

**Minutes of a Regular Meeting of the
Waupun Utilities Commission
Monday, October 12, 2020**

The virtual and teleconference meeting was called to order by President Heeringa at 4:03 p.m.

Commissioners Gerritson, Heeringa, Homan, Kaczmariski, Thurmer and Westphal were present. Mayor Nickel was present. Commissioner Mielke was absent with notice.

Motion made by Thurmer, seconded by Gerritson and unanimously carried, to approve minutes from the September 14, 2020 meeting.

On motion by Thurmer, seconded by Westphal and unanimously carried, bills for month of September 2020 were approved as presented.

On motion by Gerritson, seconded by Kaczmariski and unanimously carried, year-to-date financial reports through August 2020 were approved as presented. Electric operating income was \$208,400 or \$122,800 above budget from lower power costs and the reduction in distribution expenses. Water operating income was \$471,800 or \$36,900 above budget due to fewer project and material requirements during the COVID-19 period. Sewer operating income was \$292,700 or \$88,400 above budget on strong public authority revenues and lower WWTP maintenance costs.

General Manager Brooks reported on an outage and status of projects. Comtech Substation Feeder #1 relocation is in progress with crews working to move the overhead 3 phase line, place conduit along river, and installation of new primary cable.

General Manager Brooks reported Treatment Facilities and Operations Superintendent Steve Schramm is being awarded "WVOA Southern District 2020 Operator of the Year." General Manager, Finance Director, Commissioners, & Mayor passed along their congratulations and kind words to Superintendent Schramm. Superintendent Schramm said that it is a team effort with his staff in achieving this award. Waupun Utilities recently earned the designation of "Smart Energy Provider" from the American Public Power Association for demonstrating practices of smart energy, energy efficiency programs, environmental and sustainability initiatives and positive customer experience. The electronics recycling event was a success collecting a total of 43,743 lbs. in recyclables. In honor of Public Power Week 2020, a door prize drawing is being held for eligible customers to win bill credits and Waupun Area Chamber of Commerce certificates.

Treatment Facilities and Operations Superintendent Schramm reported the water treatment facility is performing well. Treatment facilities staff and water/sewer crew have been working on cleaning of digesters to remove grit and debris buildup. Wastewater staff continued routine system maintenance throughout the month.

Finance Director Stanek presented the 2021 budget draft summaries for review. The overall budget is forecasted to increase \$17.1 million compared to 2020 budget amounts due to two partial street reconstruction projects scheduled in 2021 and commencement of the wastewater treatment plant construction upgrades. Significant capital expenditures include phase two of the Madison Street reconstruction, phase one of Rock/Newton Street reconstruction, replacement of the vector truck, Harris lift station retrofit and construction costs associated with the WWTP upgrade. The WWTP upgrades will be financed through USDA loan proceeds and the remainder of the capital budget will be financed with cash reserves. All other capital additions and expenses are routine in nature. The proposed overall budget would use \$1,123,100 in sewer cash reserves, use \$518,200 in water cash reserve and add \$95,300 to electric cash reserves. Staff will prepare the final budget in substantially the same form with modification to the presented wage adjustment to mirror the City of Waupun's agreed upon raise percentage as approved by the Common Council.

Discussion was held regarding the 2020 Tax Roll process for unpaid delinquent accounts. Wisconsin state statutes allow utilities to place unpaid debt to the current year property taxes. Unpaid balances are up compared to prior years due to utilities' inability to disconnect for non-payment due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the extended moratorium put in place by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin. Notice will be given by October 15th to owner and tenant of property in which utility service has been provided prior to October 1st for the amount due in arrears. If the amount due is not paid before November 1st, a penalty of 10% of the amount of arrears will be added. If the arrears plus any added penalty are not paid by November 15th, the arrears and penalty will be levied as a tax against the lot or parcel of real estate to which utility service was provided.

On motion by Kaczmariski, seconded by Homan and unanimously carried, the amendment to the Waupun Utilities COVID-19 Policy was approved. Employees will be given up to 80 hours of paid time off due to COVID-19 in the event the need would arise through the end of December 2020. This update is consistent with the City of Waupun's COVID-19 Policy revision approved by the Common Council.

Motion made by Westphal, seconded by Thurmer and unanimously carried, the signatory delegation authorization to provide General Manager, or his designee, authorization to execute documents necessary to carry out USDA agreement terms for the Wastewater Treatment Plant project was approved. Signatory authority for this project was previously limited to only Mayor Nickel.

On motion by Homan, seconded by Thurmer and unanimously carried, meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

The next commission meeting is scheduled on November 9, 2020, at 4:00 p.m.

Jen Benson
Office & Customer Service Lead