

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF UTILITY BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 13, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Regular Meeting of the Utility Board of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted in the Council Chambers - City Hall Building, 220 North Hastings Avenue, on April 13, 2023.

ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in Regular Session by Bill Hitesman with the following members present: Mark Hemje, Susan Meeske, Shayne Raitt, Kevin Johnson, Erik Nielsen, Derek Zeisler, Jaci Higgins, Lori Hartman, Noel Neinhueser, Keith Leonhardt, Robin Ginn, Shawn Hartmann, Roger Nash, Karl Block, Brian Strom, LeeVrooman, Brandan Lubken, Tony Herrman, Shawn Metcalf, and Jesse Oswald.
Absent: Jeanette Dewalt, Butch Eley, and Corey Stutte.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Bill Hitesman led the group in the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

MOTION TO ADOPT CURRENT AGENDA FOR April 13, 2023 REGULAR MEETING.

Moved by Hemje and seconded by Raitt to adopt the current agenda for the April 13, 2023 Regular Meeting. Roll Call: Ayes: Meeske, Hemje, Raitt, Hitesman Nays: None. Absent: Jeanette Dewalt. The motion carried.

PUBLIC NOTICE - Official Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Tuesday, April 11, 2023. Pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute Section 84-1412, the public is advised that a copy of today's agenda and all reproducible written material which will be discussed at today's meeting is located at the back of the Council Chambers. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted on the south wall of the Council Chambers which is accessible to members of the public.

MANAGER'S COMMUNICATIONS:

Shayne Raitt has announced that he will be resigning from the board.

BOARD CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS:

Wishes Shayne well and thanks him for being a member of the board. Last meeting in June.

BOARD MEMBERS' COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATIONS:

None.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. All Consent Items.

- (a) Approval of the minutes of the Hastings Utility Board Meeting of March 9, 2023.

Moved by Meeske seconded by Hemje. Ayes: Hitesman, Meeske, heme, Raitt. Nays: None, Absent: Dewalt

REGULAR AGENDA:

2. Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting.

3. General Business.

(a) Finance

i. Q1 Update

Financials are still being updated into the new system. March financials will be a full financial statement.

Jaci presents the Fiscal Year 2023 Quarter 1 update.

Financial and Operating Report

Electric Summary - PILOT: First couple months are paid at the prior year's payment schedule; payments are then trued up after the audit.

Gas Summary - Purchased Gas: Majority of gas is purchased during winter months.

December was a particularly high gas purchase. PILOT: First couple months are paid at the prior year's payment schedule; payments are then trued up after the audit.

Hastings Utilities Headcount: Elec/Subs: Crew added during FY23 budget approval process. Engineering: Stormwater tech approved during FY23.

Heating Degree Days - December 2022 heating days were well above the previous FY and the National Weather Service defined Normal Heating degree days = Very Cold Dec.

ii. Asst. Finance Director Status

Lori gives an update. Closes Saturday the 15th. Monday will begin the process. Will develop a spreadsheet and the most qualified candidates will be forwarded to Roger.

iii. Budget Prep Assignments

Brian to speak about what they are doing.

Preparations have begun for the 2024 budget. Brian and Jaci will assist the operations department. Jaci will be working with Noel, the electric department and coordinating with Shane Stone and Derek Zeisler to complete the budget for WEC 1.

Brian will be working with Brandan for the water, sewer, and gas departments.

Teaming up with Karl to complete the administration budget.

The capital budget will be completed by Lee. Finance, engineering and HR departments will be involved in the process as well.

(b) Production

i. WEC Regulatory Compliance-Bottom Ash Project

Keith speaks about the bottom ash project. Bids have opened.

This project was not budgeted as we were waiting for EPA to approve the process.

After a discussion, they approved the project.

Will we have to close Whelan 1 during the process? Yes, we will have a regular scheduled outage.

How long will this take? 3-4 weeks.

There will be a lot of carry-over projects.

Need a recommendation to move forward/

Meeske recommends we support the staff's position, Raitt seconds; Yays: Hitesman, Hemje, Meeske, Raitt. Nays: None. Absent: Dewalt.

ii. Community Solar Expansion

Derek to explain the power point on solar expansion.

Hastings CommunitySolar Farm - Phase 2

Inflation Reduction Act (IRA)

*Signed into law Aug 16th 2022

*Direct pay refund equal to the amount of credit

*30% (potential for more)

Local Industry Demand

*Phase 1 has been completely sold out.,

*3 Businesses in town are looking for renewable options

-Utilities responsible for looking into options to fulfill a customers needs

DC/AC Output*

* Phase I was 2916 ea 330W an 3096 ea 335W

- Total 1,999,440 W or 1,999kW or 2 MW DC

- 1.33 DC/AC Ration = 1.5 MW AC Output

* Phase II planned for 10275 ea 545 W

- Total 5,599,875 W or 5600 kW or 5.6 MW DC

- 1.21DC/AC Ration = 4.63 MW AC output

Recommendation to move forward.

Meeske recommends that we take the staff recommendation to go with GenPro. Raitt seconds. Yays: Hitesman, Hemje, Meesek, Raitt. Nays: None. Absent: Dewalt.

(c) Operations

(d) Administration

i. Utility Bill/Print RFP

Karl to discuss PowerPoint.

Utility Bill Print/Mail Outsourcing

Sample of Potential Bill Rework

- * Provide an updated look
- * Display History/Comparison of services
- * Opportunity for clarity and additional information
- * Growth potential to integrate with future billing and communication partners.

Transitions and Efficiencies Gained

- * Outsourcing of the printing/mailing will gain approximately 20-25 hours/week after implementation
- * Equates to \$740-930 in payroll/week that could be transitioned to other duties (AMI/mCARE)
- * As we continue to move toward 100% readings from the AMI system, additional reading duties are placed on customer service.
- * mCARE Automation of the service ticket system is currently being tested for rollout late 2023.
- * Potential Integrations with Customer Portal and Payment Systems (currently reviewing to determine if other options are available to improve our customer experience)

Timeline

April 13th - Utility Advisory Board Meeting

TBD - City Council Work Session (Introduction)

Early May - Project Kick-off

August - Go Live with 1st Production Run of New Bills.

If customers have automated billing, do they still get a monthly bill? Yes, they have the option.

Does this integrate with the current customer connection? Yes.

Will there be any layoffs because of this? No. There are other duties that they will be doing.

Will paper be reduced and save costs? Is that a goal at some point? This is step 1 to shifting.

(e) Other

i. Yost Bldg Offices-Development Services Temp Relocation

Shawn Metcalf to give an overview of the transition of city hall.

Be out of the current building in two months.

Lee added that they are doing some work at Yost and the Airport to help the transition and move people around.

Will continue to hold meetings at City Hall until the Council moves. Plans are to hold meetings at the Airport when it is ready.

4. Possible Closed Session (if necessary or requested).

ADJOURN:

Moved by Meeske seconded by Raitt there being no further business to adjourn at 10:33 am.
Roll Call: Ayes: Bill Hitesman, Mark Hemje, Susan Meeske, Shayne Raitt. Nays: None. Absent: Jeanette Dewlat. Meeting Adjourned.

APPROVED:

Board Secretary