

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF VIRGINIA, MINNESOTA WAS HELD AT THE OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023 AT 3:30 P.M.

Item 1. - Commission President Marwick called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

Approved

Present: Commissioners Hale, Johnson, Makowsky, Marwick and Petroskey

Absent: None

Also Present: Greg French – General Manager; Mary Johnson – Supervisor – Customer Relations; Representative – Virginia Public Access TV

Item 2 – A motion was made by Commissioner Hale and supported by Commissioner Petroskey to approve the meeting agenda. Motion carried unanimously.

Item 3 – None

Item 4 (a) and (b) - A motion was made by Commissioner Petroskey and supported by Commissioner Johnson to approve financial resolution No. 5344 - Authorizing the payroll dated November 2, 2023 in the amount of \$91,299.29, direct deposits #37638 through #37685; and the payroll dated November 16, 2023 in the amount of \$88,334.06, direct deposits #37686 through #37733; and the bills dated October 23, 2023 through November 24, 2023 in the amount of \$918,781.73, checks #115877 through #116035 and wire and electronic transfers in the amount of \$1,252,863.64; and Net Payment Adjustments for the month of October 2023 in the amount of \$6,833.56; and the Regular Commission Meeting minutes from the October 23, 2023 meeting.

Item 5 (a) – Commissioner Marwick stated that no injuries were reported for the month.

Item 6 (a) – Mr. French reminded the Commission that the MCE Gas Purchasing Contract was intended to be used as a hedge for 20 to 25 years, however due to long delays in getting information and having not received a completed contract to date, as well as the subsequent gas price increase it is in the best interest of VPU to hold off at this time.

Item 6 (b) – Mr. French gave an update on the Midway Booster Station stating that both pumps had failed, but fortunately parts to rebuild one of them had arrived. On an emergency request to GPM, one of the pumps was rebuilt taking about two weeks. During that time VPU opened up the interconnect with Eveleth to feed Midway. He further stated that both the new pump, and the second pump that is being rebuilt are expected to be here in the next couple of weeks.

Item 6 (c) – Mr. French gave an update on the EV Charging Stations reminding the Commission that MP donated the fast and slow charging stations to VPU. He added that while the slow charging station has always worked, the fast charging station has had a lot of issues. VPU made efforts to work with the company responsible for maintenance, but work was not being done. At the recommendation of MP, VPU contracted for maintenance with a different company. Initially this new company was performing, but now it too has become unresponsive to VPU communications. Mr. French added that VPU does not have staff trained to work on these units and with ever-changing technology, it may be difficult to find someone with the required knowledge.

Item 6 (d) – Mr. French stated the Commission was provided a copy of VPU's response to the EPA which was drafted by SEH Engineering and People Services. He pointed out that SEH and People Services will be coming up with the required plans as addressed in the response. Finally, he stated the biggest issue remains the unaccounted-for water loss and reminded the Commission that VPU has been making every effort to identify the source by surveying the water system with highly sensitive correlation equipment, as well as looking into potential metering issues.

Item 7 (a) – A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson and supported by Commissioner Petroskey to move the December meeting from the 25<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> due to the Christmas holiday. Motion carried unanimously. Mr. French stated a Committee of the Whole meeting, to discuss the budget, will be held sometime prior to the December meeting.

Item 7 (b) – Mr. French discussed the possibility of changing VPU office hours from 8-4:30 to 8-4. He further stated he met with VPU supervisory staff to discuss the potential change, and it was determined the change would be beneficial to staff with minimal effect to the customers. Commissioner Makowsky felt the change would negatively impact customers. A motion was made by Commissioner Johnson and supported by Commissioner Petroskey to change the hours to 8-4 on a 3-month trial basis and then evaluate whether or not to make the change permanent based on customer response. Motion carried: 4 ayes; 1 nay. Mr. French stated the change will be posted on Facebook before it goes into effect.

7 (c) – A motion was made by Commissioner Petroskey and supported by Commissioner Johnson to approve the travel request for 2 Line Crew staff to attend the MMUA Transformer School and Pre-Conference; January 23-26, 2024 in Marshall, MN. Motion carried unanimously.

7 (8) – A motion was made by Commissioner Petroskey and supported by Commissioner Johnson to approve the travel request for the Power Plant Maintenance Director/SWG Supervisor to attend the SME Conference; April 15-17, 2024 in Duluth, MN. Motion carried unanimously.

Item 8 (a) – Mr. French gave an operations update stating the plant has been running approximately 35,000 – 40,000 lbs/hr of steam utilizing the package boilers, alternating between boiler #1 and #2 every two weeks. He added production peaked today at 46,000lbs/hr and noted that each boiler can produce up to 58,000 lbs/hr. Mr. French also discussed the steam blowout on 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, as well as the need to look at the potential abandonment of the steam line that feeds the hospital and ultimately the core steam district as a part of the 2024 budget discussions. Mr. French also gave a brief update on contract negotiations with AFSCME #65.

Item 8 (b) – None

Item (9) – A motion was made by Commissioner Hale and supported by Commissioner Petroskey to adjourn at 4:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
James Petroskey, Secretary

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Marwick, President