

BLACK RIVER FALLS UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

September 27, 2021

Utility Commission President John Lund called a meeting of the Black River Falls Municipal Utility Commission to order on September 27, 2021 at 4:29 p.m. in the Utility Conference Room at 119 North Water Street. Commissioners in attendance were Jeff Amo, Jay Eddy, Pete Olson, and Don Mathews. Also present were General Manager Casey Engebretson, Office Manager Julie Babcock, Electric Superintendent Kevin LaValley, and Garrett Aleckson (Banner Journal).

A motion was made by Commissioner Eddy and seconded by Commissioner Olson to approve the minutes from the August 30, 2021 regular meeting.

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

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathews and seconded by Commissioner Eddy to approve the accounts payable vouchers; CK #37538 and #37626 - #37692; HC #100540 - #100547 – Totaling \$995,802.00.

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

Julie Babcock reviewed the August 2021 financials.

Julie Babcock reviewed the August 2021 arrears.

Julie Babcock reviewed the 2022 draft electric, water, and sewer budgets with the Commission. The draft budget was discussed. The draft electric budget was sent to the USDA for review. The budgets will be presented at the October meeting for final approval.

Casey Engebretson provided an update on water operations. Casey informed the Commission that the water and wastewater staff are continuing to concentrate their efforts on AMI meter replacements. The crews have less than 20 meters yet to install. Customers who have not responded to continued contacts to schedule an appointment for a meter change-out have been sent a letter. The letter states that if the change-out is not scheduled, a non-standard meter charge will be added to the customer's utility bill, in accordance with the Utility's rate tariff.

Casey Engebretson informed the Commission of the power outage at the WWTP. Damaged equipment included a raw pump, a raw pump VFD, and a RAS meter. Preliminary cost estimates for repair and/or replacement are estimated at \$10,000. Staff continues to investigate the cause of the outage.

Kevin LaValley provided an update on electric operations. Kevin informed the Commission that he is working with Underwater Inspectors, LLC to schedule an underwater inspection of the forebay gates and guides. The quote to perform the dive inspection was \$4,360.

Casey Engebretson provided the Commission with a construction update for the operations center. The Commission reviewed the schedule, the sixth payment application, change orders to-date, and project costs-to-date. Casey informed the Commission that the punch list walk-through inspection is scheduled for the week of October 25th. Dependent upon completion of punch list items, it is feasible that move-in could begin in mid-November.

A motion was made by Commissioner Olson and seconded by Commissioner Amo to approve a community contribution to the Boys & Girls Club in the amount of \$250.00.

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

Casey Engebretson presented the quote received for the new forklift. Casey reached out to three (3) vendors with a RFP. Casey spoke with two (2) of the vendors. One (1) vendor had a forklift in stock while the other vendor stated lead time would be 50 weeks. The Commission reviewed the quote received for a new forklift.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mathews and seconded by Commissioner Amo to approve the purchase of a forklift from Fairchild Equipment in the amount of \$54,581.90.

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

Casey Engebretson informed the Commission that he and Julie Babcock participated in a conference call with representatives of Security Financial Bank (SFB) to discuss the status of the Utility's accounts. Casey presented the recommended changes to the accounts, which would help to facilitate the earning of interest and avoidance of fees.

A motion was made by Commissioner Olson and seconded by Commissioner Eddy to approve the changes to the Utility accounts at SFB as presented.

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

Casey Engebretson discussed the emerging issue of PFAS in groundwater and what can be expected in the future regarding testing and mitigation requirements. Casey stated that testing and any potential mitigation would be costly. The National Rural Water Association has partnered with a law firm to file a nationwide Class Action Cost Recovery lawsuit in an effort to recover costs related to PFAS testing and mitigation. If the Utility incurred expenses related to PFAS, the Utility would receive cost recovery through the lawsuit, minus attorney fees and disbursements. The Utility would not be responsible for any costs if the Utility does not incur expenses related to PFAS. Casey informed the Commission that numerous water utilities in the state and the nation have signed retainer agreements to join the lawsuit. The City Attorney reviewed the Agreement and had no issues with the Utility joining the lawsuit. Casey presented the Retainer Agreement to the Commission for consideration.

A motion was made by Commissioner Eddy and seconded by Commissioner Olson to authorize the General Manager to execute the Retainer Agreement.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday October 25, 2021 at 4:30 pm.

The Commissioners, Casey Engebretson, and Kevin LaValley left the Conference Room at 5:40 p.m. to visit the operations center construction site. Julie Babcock and Garrett Aleckson chose not to attend.

The Commission toured the new operations center site.

A motion was made by Commissioner Amo and seconded by Commissioner Eddy to adjourn at 6:24 p.m.

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

Casey Engebretson, General Manager

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