

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commission of North Branch Water & Light
Regular Session
April 16, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: The North Branch Water & Light Commission met in regular session and Peter Schaps called the meeting to order at 3:44 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners present were Peter Schaps, Chris Bibeau and Kathy Blomquist. Staff members present were general manager Petsche and office manager Kraemer.

APPROVE AGENDA: (.30)

Blomquist asked to add customer service, billing statement and legislation to general discussion.

Petsche would like to add discussion of a special meeting.

Motion by Bibeau, seconded by Blomquist to approve the amended agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT: (2.29)

None

Minutes (2:33)

Motion by Bibeau, seconded by Blomquist to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2019 regular session meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Bibeau, seconded by Blomquist, to approve the minutes of the March 14, 2019 and March 26, 2019 special closed session meetings. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Payment of Bills (7:19)

Schaps asked about the amount for supplies and maintenance. The large amount was for the water main repairs on highway 95. He also asked about the amount in property and equipment for the electric department. Petsche said that it was for the purchase of the pickup for the electric department.

Petsche explained that the electric department has purchased the LED lights to start changing out the streetlights throughout the city. We also get a rebate from SMMPA for the lights, which will be used to purchase more lights.

Motion by Bibeau, seconded by Blomquist to approve the payment of bills as presented. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Blomquist asked if the signatures at the banks have been taken care of. It was explained that the minutes need approval and a signature to take to the banks with the bank forms.

Utility Financial Update (11:36)

Petsche reported that revenue for the electric and the water are down when compared to last year, but the expenses are down as well. The trend seems to be more conservation on the water.

There was a brief discussion on wells within the city. The commission decided to have a more in-depth discussion regarding wells at another meeting.

Blomquist asked if there was a goal for the water tower maintenance.

Petsche thinks that the next step is to have a firm come in and inspect the water towers; both internally and externally. Without doing the inspections it would be hard to determine which tower to start looking at repairing first. Hopefully later this summer we can have a firm come in to do the inspections.

Discussion on towers followed.

M-MIP – Municipal Distributed Energy Resource Interconnection Process (25.09)

Petsche reported that there are state guidelines we need to follow for customers that want solar or wind. There were a number of areas that were not covered in the first set of guidelines. The PUC has now addressed the issues for the final set of guidelines that need to be followed. He went on to share some of the information found within the guidelines. He offered to make copies of the packet for the commissioners. He stated that the commission has until June 17, 2019 to approve the rules and process of the interconnection guidelines.

Discussion.

Motion by Schaps, seconded by Bibeau to approve the interconnection process as stated in resolution 19-03 (attached). All voted aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Schaps, seconded by Bibeau to approve the interconnection rules as stated in resolution 19-04 (attached). All voted aye. Motion carried.

Utility Office Clerk Position (37.02)

Petsche informed the commission that we received a number of applications and have interviewed two individuals so far. Since there is not another meeting until May, he asked the commission for a starting wage.

Discussion.

The commission suggested \$20 - \$22 per hour.

Incident with City Staff (47.52)

Commissioner Blomquist is concerned that there is not a process for complaints against a city employee. She thinks that a complaint should go to the general manager first. If he feels that there is a concern that needs to be addressed, he should bring it to the commission. Then the general manager and the commissioner from the city would bring it to the city administrator. She feels that lines of authority need to be respected. She also wants to address the “list” between the city and North Branch Water & Light.

Discussion.

Motion by Blomquist, seconded by Schaps to have a list prepared by the general manager. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Discussion continued.

The general manager was also asked to create a list regarding issues with city staff.

General Discussion (1.43.31)

Blomquist said that she is confident that the general manager and the office manager will help the new office clerk fit into the position.

Petsche thought that maybe a part-time employee could be utilized if needed, but it may be difficult to find someone that is qualified to work part-time.

Discussion.

Blomquist had several ideas for the billing statement. She brought a statement with the ideas sketched on the bill.

Discussion followed.

Blomquist informed the commission of the legislation for the commission board increasing to a five member board. She said there was not consensus with the city council to move forward at this time because there wasn't a reason to change the number of commissioners.

Discussion.

Petsche explained to the commission that the bid opening for the Flink Avenue project is April 30, 2019. It will then go to the council May 14, 2019. He will get the information after the opening on April 30th and he will go through the information. He will then forward the information to the commissioners. There may be a joint meeting on May 14, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. between the city council and Water & Light commissioners to discuss the project. He feels that it is very important for the commissioners to be in the loop.

Discussion.

Petsche thinks that we need to look at the agreement between East Central Energy and North Branch Water & Light.

Discussion regarding the service territory followed.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

The next regular session meeting is May 21, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

Chris Bibeau, Secretary