

MINUTES  
LAKE CRYSTAL UTILITIES COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 9, 2024  
8:00 A.M.

The following Commissioners were present:  
Commissioners McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Staff Present:

Jeremy Hutchens, Water/Wastewater Superintendent; Madison Allen, Electric Superintendent; Sara Raisbeck, Administrative Assistant; Angie Grafstrom, City Administrator; Lisa Jacoby, Utility Billing Clerk.

Others Present:

John Graupman, Bolton & Menk, Inc.; Todd Wiens, Mayor.

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m. by Chairman McCoy.

Commissioner McCoy moved, and Commissioner Ahrenstorff seconded the motion to approve the December 5, 2023, regular meeting minutes. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Commissioner Ahrenstorff moved, and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to approve utility bills totaling \$377,372.12. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Commissioner Ahrenstorff moved and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to approve the following 2024 Appointments and Designations:

Commission Chairperson: Dennis McCoy

Commission Vice Chairperson: Brad Ahrenstorff

Commission Secretary: Angela Grafstrom

Authorized Signer: Dennis McCoy

Official Newspaper: Lake Crystal Tribune

Official Depository: MinnStar Bank

Meeting Date and Time: First Tuesday of the month at 8 a.m.

The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

John Graupman updated the Commission on the Wastewater Regionalization with the City of Mankato. Mankato received the preliminary results from the SEH Study, however, there are still some questions that need to be answered before proceeding forward with this option.

Commissioner Ahrenstorff moved, and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to approve proceeding to look at the following three possibilities per Graupman's recommendation: Regionalization with the City of Mankato, upgrade the existing facility, and temporary upgrades to the existing facility that would give the City another 3-5 years of time. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Discussion was held regarding the status of the power plant generators and the fact that they are very old and difficult to repair and find parts for. Chris Nordquist, DGR Engineering has recommended that the Commission move forward with recommendations made in the Electric Systems Study drafted in 2022.

Commissioner McCoy moved and Commissioner Ahrenstorff seconded the motion to proceed with Phase 1 recommendations of the Electric System Study. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Commissioner Ahrenstorff moved and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to approve Task Order #5 for Design of the New South Substation. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Commissioner McCoy moved and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to approve going out for bids for the Power Transformer. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Commissioner McCoy moved and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to approve the Letter of Understanding between IBEW Local 160 and the City of Lake Crystal updating the Collective Bargaining Agreement Article XX Personal Leave to reflect the Minnesota Earned Safe and Sick Time (ESST) Law as of January 1, 2024. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Commissioner Richards moved and Commissioner McCoy seconded the motion to approve the IRS Standard Mileage Reimbursement for 2024 for transportation and travel expenses at \$.67 per mile for all miles of business use. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Grafstrom and Hutchens presented information from Servline on their Utilities Protection Program. The cost for the program is passed through to the customer. Staff would like to see it added to the water base rate on all customers as the city has 5-6 instances of leaky toilets,

etc. per year. The program would help ease the burden on customers when they have an issue and help ensure the city gets paid for the extra usage in a timely fashion. Last year we certified one customer to taxes as they were struggling to catch up after extra usage. Hutchens suggested we get public input. The commission would like input before deciding. Grafstrom will also follow up with Kennedy on some legal questions regarding the meeting and the fee.

Commissioner Ahrenstorff moved and Commissioner Richards seconded the motion to hold a public meeting regarding the Servline Utilities Protection for water and sewer leaks. The following vote was had and taken,

Ayes: McCoy, Ahrenstorff, Richards.

Nays: None.

Superintendent Hutchens updated the Commission on the following:

- Filter Media Replacement is on schedule. There is a preconstruction meeting on January 16<sup>th</sup>.
- There is a new Wastewater Permit that the City is required to complete for the MPCA. Working with John Graupman on this permit and the changes necessary.
- Crysteel Forcemain / Air Release Manholes that need repair have been identified and will work on replacing them this winter.
- Well #2 is not functioning properly. Working with Traut Well Company to determine the best way to repair the Well.

City Administrator Grafstrom updated the Commission on the following:

- Continuing to work on both the Wastewater and Electric upgrade projects. Both of these projects will likely need to seek Capital Budget Funds.
- Met with Servline representatives for more information about the water and sewer leak programs. Servline is recommended by MN Rural Water Association. There are a couple of options of how this could be paid for.
- We will need to address the summer sewer cap for the months of May – September. In 2023, customers will pay for all water use and the sewer was capped at 6,000 gallons.

Superintendent Allen updated the Commission on the following:

- Power outage on December 19<sup>th</sup> that was caused by a squirrel.
- Performed two solar commission tests, both passed and are in service.
- Continuing to work on the Powder Werks project. Obtaining directional boring quotes.
- Generator update: Generated the 12-cylinder Fairbanks on December 20<sup>th</sup>. Caterpillar did their maintenance check per our maintenance agreement with them. Received the generation audit report from MMUA. Still waiting to hear back from Wheeler World on the Cooper.

Information items:

- Revenue and expense summary reports.
- Update Conflict of Interest Form
- Next meeting is February 6, 2024, at 8 a.m.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

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Dennis McCoy, Chairman

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Angela Grafstrom, Secretary