MEETING MINUTES

UTILITIES COMMISSION
Friday, June 12, 2020, 7:15 A.M.
Water Treatment Plant, 555 Lincoln St.
Large Conference Room

Guests Present:    J. Freeman, D. Grumman
Staff Present:     K. Jensen, A. Price, D. Stoneback
Presiding Member: J. Nieuwsma

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
   A quorum being present, Chair Nieuwsma called the meeting to order at 7:17 a.m.

2. SUSPENSION OF THE RULES: Members participating electronically or by telephone
   Mr. Bova moved to suspend the rules, seconded by Mr. Everhart, all approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 13, 2020
   Mr. Skey moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Bova, all approved.

4. NEW BUSINESS
   a. Impact of COVID 19
      Mr. Stoneback reported that the vast majority of Public Works employees were not affected by COVID-19. Employees are screened and their temperatures are taken when they report to work, and work continues as usual. Employees are encouraged to use sick time if they are feeling sick. There have been two City employees that have contracted COVID-19. Water usage and revenues are down, 16% of retail customer accounts are delinquent but the City is not assessing any penalties for late payment or shutting off water at this time. Staff is recommending to City Council that the City start assessing penalties in July. However, between now and July staff will be reaching out to all delinquent accounts and make them aware of financial assistance the City has to offer to them, through Emergency Services and the CDBG, and working with them to set up payment plans. These are only staff recommendations that the City Council would need to approve. There are no changes to the water and sewer fund capital improvement projects. Two Public Works employees were let go and one retired, and City staff are required to take ten furlough days.
b. Community Energy Priorities
Mr. Jensen provided a presentation on Community Energy Priorities that he gave at the Environment Board last night. He said the goal of the process is to get feedback from the community to ensure the high-level community priorities are reflected in community energy agreements and programs. The week of June 15th staff will launch a stakeholder engagement process to solicit input from a variety of stakeholders on community energy priorities, and launch a survey/webpage. Three webinars will be provided; one in late June, and two in July. Staff will focus on scheduling key partner events now and holding them in July. Staff will be working with the Energy Consultant preparing RFPs for the City’s electrical supply agreement and community choice electricity aggregation, and preparing for the first formal meeting with ComEd to kick off negotiations with them towards the end of the month. Mr. Jensen would love to see the Commission attend the webinars, complete the surveys and provide feedback.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
   a. ComEd Franchise Negotiations
      Mr. Partel said prior to the last Utilities Commission meeting on March 13th the goal of the working group was to understand the scope of the franchise agreement, what is going on in the parallel process in Chicago and try to identify the best way to engage the City and all of the stakeholders moving forward. Subsequent to that there have been two meetings among the working group on April 30th and May 21st and as of now it is a process of working with the Aldermen and the City to understand what the goals are and what is reasonable going forward. The City hired Energy Consultant, Mark Pruitt, who will be helping the working group work through these issues. The main focus from now through July is to hone in on what the goals are for the City and with whom they will be speaking with at ComEd about these issues.

   b. Aggregation and Municipal Electricity Supply
      Mr. Jensen reported that the City Council approved a 10-month extension with Dynegy in May which will expire in June 2021. He has been working with Energy Consultant, Mark Pruitt, to determine what the timeline is for issuing a new RFP for aggregation and what the City wants to have in it. They are currently considering issuing a RFP in early fall that includes the municipal supply agreement which expires in December 2020. He hopes to have a very clear timeline ready to share at the July Utilities Commission meeting.

   c. Net Zero Energy Resolution
      Mr. Jensen reported that the City hired Elevate Energy to develop a zero emissions strategy for municipal buildings and operations. They are currently in the data collection and verification process, and he is waiting for feedback from them.

   d. Street Lighting Study
      Mr. Stoneback said the design on the collar of the street light pole the City received was inaccurate. A new street light pole is being made but he has not received it yet.
e. **Historic District Solar Permitting**
   Mr. Bova stated there was no news to report. Mr. Jensen said that the Preservation Commission’s retreat did not take place and they have not met since March due to COVID-19. Meetings are starting back up and they should hear something soon.

f. **Nicor gas meter replacement**
   Mr. Stoneback did not have any information on the status of remote reader installations. Messer’s Shure, Partel and Skey each reported that their remote readers were installed and the installations went very smoothly.

6. **STAFF REPORTS**
   Mr. Stoneback reported the following:
   
a. **Monthly utility reliability report (electric system outages, basement backups, water main breaks, service repairs)**
   There were only a few power outages in the last three months. Two power outages occurred in March, none in April, and two outages occurred in May.

   There were a number of basement backups in May due to major storm events.

   There were only two water main breaks in the last three months.

   The number of sewer repair permits issued was low due to COVID-19.

b. **Water & sewer fund capital improvement project status**
   Mr. Stoneback provided a detailed report on the status of the water and sewer fund capital improvement projects.

c. **Skokie rate litigation status**
   Litigation remains ongoing. COVID-19 has slowed down proceedings but there will be a hearing in state court in August.

d. **Lincolnwood water project status**
   The water main and meter vault have been installed. The new bulk water fill station is going through start-up. Pavement on Hartrey and Oakton are restored and the streets are open to traffic. The contractor is addressing punch list items. Evanston is coordinating with the Village of Lincolnwood to begin supplying water for them to complete the construction of their transmission main in the next two weeks, and begin full-time water supply on July 1st.

e. **Morton Grove/Niles water main/pumping station status**
   Morton Grove/Niles Water Commission has been operating 24/7 and there have been no complaints from residents.

7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**
   a. **Forthcoming Public Works Agency activities relative to the Utilities Commission**
Mr. Stoneback announced that City Council approved amendment to the agreement with Twin Eagle Resource Management for the purchase of natural gas for 16 City owned buildings. Northwestern University will administer the natural gas purchase for the City at no additional cost.

Mr. Nieuwsma announced that he will be term limited off of the Commission before the July meeting and there will be a vacancy. He has informally reached out to some people who might be interested in applying and would provide more diversity on the Commission. He also noticed some incorrect language on the Commission’s webpage on the City’s website stating that members must have engineering or financial experience, which could be limiting in appointing a new member. The City Code actually uses more inclusive language stating that the Mayor, when making appointments to the Commission may consider someone with engineering and financial experience. The language has now been corrected on the City’s website.

Mr. Stoneback said it has been brought to his attention by City staff that the time and location of the meetings may limit people who would like to participate as well. Therefore, the Commission may want to consider moving the meetings to the Civic Center in the evening rather than having them at the Water Treatment Plant in the early morning, which might help in getting a more diverse group. Mr. Grumman said when he served on the Commission they struggled with a time and location for the meeting and found early Friday mornings at the Water Plant worked best for the members since most people work. Mr. Rosenberg said that he thinks some targeted recruitment would make more sense than changing the time or location of the meetings.

Mr. Nieuwsma thanked the Commission for their participation and for the honor of allowing him to serve as co-chair. He turned the gavel over to Mr. Shure to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Shure thanked Mr. Nieuwsma for his dedicated service.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Everhart motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Rosenberg, all approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Angela Price
Administrative Lead
Public Works Agency