to any decision being made. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**e. DONATION POLICY**

General Manager Keith Butcher presented Memo 21-26: Donation Summary. The past three years of donations was presented to the Commission. The City of Princeton shared their form they use for donations with General Manager Keith Butcher. There was a discussion on changes that should be made on the form for PPU. When a potential donation is being requested, this form would need to be completed and submitted to the PPU Commission along with a letter prior to the PPU Commission meeting. Manager Butcher will check with authorities on requirements for donations.

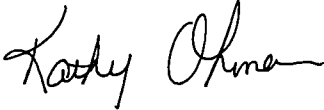
**9. NEW BUSINESS:**

There was no New Business.

There being no further business, Mr. Schwartz made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:52 p.m. Mr. Erickson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.



Gregory Hanson  
Chairman



Kathy Ohman  
Secretary