

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JEFFERSON UTILITIES COMMISSION, HELD NOVEMBER 14, 2022

On call of the roll, commissioners present were: Adams, Ganser, Pieters, Neils, Oppermann and Schroeder. Also present were: City Attorney Rogers; Office Manager Hinze; Customer Account Clerk, Kara Mroz; Billing Clerk, Emily Hein; Meter Technician Jackie Tucker; Line Forman, Nick Baumann; Lineman Nick Ganser and Brandon Gorr. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

Member Excused: Bristol

Public Participation: None

Discussion and Possible Action – Electric and Water Cash Reserves Fund Split

Hinze handed out two options for paying the reserve funds due to the water department as a result of the split from the electric utility. Hinze indicated that the city had inquired if Baker Tilly had figured any interest revenue due to water starting from January 1, 2022. Hinze indicated she reached out to Jodi Dobson from Baker Tilly who indicated that nothing had been calculated. Hinze wanted to discuss this with the Commission for determination on what rate should be used to calculate interest. Comm. Oppermann stated that the city was not intending on calculating any interest on these funds. Motion by Comm. Schroeder to issue full payment of the funds to the city for the water split. Seconded by Neils. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

Approval of October 2022 Expenditures

Motion by Comm. Pieters and seconded by Comm. Ganser to approve the October 2022 expenditures as presented. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

Minutes

Motion by Comm. Neils and seconded by Comm. Pieters to approve the minutes of October 17, 2022 meeting. On voice call, motion carried.

Discussion and Possible Action – Lease Agreement Between Jefferson Utilities and Frontier North Inc.

Hinze inquired with the Commission regarding the level of involvement the Commission wished for regarding lease/rental agreements. She indicated currently the Utility’s attorney is working on a draft agreement with Frontier to lease the East Side Sub-Station. It was the consensus of the Commission that all lease/rental agreements should come before and approved by the Commission prior to executing the agreement.

Discussion and Possible Action – Hire Sheri Ridgeman as Part-Time Customer Account Clerk

Hinze indicated that there was a tremendous response to the advertisement for this position. She indicated that she and the staff interviewed six (6) individuals and narrowed the field to two (2). She indicated that the two finalists were brought back for a second informal interview to meet everyone. The choice was made to hire Sheri Ridgeman for her past experience working in customer service and banking. Hinze stated her hourly rate would be step one (1) \$17.86. Motion by Comm. Pieters and seconded by Comm. Neils to approve the hiring of Sheri Ridgeman as presented. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

Discussion and Possible Action-Hire an Additional Journeyman Lineman

Baumann informed the Commission that the increased interim responsibilities has taken him out of the field. He stated that it is unknown at this time whether or not the vacant Utility Manager position will be filled and if the position is not filled, he would be requesting to hire an additional Journeyman Lineman. Hinze indicated that given the current labor market it may be challenging to find an experienced Lineman. Motion by Pieters to put an add out there to determine the amount and level of candidates interested. Seconded by Comm. Schroeder. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

Discussion and Possible Action-Open Utility Manger Position

It was the consensus of the Commission to hold off on any decision regarding this vacant position.

Discussion and Possible Action-Interim Utility Manager and Interim Foreman Title and Compensation

Hinze indicated that per the Commission's request she and Baumann put together an option for the Commission to review regarding the interim compensation for both the Office Manager and Foreman Lineman. The Commission reviewed and asked that this be brought back to the next meeting. Motion by Comm. Schroeder and seconded by Comm. Pieters to post-pone until the next meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote.

Discussion and Possible Action – 2023 Budget

Hinze presented the 2023 budget to Commission members. Comm. Pieters voiced his concern regarding the cost of purchase power. He indicated that the utility will need to monitor this closely in 2023. Neils inquired regarding the budget for a new truck. Baumann indicated that with the use of the Utility Manager's truck there wouldn't be a need for a new truck, however, it could be close to a year from the time a new truck is ordered to delivery. Motion by Comm. Oppermann to approve the budget as presented and seconded by Comm. Ganser. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

Discussion and Possible Action – Electric Rate Case

Hinze stated that the final cash reserve amount paid due to the water split was higher than initially thought and as a result this has dropped the utilities cash reserve to below the recommendation from the auditors of three (3) months. This along with the current inflation the country is seeing it is advised that the utility initiate a rate case with the Public Service Commission. Hinze stated that the last rase case was approved in 2016. Motion by Comm. Pieters to approve Hinze to initiate the process with WPPI for a rate case with the PSC. Seconded by Comm. Neils. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

Discussion and Possible Action – Carlson Dettmann Compensation Study

Hinze indicates she has not received a signed copy of the agreement and will report back at the next meeting.

Discussion and Possible Action – Community Contributions Requests from St. Marks Church and Jefferson County Christmas Neighbors

The Commission reviewed the request for \$1685 from St. Marks Church to purchase to-go food containers for the free meal program and the request for \$1000 from Jefferson County Christmas Neighbors to purchase gifts and food for their annual program. Motion by Comm. Oppermann and seconded by Comm. Pieters to approve both requests as presented. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams – Aye; Oppermann – Aye; Pieters – Aye, Ganser – Aye; Neils – Aye; Schroeder - Aye).

It was moved by Comm. Neils and seconded by Comm. Pieters to adjourn. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm.