

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JEFFERSON UTILITIES COMMISSION, HELD FEBRUARY 8, 2021

On call of the roll, commissioners present were: Adams, Brandel, Pieters, Ganser, Oppermann (arrived at 5:32 p.m.) and Neils. Also present were: Utility Manager Adler, Office Manager Statz, City Attorney Rogers, and Water Quality Investigations Chief Scientist Dr. Andrew Jacques, P.E. Absent was: Bristol. The meeting began at 5:30 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

MINUTES

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Ganser to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2021. Motion carried on a voice vote.

EXPENDITURES

It was moved by Comm. Pieters and seconded by Comm. Neils to approve the payment of December 2020 and January 2021 bills totaling \$1,204,455.21. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Pieters – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Ganser – Aye, Adams – Aye, Neils – Aye)

Comm. Oppermann arrived.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – WELL #4, WELL #4 RESERVOIR, AND WELL #5 CLEANING – WATER QUALITY INVESTIGATIONS – DR. ANDREW JACQUES P.E.

Utility Manager Adler introduced Dr. Andrew Jacques, P.E. from Water Quality Investigations to discuss well #4 and well #5.

Dr. Andrew Jacques, P.E. explained that the allowable radium levels at well #4 were exceeded in July at well #4. This places the utility in a situation where quarterly monitoring is required by the WI Department of Natural Resources. Currently, the utility is not in violation, but will be if the radium levels are not lowered to allowable levels after four quarters of the exceedance. After completing an investigation, we have found that similar to what is happening at well #5, there is naturally occurring biofilm in the well. At well #5 we are now doing preventative maintenance and that has been holding off the biofilm. The hope is that if we do the same things at well #4 as we did at well #5, we can lower the numbers and avoid spending \$2,000,000 on a radium removal filter.

Utility Manager Adler explained that well #2 has a radium removal filter.

Dr. Jacques stated that the utility may have been able to treat well #2 like we are discussing at well #4, if we had today's practices at that time.

Comm. Pieters questioned if the treatment method was a physical or chemical process.

Dr. Jacques explained that it was both. First the treatment would be physical and then chemicals would be added. He stated he has used this method on 30-40 wells throughout the state with success.

Comm. Adams questioned if the bad water is pumped out of the well after the cleaning was performed.

Dr. Jacques stated the process involves pumping water in a circle and injecting the chemical into the water to treat. This ensures that the chemical is getting through the entire well. He explained that they look at the whole process during treatment.

Utility Manager Adler explained we have seen the numbers go down at well #5.

Dr. Jacques stated the treatment at well #5 would be about \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually to keep up with the maintenance. It will cost about \$75,000 to clean well #4 just to get an idea of what is wrong, but it still cheaper than a \$2,000,000 radium filter.

Comm. Ganser asked about the annual cost to maintain the well.

Dr. Jacques stated it would be for sure \$5,000-\$10,000 annually for chlorine.

Utility Manager Adler stated he hoped to have firm costs for the next meeting. He asked Dr. Jacques if this would be something we should bid or if it was considered maintenance work.

Dr. Jacques stated it is considered maintenance work and does not have to be bid. He stated the utility could bid if they wished, but there are only two drillers in the state he would trust to do the work.

Comm. Ganser asked how long the cleaning would take.

Dr. Jacques stated it would take about four weeks to complete. It is time intensive, but then we would know that it is as clean as it can be.

Comm. Adams asked who would be responsible if equipment in the well was broken during the process.

Dr. Jacques stated it is rare to have any damage done during the process, but if the contractor damages anything, they would be responsible to fix it. If there are things discovered to already have been broken that would be the responsibility of the utility.

City Attorney Rogers asked Dr. Jacques if he was sure this would fall under maintenance work.

Dr. Jacques stated he was, as we are cleaning and replacing equipment that is already there.

Comm. Ganser asked if we had a maintenance schedule for our wells.

Utility Manager Adler stated we didn't have a schedule, but do monitor for changes and address as needed.

Dr. Jacques stated it was a good idea to develop a maintenance program for all of the wells.

Dr. Jacques left the meeting at 6:03 p.m.

DISCUSSION – PSC BILLING AUDIT

Office Manager Statz updated the commission on the status of the PSC billing audit. She explained that there were three items left on the list and two of them were to be completed by WPPI. Those two items include placing a notation on customers' bills showing if an electric meter is a single phase or a three phase meter. And also, we need to note on all customer's bill of what bill category they are in.

The third item has to do with our requirement for customers to show a photo ID to sign up for service. The PSC rules do not allow for a photo ID for initial identification. The PSC code has specific items that a utility must accept.

Office Manager Statz is hoping to have the billing audit wrapped up within the next month.

DISCUSSION TRIP PROGRAM

Office Manager Statz explained that since staff is unsure if we will be able to disconnect customers in the spring for past due amounts, they began to think about ways to encourage customers to make payment during the

winter months. This is the time when some customers' balances increase substantially. We have decided to pursue TRIP through the Department of Revenue. The program is similar to State Debt Collection, but has fewer restrictions. TRIP (Tax Refund Intercept Program) collects unpaid balances from customers' tax refund. Office Manager Statz explained that the program has been positive for the utility so far. Staff has not yet collected anything from the program, but have collected over \$20,000 from customers to avoid having the debt transferred to TRIP. She stated she was excited about the program and hoped we could continue to do it in the future.

It was moved by Comm. Brandel, seconded by Comm. Ganser to adjourn to closed session pursuant to section 19.85(1)(c) to consider employment, promotion, compensation or performance evaluation data of new employee and Utility Manager Review. (Pieters – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Ganser – Aye, Adams – Aye, Neils – Aye, Oppermann - Aye)

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

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION – HIRE APPRENTICE LINE WORKER AT AN HOURLY RATE OF \$31.86

It was moved by Comm. Oppermann and seconded by Comm. Pieters to approve the hire of Jacob Percival at an hourly rate of \$31.86. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Pieters – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Ganser – Aye, Adams – Aye, Neils – Aye, Oppermann - Aye)

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Ganser to adjourn. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

PRESIDENT

SECRETARY