

**MINUTES**  
**Lake Crystal Public Utilities Commission**  
**Tuesday September 3, 2024, 8:00 am**  
**City Council Chambers**  
**100 E. Robinson St.**

**Call to Order**

McCoy called the meeting of the Lake Crystal Public Utilities Commission to order at 8:00 am. The following Commissioners were present: Commissioners McCoy, Ahrenstorff, and Richards.

Staff Present: Jeremy Hutchens, Water/Wastewater Superintendent; Madison Allen, Electric Superintendent; Angie Grafstrom, City Administrator; Ramsey Graff, Utility Billing Clerk.

Others Present: Gina Cooper and John Graupman, of Bolton-Menk

**Approve Minutes of August 6, 2024, Regular Meeting**

***Motion made by Commissioner Ahrenstorff to approve the minutes of the August 6, 2024 regular meeting pending clerical revisions,*** motion seconded by Commissioner Richards and carried unanimously.

**Payment of Bills**

The commission reviewed the bills prior to the meeting.

***Motion made by Commissioner McCoy to approve payment of PUC bills totaling \$295,242.52,*** motion seconded by Commissioner Ahrenstorff and carried unanimously.

**Action Items**

Electric Apprenticeship Program with Chippewa Valley

Superintendent Allen presented details on the Electric Apprenticeship Program with Chippewa Valley. It would be 4 years of classes for the 2 apprentices. The cost for both for the full four years would be approximately \$31,311.68 which could rise depending on tuition increases which are subject to change yearly. The two apprentices may be able to test out of one year of classes. Superintendent Allen explained the benefits of choosing this specific program over others offered and his desire for this level of higher education. Administrator Grafstrom voiced support for this decision.

***Motion made by Commissioner McCoy to approve sending both apprentices to the Chippewa Valley Electric Apprenticeship Program for the four years,*** motion seconded by Commissioner Richards and carried unanimously.

Approve 3 Phase Pad Mount Transformer Quote (B & B, TR Electric)

Superintendent Allen requested approval of a 3-phase pad mount transformer quote. Allen explained that we are short in our inventory for this type of transformer, and it is an important piece of infrastructure to make sure we have on hand. This would be coming out of the 2025 budget. The following two quotes were received:

B & B Electric for \$17,895.00

T&R Electric for \$20,622.00

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***Motion made by Commissioner Ahrenstorff to approve the transformer quote from B & B Electric in the amount of \$17,895.00, motion seconded by Commissioner McCoy and carried unanimously.***

Approve Manhole Quote (Hiperline)

Superintendent Hutchens had presented the manhole quote at the last meeting, but the PUC requested a new quote. The new total is \$12,984.10 for 2 manholes. There is the potential this will exceed the budget. However, discussion was had between Administrator Grafstrom and Hutchens that they may have transferred some sewer funds to reserves in 2023 that could be used now.

***Motion made by Commissioner Ahrenstorff to approve the Hiperline quote of \$12,984.10 to repair two manholes, motion seconded by Commissioner McCoy and carried unanimously.***

Travel Request for W/WW \$1603.06

The commission reviewed a travel request for water / wastewater employees Ethan Karels and Jackson Thate totaling \$1603.06 for classes in St Cloud Minnesota. Hutchens explained it was a refresher class and a test would be taken. Karels would be testing for his Class D Wastewater certification and Thate would be testing for his Class C Water Certification.

***Motion made by Commissioner McCoy to approve the travel request of \$1603.06 for the two water and wastewater employees, motion seconded by Commissioner Ahrenstorff and carried unanimously.***

**Discussion Items**

Power Plant

Grafstrom and Gina Cooper met with the Humphrey School and the MN Dept of Commerce on future plans for the generator plant. Cooper spoke about the Green Steps Program and seeking opportunities for efficient growth. No action required by the PUC.

RFPs for Electrical Engineering

Grafstrom suggested that going forward as large projects come up, the commission should consider going out for RFPs for engineering firms. It has been suggested that maybe we should consider firms from Minnesota, like Barr Engineering who are more familiar with Minnesota regulations. The commission agreed this may be a good idea as they have not really done so in the past and with future projects it might not hurt to look at options. No action required at this time.

DGR Award Recommendation (approve by council 8/19) and Plan Discussion

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The commission reviewed the DGR Engineering Recommendation Letter. The city received two bids:

Niagara Power Transformers (Niagara) of Buffalo NY of \$1,612,224.00  
WEG Transformers of \$1,708,330.00.

The City Council had approved the Niagara power plant bid on 8/19/2024. The Commission discussed the different companies and agreed that the Niagara power transformers being built in Buffalo NY were likely the better choice of the two bids. Grafstrom noted the first payment would need to be made in September and that council had also approved a resolution allowing the electric department to pay now for the transformer and be reimbursed from the bond when it is taken out. No action required by the PUC at this time.

### **Staff Reports**

#### Water/Wastewater

Superintended Hutchens spoke to Joe Traut about well #2 Traut Co., and they will be in town to do the pulling, brushing and televising of this well in the next coming weeks. He will keep the commission informed on the matter of well #2. Hutchens mentioned he was informed there could be \$10,000 plus available between two different grants that could be applied to the work on Well #2.

Superintendent Hutchens included a written report in the packet and updated the Commission on the following:

Hiperline Manhole Quote as discussed earlier in the minutes.

Water/Wastewater employee class travel request as discussed earlier in the minutes.

Well #2 as discussed earlier in the minutes.

Westrum Leak Detection – On August 15<sup>th</sup> Hutchens had Stacey from Westrum in town doing his yearly water leak inspection, and he found two leaks. One is a 6' watermain that Hutchens had GM hydro excavate for us and verified – Location: E Watonwan and S Murphy. The other leak was a service leak, Hutchens and staff potholed the leak and found water coming from the homeowner's service somewhere between their house and the watermain. It is

Water/Wastewater employee Jackson Thate's residence, and he is fully aware it is his responsibility to fix. He is working with GM to coordinate these repairs as of 8-21-24.

High Service Pump #4 – Hutchens spoke with John Graupmann on Friday August 23<sup>rd</sup>, and they are still working on final numbers for the pipe replacement, electrical, SCADA and start up numbers. As of now it's around \$100,000 mark but he's hoping to have something more formal mid next week.

#### City Administrator

Administrator Grafstrom included a written report in the packet. She updated the commission on the school board meet and greet scheduled for the evening of September 3; the generation meeting her and Councilor Cooper had that was previously discussed in the minutes, her application for the SMIF Glen Taylor grant, and the city's new Climate Corps member. The items were for their information.

#### Electric Superintendent

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Superintendent Allen provides a written report in the packet which updated the Commission on the following:

Outage Report: There were no outages to report.

Still waiting for quotes for the power plant roof.

Crystal Gardens electric infrastructure installation is complete.

Powder Werks three phase transformer is expected to arrive between now and October.

Generation step up transformer repair is scheduled for the week of October 14<sup>th</sup> weather dependent.

**Information Items**

2024 Letter of intent – Benco Electric Cooperative Service Territory

Grafstrom provided a copy of the letter in the packet and gave a brief update on where we are in the process.

Revenue and Expense Report Summary

The commission reviewed the report and noted that Grafstrom forgot to attach the wastewater expenses this time.

Next Meeting will be Tuesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024

**Commission Comments and Observations**

None.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business of the Lake Crystal Public Utilities Commission Meeting of September 3, 2024, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 am.

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Dennis McCoy, Commission Chair

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Angela Grafstrom, City Administrator