

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JEFFERSON UTILITIES COMMISSION, HELD MAY 11, 2020

On call of the roll, commissioners present were: Adams, Brandel, Neils, Pieters, Ganser, Bristol and Oppermann (arrived at 5:43 p.m.). Also present were: Utility Manager Adler, Office Manager Statz and City Attorney Rogers. The meeting began at 5:33 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Utility Manager Adler thanked Jim Horn for his service to the Utilities Commission and welcomed new commissioner Chick Neils.

Comm. Neils introduced herself and gave a background of her work and life in Jefferson.

The commission discussed providing prior Comm. Horn with chamber gift certificates to thank him for his service to the Utilities Commission. Comm. Adams suggested a value of \$100.00.

MINUTES

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Pieters to approve the minutes from the April 13, 2020 meeting. Motion carried on a voice vote.

EXPENDITURES

It was moved by Comm. Bristol and seconded by Comm. Pieters to approve the payment of April's bills totaling \$968,004.28. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Adams - Aye, Pieters - Aye, Brandel - Aye, Neils - Aye, Ganser - Aye, Bristol - Aye)

DISCUSSION ON COVID-19 IMPACT ON REVENUES

Office Manager Statz explained that she did a rough estimate of revenues lost at this point due to COVID-19. Those rough estimates show about a \$50,000 loss of revenues from foregone late penalties and decreased usage. She explained that she used the last three year average up to April of each year and compared that to the revenue thus far in 2020. These numbers do not take into account fluctuation in expenses, so the numbers are not concrete. She stated that the utility had two open positions that we have not filled because of the pandemic, so there is a cost savings there with not paying for health insurance, dental insurance and wages for two employees.

Comm. Oppermann arrived at 5:43 p.m.

Office Manager Statz shared a history of the accounts receivable figures for all customers. She stated that while the numbers are a tad worse than historical figures, she was not alarmed. She explained that typically in April, the winter moratorium is lifted and customers that do not pay during the winter months are forced to bring their account current to avoid disconnection. With disconnections on hold this year, some of those collections were not occurring.

Office Manager Statz explained that given the current situation of things, our finances and collections do not look bad. At this point, she is not alarmed.

Utility Manager Adler added that this is a typical arrearages cycle for the utility, as there are a small percentage of customers that go months without paying their bills because there are no

repercussions during the winter months. Some of these customers had large balances well before the COVID-19 virus closed down the state.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE LANDLORD INFORMATION BROCHURE

Office Manager Statz explained that office staff had developed an information packet to be sent to new landlords and annually to all landlords on record. The goal is to provide landlords with more information to assist them with their rental practices here in Jefferson.

Comm. Adams stated he liked the idea and nothing like that had been done before. He stated it laid out everyone's responsibilities so there was no confusion.

Comm. Pieters agreed he liked the idea. He stated he reviewed it a couple of times and thought it was good information.

Comm. Bristol asked if this brochure would be placed in the lobby for customers to obtain.

Office Manager Statz stated it would be. In addition, it would be placed on our website and maybe on the monitor in the lobby.

Comm. Adams suggested placing information on the City's sign by the library as needed.

Comm. Bristol suggested reaching out to the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce to see if they could have some available as well.

Office Manager Statz stated we could certainly do so, but there aren't as many commercial landlords as there are residential.

Comm. Adams suggested having something like this for all of our customers.

Office Manager Statz stated she could work on something of that nature, but this notice would be specific to landlords.

It was moved by Comm. Brandel and seconded by Comm. Neils to approve the landlord information brochure. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Adams - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Neils – Aye, Ganser – Aye, Bristol - Aye)

DISCUSSION ON THE VOLT

Office Manager Statz stated she has created a newsletter for the office, called The VOLT. Her goal is to provide the commission with information about what is occurring in the office that may not warrant a discussion at monthly meetings. At this time, she is not sure if it will be monthly or quarterly. It was not meant to be a discussion at the commission meetings each month, just an insert in the packet to keep everyone informed. She encouraged commission members to reach out to her if there is anything they would like to see in there about phrases used, procedures, operations etc.

Comm. Adams stated he really liked the idea as it informed the commission about what was going on.

Comm. Pieters asked who would put this together each month.

Office Manager Statz stated she would be the one responsible for the project.

Comm. Pieters stated he liked the idea and thought it was well done.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE WELL #3, WELL #4 AND BOOSTER STATION CLEANING AND INSPECTION TO SUEZ FOR \$13,260 WITH AN HOURLY CLEANING RATE OF \$240 PER HOUR

Utility Manager Adler stated he received quotes to clean well #3, well #4 and the booster station and was recommending Suez at a cost of \$13,260.

Comm. Adams asked if this would correct any violations we were cited for by the DNR.

Utility Manager Adler stated it would not. This was just for routine cleaning.

Comm. Pieters questioned why there was such a range of prices. Was there any reason for this?

Utility Manager Adler stated he was not sure why there was such a large gap. He wondered if it was because Suez may be closer to Jefferson.

Comm. Adams asked if we had used Suez in the past.

Utility Manager Adler stated the utility had used Suez previously to paint the water tower.

Comm. Oppermann questioned if the portable pressure tank in the quote was in addition to the \$13,260 or if it was included.

Utility Manager Adler stated it was included in the price. He explained that when they perform the cleaning, it will affect water pressure for some customers. The portable pressure tank would be used to maintain that water pressure.

It was moved by Comm. Pieters and seconded by Comm. Ganser to approve Suez to clean well #3 and well #4 at a cost of \$13,260. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Adams - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Neils – Aye, Ganser – Aye, Bristol - Aye)

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE APPRENTICE TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Utility Manager Adler explained that a lot of time and money is spent on training new apprentices and if the employee leaves, the utility is left with a lot of expenses. He would like to have a policy in place which requires new apprentices to repay the utility for costs incurred to train them.

Comm. Brandel stated he thought it was a great idea and asked if City Attorney Rogers had reviewed the policy.

City Attorney Rogers stated he had reviewed it and did not see any issues.

Comm. Bristol questioned if we needed to have language prorating the percentages by month rather than years.

City Attorney Rogers stated he was fine with the way it was written.

Comm. Oppermann stated he thought it was good policy and was standard in today's market.

Utility Manager Adler clarified his intent was to enforce this with all new apprentices, not our current staff.

It was moved by Comm. Oppermann and seconded by Comm. Ganser to approve the apprentice reimbursement policy. On call of the roll, motion carried. (Oppermann – Aye, Adams - Aye, Pieters – Aye, Brandel – Aye, Neils – Aye, Ganser – Aye, Bristol - Aye)

It was moved by Comm. Neils and seconded by Comm. Brandel to adjourn. Motion carried on a voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.