

The Owatonna Public Utilities Commission met in regular session in the Morehouse Conference Room at the Owatonna Public Utilities. Present were Commissioners Rossi, Vetter, Zirngible and McLane. Absent was Commissioner Johnson. Also present were General Manager Warehime; City Administrator Busse; Director Finance & Administration Linders; Director, Engineering & Field Services Fenstermacher; Senior Advisor Olson; Supervisor, Accounting Jerpbak; Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator Schmoll; OPU Employees Shannon Petty, Shanda Meier, Bob Anhorn and Michael Merry. Other guests included Councilmember McCann; Assistant City Administrator Jenna Tuma; and customer Roger Wacek.

President Rossi called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. He then asked for approval of the agenda. Commissioner McLane moved to approve the agenda as submitted. Commissioner Vetter seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed. President Rossi then asked for approval of the consent agenda items. Consent agenda items included the minutes from the meeting of May 20, 2025 meeting and the contributed services report as of May 31, 2025. Commissioner Zirngible moved to approve the consent agenda items. Commissioner McLane seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

Committee Reports

Personnel Committee – Commissioner McLane reported the Personnel Committee met and received a staffing report. She noted the positions of Information Technology Engineer and Meter Serviceworker have been filled. She further reported it has been 56 days without an OSHA recordable.

Finance Committee – Commissioner Vetter reported the Finance Committee met, reviewed and approved vouchers totaling \$5,775,430.65. He further noted two work orders were closed for a total of 19 closed for the year. Sixty-three remain open.

City Administrator's Report

City Administrator Busse reported the City did not receive bonding funds for the public safety center, so the project will be re-evaluated, and it will be decided if they reapply or not. She further reported, the legislature did not take any action on sales tax, so the moratorium is over as of July 1st. The City may now request legislative approval to implement a local option sales tax to help fund a potential Community Center. If that authority is granted, the City could then ask voters to support the project through a ballot measure the following fall. City Administrator Busse provided an update on street projects and introduced Jenna Tuma as the new City Administrator.

Energy Acquisition Adjustment and True Up Policy

Director, Finance & Administration Linders presented changes to the Energy Acquisition Adjustment policy. He noted, an electric true up charge is being proposed, similar to the Purchase Gas Adjustment & Gas True Up policy. The actual electric commodity costs will be passed through to customers more equitably if the EAA is separated into two components. Mr. Linders discussed the history of commodity cost adjustments, provided an example of how someone's bill would look the new way versus the old way, and showed an example of how it would look on the bill. After extensive conversation, the Commission directed staff to revisit the policy with only the Electric True Up charge and the removal of the EAA altogether. Staff will bring back updates to the next Commission meeting.

Electric Line Extension Policy

Director, Engineering & Field Operations Fenstermacher presented the electric line extension policy to the Commission. He discussed the background and purpose of the policy and discussed the proposed changes. After discussion, the Commission requested, going forward, policy changes in the agenda packet include the "red-lined" versions, as well as the clean copy. Commissioner Rossi moved to approve the revised Electric Line Extension policy as submitted. Commissioner McLane seconded the motion. All Commissioners voting Aye, the motion passed.

General Manager/Staff Reports

General Manager Warehime introduced Shannon Petty, OPU's GIS Coordinator. Mr. Petty showed the Commission changes he has made to the GIS system that has helped improve processes for our field personnel.

Commission Roundtable

Commissioner McLane noted she attended the joint task force meeting, and complimented Mr. Fenstermacher on the presentation he gave. She further discussed the MMUA meeting she attended regarding legislative changes that have occurred.

Commissioner Rossi complimented OPU's Ghost Writer, Jane Doe, on the article in the June newsletter about "What's Above".

Audience Comments

Customer, Roger Wacek, discussed water conservation equals energy conservation and noted it takes energy to pump the water from the aquifer. He suggested a page in the newsletter to discuss how much energy it takes to pump a gallon of water, what is the average gallons/year for an average household in Owatonna and promotion of the rain barrel rebate. He encouraged everyone present to watch Public TV's Ask this Old House video "How to Install a Graywater Irrigation System" and encouraged OPU to offer a rebate or cost sharing option for a Graywater Irrigation system or a rebate/cost sharing option for Pollinator Rain Gardens for Graywater.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 5:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Schmoll
Executive, Communications & Administration Coordinator