

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JEFFERSON UTILITIES COMMISSION, HELD AUGUST 12, 2019

On call of the roll, commissioners present were: Adams, Horn, Ganser, Bristol, Brandel, Pieters and Oppermann. Also present: Utility Manager Adler, Office Manager Statz and City Attorney Rogers. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Utility Manager Adler welcomed new Commissioner Joe Pieters. Mr. Pieters reviewed his background with the commission.

MINUTES

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Ganser to approve the minutes from the July 15, 2019 meeting. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Horn - Abstain, Pieters – Aye, Adams - Abstain, Ganser – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Bristol – Aye)

EXPENDITURES

It was moved by Comm. Oppermann and seconded by Comm. Brandel to approve the payment of July's bills totaling \$1,245,568.08. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Horn - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Adams - Aye, Ganser – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Bristol – Aye)

DOWNTOWN SWITCHYARD UPDATE

Utility Manager Adler discussed the City's plans to redevelop land near our switchyard. He explained that the City intends to take some of the utility's property for a parking lot expansion.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF GIS LOCATOR – SEILER FOR \$14,227

Utility Manager Adler explained he would like to purchase a GIS locator to mark utility infrastructure via satellite and plot on our maps. The locator he was recommending will plot to the nearest centimeter. He went with a better model to get better accuracy. The locator will help create maps and in the future it will help with an outage management system.

Comm. Bristol asked if the locator communicated with any devices.

Utility Manager Adler said it did communicate with iPads. He explained that the city has an ESRI system already in place for their mapping and the utility piggy-backs onto their system.

Comm. Bristol asked if the locator used 4G or 3G service.

Utility Manager Adler said he was not sure, but the pricing does include training and technical support.

Comm. Oppermann asked if the city had a locator.

Utility Manager Adler explained that City Engineer Pinnow does have a locator, but he was hoping to have one for the utility, as he envisions it being used quite a bit.

Comm. Oppermann questioned why the city staff and the utility staff could not share the device. He stated he was troubled by the separation between the utility and the city.

Utility Manager Adler stated City Engineer Pinnow has offered to share the locator. He didn't want to end up in a situation where the utility has the device and it is needed by the City, as he is envisioning it being used a lot by the utility.

Comm. Ganser asked if the city's unit was as good as the one being proposed.

Utility Manager Adler stated he wasn't sure, but it could be.

Comm. Horn asked if the device would be used to locate water valves. He was wondering if it may be needed in the middle of the night during an emergency.

Utility Manager Adler stated it could be needed in the middle of the night, yes.

Comm. Horn stated it made sense to have two locators, one for the utility and one for the city, in the event of an emergency.

Comm. Brandel stated the device could be housed at the utility just as easily as City Hall so the utility could use it in an emergency.

Comm. Bristol stated it may be best to delay the decision until there are more details about the city's locator.

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Bristol to table the purchase of a GIS locator. Motion carried on a voice vote.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE LEMKE FENCE FOR SWITCHYARD FENCE REPAIRS - \$2,900

Utility Manager Adler explained the quote was for logos on the east and west sides of the fence wrap. One side will have the “We’re Going Outside” tagline and the other side will have “Jefferson, A Public Power Community” on the other.

Comm. Bristol asked if alternate two was also needed.

Utility Manager Adler stated that it was for additional logos, an additional cost of \$740.00

It was moved by Comm. Oppermann and seconded by Comm. Brandel to approve the purchase of fencing wrap with logos from Lemke Fence in the amount of \$3,640. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Horn - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Adams, Aye, Ganser – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Bristol – Aye)

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON POLICY FOR CONTRIBUTION OF AID IN ADVANCE OF CONSTRUCTION

Utility Manager Adler requested that a policy be created for the extension of electric lines. He explained many communities require money for extensions up front. Those funds are then put into an escrow until the project is finished. He stated it protects the utility financially if a project does not go through.

Comm. Oppermann questioned if there have been any instances where the utility has suffered a loss.

Utility Manager stated there has been.

Comm. Bristol asked if the deposit was in the form of cash or a letter of credit.

City Attorney Rogers liked the idea of requiring a letter of credit.

Comm. Bristol stated a letter of credit protected the utility and didn’t put a financial burden on the customer/developer.

City Attorney Rogers stated if the developer was using performance bonds, the bonding company would guarantee the project would be completed.

Comm. Bristol stated it was standard in his business to require a letter of credit prior to any work being done.

Comm. Brandel stated the City of Jefferson has a hard enough time attracting developers. He didn’t want to place any unnecessary barriers in the way of development.

Comm. Oppermann stated he also didn’t want to discourage development. He stated some projects may take a couple of years to complete.

City Attorney Rogers stated if the utility required funds up front, the developer may be looking for interest on the escrow funds.

Utility Manager Adler asked how the commission felt about advancements on city led developments.

City Attorney Rogers stated he didn’t feel a cash advance was necessary, a letter of responsibility for the cost would be sufficient.

Comm. Horn pointed out in the PSC language it reads as “may” require up-front costs.

Utility Manager Adler explained that was why he was looking for guidance from the Commission on how it should be handled.

City Attorney Rogers will draft a policy on the issue.

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Oppermann to table the discussion until City Attorney Rogers can draft a policy for review. Motion carried on a voice vote.

RIVERSIDE ALLEY UPDATE

Utility Manager Adler explained the city’s Riverside Alley project from City Hall to Candise Street is slated to occur 2020-2021. The title discrepancies and surveys have been completed. There is a main electric feed that will need to be removed and that will be expensive.

Comm. Oppermann stated there may need to be a joint meeting of the Common Council and the Utilities Commission to discuss the project.

Comm. Pieters clarified this was the area under the bridge.

Utility Manager Adler stated it was.

Comm. Brandel stated the cost of the project may be too staggering to complete. He stated we also had to be realistic.

City Attorney Rogers stated there were grant funds available for the project.

Utility Manager Adler stated at this time the utility would not be receiving any of the grant funds. He had a meeting with city staff to discuss the project and placement of the infrastructure. He reiterated that the alley has a main electric feed running through it.

Comm. Pieters asked if the scope of the project was well defined and if there was final pricing yet.

Utility Manager Adler stated it was not yet finalized.

Comm. Oppermann explained the project was three blocks of the alley, from Dodge Street to Candise Street.

Comm. Adams stated the Fire Department was able to get fire trucks in the alley as it is right now.

Comm. Pieters questioned who was responsible for the project.

Utility Manager Adler explained the Common Council would determine the project and then the department heads would follow out the directives. He explained the utility needed to be careful working around customers' services. As explained by Forester Engineer Bruce Beth at a prior meeting, the utility needs to be careful not to set a precedent on paying for customers' services. That infrastructure is the responsibility of the customer; the utility only owns the meter.

LEAD LINE REPLACEMENT UPDATE

Utility Manager Adler explained there has not been a lot of participation in the lead line replacement program. He is going to have a Water Operator knock on doors and talk about the program with customers to encourage participation.

City Attorney Rogers questioned why there has not been much participation.

Comm. Oppermann suggested doing an article in the Daily Union and possibly a radio ad to help get the word out.

Comm. Bristol clarified that the line being replaced ran from the lateral to the curb box in the lawn.

Utility Manager Adler explained the grant funds can only be used for with lead services, where the utility's service type is copper, per the Department of Natural Resources. He was hoping to be able to replace some of the utility's lead services to make the program available to more customers.

Comm. Brandel verified the grant funds will pay for 100% of the customer's costs.

Utility Manager Adler stated the program does pay for 100% of the cost.

City Attorney Rogers asked if we have deployed AMI meters on the water side.

Utility Manager Adler stated the utility has not yet done AMI on the water side because of the cost. He explained that installing AMI water meters could be installed independently of replacing the service type.

Comm. Pieters asked if there are any immediate risks to customers with lead services.

Utility Manager Adler stated there were not because we put poly-phosphates in our water to line our lead pipes. This reduces the lead exposure to our customers.

Comm. Oppermann reiterated that we should put an article in the Daily Union and on the radio to gain more awareness.

Comm. Bristol suggested that we request an article be placed on the Daily Union's Facebook page. Those get more attention than the other articles in the paper.

AMI METER UPDATE

Utility Manager Adler explained that when electric meters are replaced, we are putting in an AMI meter. He reviewed the current map of AMI meters in the city. Further, he explained that the rural areas will be replaced with AMI meters, as we do not have to read water meters in those areas. It will save from the meter readers having to leave the city limits each month to read meters.

Utility Manager Adler explained, for the new commission members, the commission looked into a full AMI replacement last year, but it was decided to wait until a late date because the water rates would have to be increased to pay for the conversion.

Utility Manager Adler explained that the lead time to get the meters is very long, anywhere from three to four months. As of now, we are okay, but we may need to put in a big order before the end of the year to have them ready to go by January 1, 2020.

It was moved by Comm. Horn and seconded by Comm. Ganser to adjourn to closed session pursuant to section 19.85(10)(g)(g) conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Horn - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Adams, Aye, Ganser – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Bristol – Aye)

It was moved by Comm. Oppermann and seconded by Comm. Brandel to reconvene to open session. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Horn - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Adams, Aye, Ganser – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Bristol – Aye)

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION – JEFFERSON FIRE DEPARTMENT COLORING BOOKS

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Ganser to approve a contribution of \$200.00 to the Jefferson Fire Department for an ad in their coloring book. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Horn - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Adams, Aye, Ganser – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Bristol – Aye)

It was moved by Comm. Horn and seconded by Comm. Ganser to adjourn. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.