

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Commission of North Branch Water & Light
Regular Session
September 17, 2019

CALL TO ORDER: The North Branch Water & Light Commission met in regular session and Peter Schaps called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

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

APPROVE AGENDA: (.30)

Motion by Schaps, seconded by Bibeau to approve the amended agenda. All voted aye. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT: (1.43)

Customer Lana Albrecht asked the commission why the water bill is so high. She is upset that she has to pay for the water coming into her home as well as getting rid of it. She understands that she needs to go to the City Council meeting to address the sewer charges.

Bibeau went over her bill with her and explained the charges associated with water.

Petsche reported on the water customer charge. The information was taken from the 2015 water rate study by Dave Berg Consulting.

Discussion.

Minutes (17.31)

Motion by Neider, seconded by Schaps to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2019 regular session meeting. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Payment of Bills (18.56)

Schaps asked about inventory. He also asked about territory acquisition.

Petsche informed him of the purchased items for inventory. He explained the payment to East Central Energy for the acquisition of 17 customers.

Discussion.

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

Salvation Army – Heat Share (25.39)

Petsche informed the commission about the Heat Share program. North Branch Water & Light has participated in the program for years.

Discussion.

Motion by Schaps, seconded by Bibeau to participate in the Salvation Army Heat Share program. All voted aye. Motion carried.

SMMPA Bond Closing (28.14)

Petsche reported on SMMPA's Badger Coulee Project. He asked the commission to support the bond sale for the project.

Discussion.

Petsche said that the certificate will need the signature of the commission chair as well as the mayor.

Discussion.

Five-Member Commission (41.26)

Schaps read a prepared letter stating the intentions to increase to a five-member commission. He asked the commission for approval.

Motion by Schaps, seconded by Bibeau to increase the commission to five members.

Discussion.

All voted aye. Motion carried.

Credit Card Fees (45.02)

Petsche wanted to inform the commissioners of the charges assessed for processing credit card payments. The question was asked at the previous meeting.

Discussion.

Project Reports (55.08)

Utilities – Flink Avenue & 400th St – water meters are in

Meadows North – drawings have been reviewed

Utilities – NB Business Park – Willow Grove – nothing to report

Utilities – Luchts Crossing – Luchts II is finished and the punch list is complete. **Lucht's III** is just getting started.

Wildridge II – pipes are in the ground. We haven't received any bacteria test results.

Kwik Trip – East & West – foundation work is in progress. Water mains are in place and services are in the ground. Kwik Trip east's electric conduit is in place and the transformer has been ordered.

There is an issue with boring under the creek to Lucht's II. Another contractor is coming in to look at trying to get this finished.

PUC Water & Light – Contracted Professional Services (1:00.05)

Financial Reporting – Petsche stated that he has been working with Kathy Aho on a financial report format to present at the meetings.

Neider asked if Aho was going to be the person working on the financials or if there is an outside person that should be contacted.

Discussion.

Motion by Neider, seconded by Schaps, to move forward and call a special session to conduct three interviews to hire an individual to provide financial reporting. All voted aye. Motion Carried.

Legal Counsel -

Commission Attorney Resignation – Petsche stated that the commission attorney sent a resignation letter to Petsche as well as the commission members. He believes that the commission should look for a new attorney.

Schaps asked where it states that he is resigning because the letter states he resigned as the City attorney.

Petsche said that he spoke to Stevens and he affirmed his resignation from the commission.

Discussion.

Motion by Neider, seconded by Schaps, for chairman Schaps move forward in finding an attorney on an interim basis until a long-term attorney is hired. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Summary of Conclusions from Special Closed Meeting (1:21.19)

Schaps asked the commissioners what their thoughts were regarding the meeting. He then asked Petsche what his thoughts were.

Petsche stated that he was not at the meeting, but he did have thoughts about the meeting. He feels that it was an illegal meeting.

Discussion.

Neider feels that it is important to get an update on projects.

Discussion.

The commission briefly discussed the 2016 Springsted Study.

Bibeau thinks that there were some good ideas taken from the meeting.

Petsche feels that the part of conclusions from the closed special session meeting were a reprimand or a threat.

The commissioners did not agree.

Discussion.

There was a short discussion with the City mayor regarding North Branch Water & Light employees as well as employees of the City.

There was continued discussion regarding the roles of the general manager.

Petsche read statements from the conclusions.

Petsche and the commission did not agree on the context of the findings.

Discussion.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

The next regular session meeting is October 15, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

Chris Bibeau, Secretary