

CITY OF HASTINGS, NEBRASKA
MINUTES OF UTILITY BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Thursday, April 10, 2025

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a Regular Meeting of the Utility Board of Hastings, Nebraska was conducted Airport Conference Room - Hastings Municipal Airport 3300 W. 12th Street, on April 10, 2025.

ROLL CALL:

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. in Regular Session by Bill Hitesman with the following members present: Jeanette Dewalt, Mark Hemje. Derek Zeisler, Erik Nielsen, Kirk Layton, Steve Huntley, Shane Stone, Larry Consbruck, Noel Nienhueser, Karl Block, Jaci Higgins, Kyle Patten, Jason Redding, Lee Vrooman, Lori Hartman, Brandan Lubken, Jay Beckby, Mark Funkey, Jesse Oswald, Tony Herrman. Absent: Susan Meeske, Scott Kvols

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 10, 2025 REGULAR MEETING.

Moved by Dewalt and seconded by Hemje to adopt the current agenda for the April 10, 2025 Regular Meeting. Roll Call: Ayes: Hitesman, Dewalt, Hemje. Nays: None. Absent: Meeske, Kvols. The motion carried.

PUBLIC NOTICE - Official Notice of the Regular Meeting was published in the Hastings Tribune on Tuesday, April 8, 2025. 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 Conference Room. Also, a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act is posted on the south wall of the Airport Conference Room, which is accessible to members of the public.

MANAGER'S COMMUNICATIONS:

We are starting the process of getting the budget documentation put together. Appreciate the members of City Council that stopped by the sub-committee so we could go over how our budget process takes place.

Asked Brandan to say a few words because we have a few retirements coming up that we believe need acknowledgment.

Brandan talks about the two men who are retiring from the gas department. They have 84 years combined knowledge. May 2nd, Bob Helton will be retiring. Has been here for 39 years. April 17th, Ed Fleharty will be retiring after 45 years. We have learned so much from them. There is always good and bad with people retiring. We appreciate all of their hard work and dedication. We wish them the best.

BOARD CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS:

Bill would like them to know that we appreciate the years of service that they have given to the Hastings Utilities. We also appreciate Mark and Derek putting a committee together to review the budget and take a look at and educate most of us.

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 13, 2025.

Hemje moved, Dewalt second to approve the minutes from the meeting on March 13, 2025. Roll Call: Ayes: Hitesman, Dewalt, Hemje. Nays: None. Absent: Meeske, Kvols. Approved.

REGULAR AGENDA:

2. Unfinished Business of Preceding Meeting.

3. General Business.

- (a) Finance

- i. Monthly Financial Comments

You should still be receiving monthly financial as they get completed by accounting. We will leave this on here in case anyone ever has any questions on the financial documents or any financial in general.

- (b) Production

- i. Coal Contract Extension

There was a redacted version of the copy handed out to Board members and can be discussed further if there are any questions.

We will be asking the recommendation of the board members to approve this to go to city council.

Shane Stone goes over the highlights of the coal contract.

How often do we look at the coal agreement? Historically, it has been about 3–5 years. We always try to get the best deal.

Recommended by Dewalt to approve this to go to City Council. Second by Hemje. Roll Call: Ayes: Hitesman, Dewalt, Hemje. Nays: None. Absent: Meeske, Kvols.

Approved.

(c) Operations

i. March 19th Outage Summary

Noel gives us details about the March 19th Blizzard Event.

- The first storm outage call came in at 2:30 am. The wind was up and it was more like a hailstorm than a blizzard.
- By 5:00 am it was a full-blown blizzard. Everyone was called in.
- Outages peaked shortly after 9:00 am at about 5000 customers on Tunet.
- At 9:30 am amid the storm the first large area was brought back returning 148 customers.
- SCADA, GIS mapping, and Tunet mapping were heavily utilized to determine scale and prioritize areas for restoration efforts.
- Juniata had broken poles on its primary feed down 12th Street and on its back up feed down DLD. DLD was impassable so repairs had begun before noon on the primary feed down 12th Street.
- By 1:30 pm, 2000 customers were without power. Half of Don Henry and the WEC Substation had sustained damage. Feeders from those substations had been rerouted to other feeders.
- Transmission lines had been restored and were holding.
- The water department was working to clear DLD and the gas department was delivering poles and vacuuming holes for replacement poles.
- All crews worked straight through the day. The water department delivered food to crew sites shortly after 5:00 pm.
- The majority of Juniata was restored about 9:00 pm. At that time, a small portion of the crews began being sent home as they would be returning at 6:00 am to take over.
- By 12:15 am on the 20th, just over 100 customers were without power. A small number of those were residential customers that were in between areas of major damage. The others were customers such as irrigation wells and street light services which were a lower priority.
- At 12:15 am a skeleton crew was kept to keep working until 6:00 am to be available for emergencies such as fire calls. Others were sent home to return at 8:00 am.
- The last known residential customer from the initial wave of the storm was restored at 8:00 pm Tuesday the 20th.
- The 20 electrical department employees logged over 400 hours during the Wednesday workday. All employees also worked a minimum of a 12-hour day on Thursday.
- Monday the 24th, a 4-man crew left with 3 bucket trucks and a skid loader to provide Mutual Aid to Fremont. They returned on the 28th.
- Line Crew have replaced over 20 poles since the 19th which were either temporarily braced or noted as heavily damaged, but not completely broken.
- Saturday the 22nd, a 115 KV insulator failed that was damaged in the storm.

- A 115KV failed arrestor jumper was found on Monday the 24th.
- 34.5 KV spacer brackets that were damaged but inaccessible due to snow and mud were replaced on the 27th.
- The system was return to "Normal" on Friday, April 4th when the Don Henry West bus was returned to service.
- Two 13.8 KV breakers failed at Don Henry. They are 1971 breakers scheduled for upgrade in 26-27 budget cycles.
- The 13.8 KV breakers just taken out of service in January during the B Street substation upgrade were utilized.
- Breaker Bus Terminal posts were also taken from the B Street switchgear during the repairs to repair Don Henry feeder 234 which was damaged a few years ago.
- SCADA reported 372 unplanned breaker cycles on the 19th. In each of the last 4 years, it has not been over 100 total.

(d) Administration

i. Elimination of postings/potential late fees.

Karl Block explains the Next Phase of ERP (Utility Billing).

New Features and Changes

- Communication Options: Email, text, automated voice.
- Updated Customer Portal: Schedule payments, see meter data, set self-service alerts.
- Change to budget billing: 12 month spread, no settlement month.

Postings/Late Fees

- No other peer utilities currently use postings
- Improved communication methods to avoid lost/unseen posting
- No need to roll truck to post to address
- Start June 1, 2025
- Will work with Tony to get the word out and ask customers to ensure we have current contact information

(e) Other

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

ADJOURN:

Moved by Dewalt seconded by Hemje there being no further business to adjourn at 10:04 am.

Roll Call: Ayes: Bill Hitesman, Jeanette Dewalt, Mark Hemje. Nays: None. Absent: Susan Meeske, Scott Kvoles. Meeting Adjourned.

APPROVED:

Board Secretary