

## MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

A meeting of the Beatrice Board of Public Works was held on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2014 at 12:15 p.m. at the City Hall Conference Room, 400 Ella Street, Beatrice, Nebraska.

Attending: Boardmembers: Vetrovsky, Baehr, Eskra, and Moran.

Absent: Boardmembers: Moon.

Chairman Don Vetrovsky announced that a copy of the Open Meetings Act is available in the meeting room and is accessible to members of the public.

### CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approve agenda as submitted.
- b. Receive and place on file all notices pertaining to this meeting.
- c. Receive and place on file all materials having any bearing on this meeting.
- d. Approval of minutes of regular BPW Board meeting on November 26, 2014.
- e. Recommend approval of Street Department Report of Claims to City Council in the amount of \$11,036.42.
- f. Approval of Electric Department, Water Department, and WPC Department Report of Claims in the amount of \$391,448.13.

Moved by Eskra, seconded by Baehr, that the items listed under the consent agenda approved, accepted and/or ratified as presented.

Roll Call: Yea: Vetrovsky, Baehr, Eskra, and Moran

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

### ORDINANCES

#### **Ordinance to establish electric utility rates for the City of Beatrice, Nebraska.**

Tobias Tempelmeyer, General Manager, presented to the Board the proposed electric utility rate ordinance. The proposed ordinance would pass along a one percent (1%) increase, with the increase being greater in the winter months. This increase comes from the increase we will be receiving from Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). An Economic Development Rate section was added to the ordinance setting out the requirements customers must meet in order to qualify for said rate. NPPD has offered the Economic Development Rate for a number of years and it was recommended by JK Energy to add the section to the ordinance. Pat Feist, Electric Superintendent, noted that NPPD tends to lean a little heavier on the winter rates than we normally pass along to our customers and the recommendation from JK Energy was to implement the increase on the winter rates. Boardmember Baehr inquired how long a customer is able to remain on the economic development rate and Tempelmeyer said it is for a five (5) year term. Boardmember Moran inquired on how large the customer would have to be in order for them to be able to qualify for the economic rate and Feist stated that a company similar in size to Exmark or Accuma could qualify.

Moved by Baehr, seconded by Moran, to recommend to the Mayor and City Council to approve the ordinance to establish the electric utility rates.

Roll Call: Yea: Vetrovsky, Baehr, Eskra, and Moran

Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Utility Deposit Policy**

Tobias Tempelmeyer, General Manager, presented to the Board the revised utility deposit policy as discussed at the last Board meeting. The revised policy establishes the commercial deposit would continue to be figured at two (2) times the average monthly utility bill and the utility deposit for commercial customers would be credited to their utility account after thirty (30) consecutive months of good credit. Good credit was defined in the revised policy to mean that “a customer has not been disconnected for non-payment nor has provided the City of Beatrice or the Beatrice Board of Public Works with an insufficient fund check”, meaning that the customer would still be able to have late charges incurred. Tempelmeyer noted that commercial customers also have the option of a certificate of deposit or irrevocable letter of credit for their deposit. Boardmember Baehr noted that if a customer is allowed to become delinquent and incur late charges that may not be a good definition of “good credit”. Michael Sothan, Executive Director of Main Street Beatrice, stated he felt the policy as presented was a bit more business friendly, but asked if there would be a grace period offered if a customer was late. Boardmember Moran noted that there is already a grace period from the time the bill is due until the services would be disconnected for non-payment. Boardmember Moran noted that he would be more comfortable if the policy stated that no more than two (2) delinquent charges could be incurred over the time period. Janet Byars, BPW Office Manager, inquired if residential customers would be looked at the same as commercial customers and Tempelmeyer noted that they would be, as the term “good credit” is defined within the policy. Boardmember Vetrovsky noted he felt that “good credit” as defined in the proposed policy should be acceptable as long as the customers are still paying their utility bill prior to being disconnected. Byars also noted that she will at times extend a one (1) time courtesy waiver of delinquent charges in a twelve (12) month period if the customer has had good credit. Pat Feist, Electric Superintendent, noted he feels the policy is more clear so that there is no question what is meant by “good credit”. Boardmember Baehr noted he felt that with the current definition of “good credit” we are setting a low bar and thought it should state no more than one (1) late charge should be incurred over a twelve (12) month period. Tempelmeyer noted the proposed policy states that commercial customers may receive their deposit back after thirty (30) consecutive months of good credit and asked how many late charges the Board would allow with that time frame. Boardmember Baehr suggested to change the policy to state twenty-four (24) consecutive months of good credit instead of thirty (30) as previously stated. Tempelmeyer noted that Administration will draft a policy with the proposed changes and bring the revised policy to the next Board meeting.

### **Landlord Notification Policy**

Tobias Tempelmeyer, General Manager, reported to the Board that he met with Elizabeth Jurgens and Ron Miller, representing the Gage County Rental Property Owners Association, regarding the landlord notification policy. The Association would like to be billed per call. Tempelmeyer stated they are looking in to the legality of adding a charge to the landlord’s utility bill and also noted that not all landlords live in Beatrice and therefore would not have a utility bill to add that charge to. Tempelmeyer noted that he suggested setting up a retainer amount that would then be billed against and the Association did not like that idea. Boardmember Eskra asked if the Billing Department had the capability of sending a bill separate from a utility bill and Tempelmeyer noted that a bill can be generated and sent out. Boardmember Eskra also noted that the fee needs to be at least \$50.00 per call and that landlords need to be responsible for their rental properties and not depend on the utility company to manage their properties for them. Tempelmeyer noted the Association felt that the fee should be \$5.00 per call. Janet Byars, BPW

Office Manager, noted that at times landlords do not notify us that their tenant has left until it gets to the disconnect point even though they are aware that their tenant has moved out. Tempelmeyer will present the recommended fee of \$50.00 per call to the Association and report to the Board at a later meeting. Tempelmeyer also noted that there will still be a couple of options that landlords may choose with no cost associated with them.

### **Monthly Department Reports**

The monthly department report was presented. Some highlights include: the Engineering Department has been working on the stormwater updates and bringing them up to code; the Water Department reported that they were able to reduce the size of pipe from 14" to 12" on the BNSF watermain replacement and estimated the total cost will be between \$50-60,000.00; and the Return-to-Work policy has been beneficial, as we currently have an employee from the Landfill on light duty working for the Street Department.

Moved by Baehr, seconded by Eskra, that the monthly department report be received and placed on file.

Roll Call:     Yea: Vetrovksy, Baehr, Eskra, and Moran  
                  Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The next regular Board of Public Works meeting is scheduled for December 31, 2014 at 12:15 p.m. in the City Hall Conference Room, 400 Ella Street, Beatrice, Nebraska.

Moved by Baehr, seconded by Moran, that the meeting be adjourned at 1:08 p.m.

Roll Call:     Yea: Vetrovksy, Baehr, Eskra, and Moran  
                  Nay: None

MOTION CARRIED.

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Don Vetrovsky, Chairman

Attest:

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Bob Moran, Secretary