

Draft

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WATER AND LIGHT COMMISSION

April 4, 2013

Commission President Allwardt called the Special Meeting of the Water and Light Commission to order at 2 P.M. with Commissioners Joanne Roush, Don Merkes, Roy Kordus, and Dan Zelinski present on roll call. Also present were Melanie Krause, Co-General Manager/Business Operations; Steve Grenell, Project Engineer; Tim Gosz, Water Plant Supervisor; Kristin Hubertus, Business Operations Accountant; Paula Maurer, Customer Services Manager; Lonnie Pichler, Electric and Water Distribution Supervisor; and John Teale, Technical Services Engineer.

Item II. No one from the Gallery was heard on any topic of public concern to the Utility:

Item III. Unfinished Business, Springsted Study – Commissioner Allwardt explained the reason for the meeting was to give employees a chance to express their comments on the Springsted study in front of the Commission. The meeting was opened up to the Gallery for comments.

Electric Distribution Technician, Greg Shull, spoke regarding his thoughts on changes that could be made to improve the Utility. Highlights for the Electrical Department included staff restructuring; working on power line economics, larger conductors; work on 35Kv circuitry; installing additional feeder from Meadows back to the city; address step down transformer loop loading on Midway Road; closing Biolife loop; and incorporating automation with larger businesses.

Commissioner Roush asked if his primary concern dealt with the Electric Department infrastructure assessments, planning and improvements. Mr. Shull concurred.

Mr. Shull also commented on the General Manager position; supervisor to employee ratios; sharing a bucket truck with the city; trading the Utility skid loader for a mini excavator; employee morale; and commissioner involvement.

Comm. Roush commented on the different aspects of the Utility that commissioners are involved in such as: evaluating projects; instituting strategic planning; improving the financial reports for ease of understanding; urging changes in Customer Service and stepping up the public profile of the Utilities.

Comm. Allwardt discussed working with staff, on a yearly basis, to go over the Strategic Plan and then the Capital Budget. The question was raised if employees have seen the Strategic Plan or Capital Budget. Management will make the plan available for employees.

Line Foreman, Joel Heider, spoke regarding the General Manager vacancy; restoring morale; overstaffing; quality of work; and cross training difficulties.

Comm. Roush discussed the benefits of cross training employees when there are lulls in the work load. Electric and Water Distribution Supervisor Pichler stated that staff has been looking into possible shared work duty opportunities and maintenance work that could be done during such times.

Commissioners discussed working on the Employee Manual in anticipation to the Union contract ending at the end of 2012.

Comm. Allwardt added that employees need to look at the Strategic Plan and Capital Budget, and discuss any issues with their manager.

Commissioner Kordus departed at 3:10 p.m.

Co-General Manager/Business Operations Krause reported on the Management comments to the Springsted Study. The management team answered the same questions the Commissioners were given at the March 27th commission meeting and comments were compiled into one document. Highlights of recommendations from the report staff agreed upon were: filling of mission critical vacancies; further development of the organizational structure; building the team; and strategic planning.

Recommendations from the report management team had questions on were: broadening scope of Business Services; organizational structure; combining into one Water Department; and shared Human Resources. Best opportunities to increase cooperation were: coordinate infrastructure; partnership beginning at the top with the Council and Commission; joint meetings with city and utilities staff; and putting the steam plant to rest. Missed opportunities centered on the organizational chart; changing the culture of the organization; the belief that Springsted did not fully understand how the Utility was regulated; having an implementation plan; safety and defining management roles.

Responses from all parties will be compiled into one document and sent to Springsted.

Project Engineer Grenell asked if the Commission had a timeframe for the General Manager search. Commissioner Allwardt stated there was no timeframe; the process would need to start with a job description and then advertising for the position.

Item IV. No one from the Gallery was heard on any items discussed at this Meeting.

Item XII. The motion by Comm. Allwardt, seconded by Comm. Zelinski, was unanimously approved on roll call to adjourn at 3:30 p.m.

By: MARK L. ALLWARDT
President

DAN ZELINSKI
Secretary