

## BLACK RIVER FALLS UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

August 28, 2023

Utility Commission President John Lund called a meeting of the Black River Falls Municipal Utility Commission to order on August 28, 2023 at 4:30 p.m. in the Utility Conference Room at 349 South McKinley Street. Commissioners in attendance were Jeff Amo, Jay Eddy, Don Mathews, and Pete Olson. Also present were General Manager Casey Engebretson, Electric Supt. Kevin LaValley, Office Manager Julie Babcock, and Garrett Aleckson (Banner Journal).

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathews and seconded by Commissioner Olson to approve the minutes from the July 31, 2023 regular meeting.

Aye: Lund, Amo, Eddy, Mathews, and Olson  
Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Eddy and seconded by Commissioner Amo to approve the accounts payable vouchers; CK #41398 - #41465; EP #100747 - #100753 – Totaling \$641,851.42.

Aye: Lund, Amo, Eddy, Mathews, and Olson  
Motion Carried.

The Commission reviewed the July 2023 arrears.

Julie Babcock presented the draft 2024 electric, water, and sewer budgets. Julie stated that she completed two (2) water budgets, with one (1) including a Simplified Water Rate (SCR) increase. The Commission directed Julie to move forward with the SRC draft water budget for approval of final budgets at the September meeting.

Kevin LaValley and Casey Engebretson updated the Commission on the progress for designing repairs on the forebay gates. Warren Hayden, Mead & Hunt, proposed an abbreviated repair, which would extend the functionality 5-10 years. Warren estimated that a complete refurbishment, completed with a drawdown or cofferdam, is estimated to cost approximately \$1,500,000. Kevin and Casey agreed that postponing the complete refurbishment would allow time to pay off one of the dam construction loans in 2030 and allow more flexibility for the Utility to fund the project with a lesser effect on rates.

Casey Engebretson informed the Commission that BRFMU was approached by the Village of Merrillan regarding their plan to enter two (2) of their employees in the state indentured Electric Lineworker Apprenticeship program. A requirement of the program is that apprentices must be accompanied by a Journey Lineworker while obtaining on the job work experience and hours. Since Merrillan does not have a Journey Lineworker on staff, they inquired about the willingness of BRFMU to enter into an agreement to allow Merrillan apprentices to work with BRFMU journey lineworkers in BRFMU's electric system. The agreement also provided for provisions where BRFMU would provide mutual aid to Merrillan in the case of emergencies. The Commission was generally supportive of the apprenticeship portion, however, the Commission questioned the need of the emergency mutual aid, as mutual aid is already available through the Municipal Electric Utilities of Wisconsin. The Commission requested more information be brought to future meetings.

Casey Engebretson presented a community contribution request to the Commission. Black River Memorial Hospital, Krohn Clinic, and the Jackson County Health & Human Services are sponsoring a

walk-a-thon to raise funds and awareness for mental wellness. Casey informed the Commission that Value of Public Power funds could be used to fund this request.

A motion was made by Commissioner Amo and seconded by Commissioner Olson to make a contribution to the Walk-a-Thon in the amount of \$250.00.

Aye: Lund, Amo, Eddy, Mathews, and Olson  
Motion carried.

Casey Engebretson informed the Commission that the FERC Triennial Dam Safety inspection is scheduled for Wednesday August 30<sup>th</sup>.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathews and seconded by Commissioner Eddy at 5:36 p.m. to Adjourn to Closed Session pursuant to Section 19.85 to consider employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation of any public employee subject to the jurisdiction or authority of the governing body; for the purpose of discussing preliminary 2024 wage adjustments and review possible changes to the General Manager's contract.

Aye: Lund, Amo, Eddy, Mathews, and Olson  
Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Amo and seconded by Commissioner Olson at 5:51 p.m. to reconvene to Open Session.

Aye: Lund, Amo, Eddy, Mathews, and Olson  
Motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathews and seconded by Commissioner Eddy to delete the current language in Section 4.1: Salary and replace it with the amended language as presented; and take no action on the amendment proposal presented for Section 4.3: Vacation and Sick Leave.

Aye: Lund, Amo, Eddy, Mathews, and Olson  
Motion carried.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday September 25, 2023.

A motion was made by Commissioner Eddy and seconded by Commissioner Olson to adjourn the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

Casey Engebretson, General Manager

comm.mtg.minutes.8.28.2023