

**ELK RIVER MUNICIPAL UTILITIES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE UTILITIES COMMISSION
HELD AT THE ELK RIVER FIRE STATION EOC CONFERENCE ROOM**

June 8, 2021

Members Present: Chair John Dietz, Vice Chair Al Nadeau, Commissioners Paul Bell, Mary Stewart, and Matt Westgaard

ERMU Staff Present: Theresa Slominski, General Manager
Melissa Karpinski, Finance Manager
Jennie Nelson, Customer Service Manager
Tom Sagstetter, Conservation & Key Accounts Manager
Michelle Canterbury, Executive Administrative Manager
Tom Geiser, Operations Director
Chris Sumstad, Electric Superintendent
Mike Tietz, Technical Services Superintendent
Dave Ninow, Water Superintendent
Chris Kerzman, Engineering Manager
Tony Mauren, Communications & Administrative Coordinator

Others Present: Peter Beck, Attorney; Cal Portner, City Administrator

1.0 GOVERNANCE

1.1 Call Meeting to Order

The regular meeting of the Utilities Commission was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Chair Dietz.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

1.3 Consider the Agenda

Chair Dietz added an agenda item, Return to Normal Procedures for Past Due Accounts, to 6.3 Other Business.

Moved by Commissioner Nadeau and seconded by Commissioner Stewart to approve the amended June 8, 2021 agenda. Motion carried 5-0

2.0 CONSENT AGENDA (Approved By One Motion)

Moved by Commissioner Westgaard and seconded by Commissioner Bell to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

2.1 May 2021 Check Register

2.2 May 11, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

2.3 Resolution Awarding the Sale of GO Water Utility Revenue Bonds, Series 2021C

Motion carried 5-0.

3.0 OPEN FORUM

No one appeared for open forum.

4.0 POLICY & COMPLIANCE

Nothing was presented for policy & compliance.

5.0 BUSINESS ACTION

5.1 Financial Report – April 2021

Ms. Karpinski presented the Financial Report for April 2021.

Chair Dietz had clarifying questions. Staff responded.

Chair Dietz noted increases in expenses compared to the previous year. Staff responded that many expenses were reduced during the previous year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moved by Commissioner Stewart and seconded by Commissioner Nadeau to receive the April 2021 Financial Report. Motion carried 5-0.

5.2 Field Services Facility Expansion Project

Mr. Kerzman updated the Commission on the progress of the Field Services Facility Expansion project. He shared that staff had been in communication with residents in the adjacent properties about the work being done and the expected final state of the project.

Chair Dietz relayed a question about the trees on site that he had received. Staff responded that the trees currently remaining on the site would stay. There was discussion.

There was discussion related to the steel component of the project, and some costs being allocated to contingency that staff did not feel were appropriate. Staff has had multiple conversations with legal counsel regarding this and informed the commission they were

planning to have counsel send a letter to the project manager stating ERMU's position on the matter and its hopes to continue working towards a fair resolution. The commission supported this action.

6.0 BUSINESS DISCUSSION

6.1 Staff Updates

Ms. Slominski noted that she would be at the American Public Power Association's National Conference from June 21-23 in Orlando, Florida. Mr. Geiser was put in charge in her absence.

Ms. Canterbury highlighted the item from her update on the annual commissioner self-evaluation. She informed the commissioners they would be receiving the link to an electronic survey in the coming weeks, adding that the presentation in July would include comparisons with previous surveys, per Commissioner Stewart's request.

Mr. Geiser informed the Commission that ERMU would be purchasing a budgeted pickup truck from Midway Ford. Commissioner Stewart asked about the timeline for delivery. Mr. Geiser responded it would be about 26 weeks.

Chair Dietz commended Mr. Geiser and staff for their rapid response to the American Legion's request to have American flags installed along some of the main thoroughfares in Elk River before Memorial Day.

6.2 Future Planning

Chair Dietz announced the following:

- a. Regular Commission Meeting – July 13, 2021 – Utilities Conference Room
- b. Quorum – Groundbreaking Ceremony for Field Services Facility Expansion – June 14, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.
- c. 2021 Governance Agenda

Chair Dietz raised the issue of reinstating an employee appreciation event to be hosted by the Commission, as it had been cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic. There was discussion.

Chair Dietz reminded the Commission of the groundbreaking event for the field services building scheduled on June 14 at 2:00 p.m.

6.3 Other Business

Return to Normal Procedures for Past Due Accounts

Chair Dietz provided the Commission and staff with a copy of an article from the May

edition of Minnesota Municipal Utilities Associations' publication *The Resource*. The article titled, "State-Regulated Utilities Receive Approval to Move Back to 'Normal,'" states that the Public Utilities Commission is allowing investor-owned utilities to recommence disconnecting delinquent accounts beginning August 2, following a series of notices from May – July. There was discussion regarding the article and how ERMU's past due statistics compare to state-regulated utilities. As the PUC approved transition plan does not apply to municipal utilities, Chair Dietz suggested staff come up with a plan on how to transition back to normal.

Ms. Nelson provided details on ERMU's process regarding multiple notices and the small number of disconnects they have been doing throughout the pandemic. It was also noted that based on special assistance funding coming to an end September 1, disconnections will begin ramping up in August. There was further discussion.

Commissioner Westgaard had questions about plans for the Sherburne County Fair Parade. There was discussion.

The Commission recessed the regular meeting at 4:13 p.m. and went into the closed meeting.

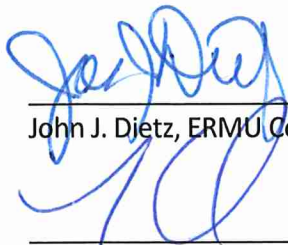
6.4 Closing of Meeting: Meeting closed pursuant to MN Statute 13D.05, Subd. 3(a) for the performance evaluation of Theresa Slominski, General Manager

The Commission reconvened the regular meeting at 5:10 p.m.


7.0 ADJOURN REGULAR MEETING

Moved by Commissioner Nadeau and seconded by Commissioner Bell to adjourn the regular meeting of the Elk River Municipal Utilities Commission at 5:11 p.m. Motion carried 5-0.

Minutes prepared by Tony Mauren.



John J. Dietz, ERMU Commission Chair



Tina Allard, City Clerk