MEETING MINUTES

UTILITIES COMMISSION
Friday, July 10, 2020, 7:15 A.M.
Water Treatment Plant, 555 Lincoln St.
Large Conference Room

Members Present: C. Bova, D. Everhart, T. Partel, E. Rosenberg, R. Shure, C. Skey
Staff Present: K. Jensen, A. Price, C. Ruiz, D. Stoneback
Presiding Member: R. Shure

1. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
A quorum being present, Chair Shure called the meeting to order at 7:16 a.m.

Mr. Stoneback introduced and welcomed guest and potential new Utilities Commission member, George Varela to the meeting. Mr. Varela is an Evanston resident and Senior Manager, Environmental Scientist at AECOM.

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

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 12, 2020
Mr. Bova moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Everhart, all approved.

4. NEW BUSINESS
a. Election of Vice-Chair
Chair Shure made a motion to nominate a Commission member to fill the vacant position of Vice-Chair through December, 2020. Mr. Everhart moved to nominate Mr. Rosenberg, seconded by Mr. Skey, all approved with one abstention.

b. Utilities Commission Volunteer for CARP Implementation Task Force
Chair Shure made a motion for a volunteer from the Utilities Commission for the CARP Implementation Task Force. Mr. Everhart volunteered. Mr. Skey moved to approve Mr. Everhart, seconded by Mr. Bova, all approved.

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS
a. Impact of COVID 19 and cooperation understanding among water supply facilities in the area should a staffing problem arise
Mr. Stoneback reported that only two meetings have occurred between all of the water facilities in the area, and no formal understanding was developed between any of them. To his knowledge no water facility has experienced any staffing issues. He said the connection is there if an organization actually has
a staffing issue they can reach out to other providers to obtain assistance. Mr. Stoneback said Evanston has not had any staffing issues but the City has encouraged employees to stay home if they are sick and as a result employees are using more sick leave than normal. He said all employees are screened as they report to work for both temperatures and a list of questions according to the best recommended practices. Of the 150 employees in Public Works no one has had a confirmed COVID-19 case. To his knowledge there have only been two confirmed COVID-19 cases among City employees. He said there will continue to be no shut offs of water accounts for nonpayment through the rest of the year. The City may resume shut offs in March depending on the economy and the status of COVID-19.

b. Community Energy Priorities
Mr. Jensen said this item is now being called Evanston’s Energy Future. He said there is a survey as well as direct outreach to organizations that work with community members. The survey closes August 14th and 235 surveys have been completed thus far. The first webinar was held in June and the next webinar will be on July 23rd. They are beginning conversations with large employers about their needs and energy priorities.

c. ComEd Franchise Negotiations
Mr. Partel said the working group had a meeting on June 30th with four or five people from ComEd’s External Affairs Department for a high level discussion of what the goals of the City might be. He said the working group is still in the process of developing those goals and what the City’s negotiation position is. He thinks it has been a good process so far because there has been a lot of engagement from the City’s elected representatives. There will be a follow up telephone call this afternoon to determine next steps. Mr. Jensen added that the goals shared with ComEd are the City Council plans plus implementation of the Climate Action Resiliency Plan but additional detail was provided as to priorities within those goals. He said one of the outcomes of that meeting was an understanding that the various specifics of what is going to be in the agreement are going to be worked out in smaller group meetings with individual ComEd groups.

d. Aggregation and Municipal Electricity Supply
Mr. Jensen said staff recommends a three pronged approach to Municipal Electricity Supply which will require issuing three RFP’s:

1. Issue RFP for onsite solar on City facilities (fall 2020)
2. Issue RFP for a Virtual Power Purchase Agreement (fall/winter 2020-2021 – invite other large users to participate
3. Issue RFP for 100% renewable energy supply (August 2020)

He said the 3rd approach is the simplest and would look much like the alternative supply agreements the City has issued in the past. The 1st approach would pursue issuing a RFP for onsite solar on City Facilities to see what it would take to put solar on the City’s larger energy users such as the Water Plant, the Robert Crown Center and potentially the Service Center. The 2nd approach is the newer of the three and would involve finding developers
and asking for prices to develop new renewable energy resources and then signing a long term contract with them to buy back the supply of that electricity over a term of ten plus years.

Mr. Jensen said that the current aggregation program contract extension will expire in June 2021. He is recommending that the City switch to a program that provides a price guarantee to all participants to ensure that no one would ever pay more than ComEd’s rate, which would also open up opportunity for the City to generate revenue from that program that could be put towards energy efficiency and supporting low income energy assistance programs, and supporting additional renewables and potentially more development opportunities.

e. Net Zero Energy Resolution
Mr. Jensen said the municipal greenhouse gas emissions inventory is under review right now by the City’s energy consultant, Elevate Energy. They already had a kick off meeting on the case study of three City facilities (the Service Center, Fire Station I and Fleetwood-Jourdain Community Center). They are working to develop the educational workshops which will be a part of the public outreach component of the strategy, and then the Fleet analysis will take place after the GHG Inventory is complete.

f. Street Lighting Study
Mr. Stoneback reported that the street light pole has finally been approved to be manufactured by new suppliers for the City and some Tallmadge street light poles have been ordered at this point. In regard to the overall Master Plan the City is also purchasing and installing the LED fixtures that are in the plan for the Dabit poles and are starting to order LED fixtures for the Tallmadge poles as well. Mr. Stoneback said this item can be removed from the agenda.

g. Historic District Solar Permitting
Mr. Ruiz provided Draft 6 of the guidelines that were put together by the working group composed by members of the Environment Board and the Utilities Commission to Chair Shure on June 9th for the Commission’s review, comments and endorsement. Chair Shure will forward Draft 6 of the guidelines to the Commission members today so they can provide comments directly to Mr. Ruiz who will then bring it back to the Commission for final review and endorsement in August.

h. Nicor gas meter replacement
Mr. Stoneback said he has reached out to Nicor for the status of the remote reader installations but has not heard back from them yet. To his knowledge there have been no issues with the installations.

6. STAFF REPORTS
Mr. Stoneback reported the following:
  a. Monthly utility reliability report (electric system outages, basement backups, water main breaks, service repairs)
     There was only one power outage during the month of June.
There were three water main breaks which were caused by the Fire Department testing fire hydrants. They were immediately trained again on proper operation of fire hydrants and since then there have not been any more water main breaks.

The five year comparison shows that the year to day number of basement backups and floodings are higher this year due to heavy rain events.

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
No news was reported.

d. Lincolnwood water project status
The City’s construction work is complete. City Staff continues to coordinate with the Village of Lincolnwood to open the water supply for flushing and disinfection of the Village’s transmission main. Lincolnwood will continue to receive water from the City of Chicago through the end of July to meet contractual obligations and transition to supply from Evanston. Full supply will be provided by the City of Evanston by August 1st.

e. Morton Grove/Niles water main/pumping station status
No news was reported.

7. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS
   a. Forthcoming Public Works Agency activities relative to the Utilities Commission
      Mr. Stoneback announced that Evanston is holding the annual recycling event tomorrow at ETHS but it will be scaled down from previous years.

      Mr. Stoneback said the City is currently working with Elevate Energy and CMAP on how to development an affordable water and sewer rate. He is hoping to be able to go to council next year with a recommendation. He will bring the recommendation to the Utilities Commission for their review and input before taking it to council.

      Mr. Stoneback announced that ComEd has a generator station located at 2259 Washington. Due to peak loading every day this week they are having issues and will be bringing a generator in to help supply power to that particular circuit. The generator will run through Monday, July 13th. ComEd is currently notifying approximately forty properties that they will experience a five hour power outage on Monday so they can do some rewiring and shifting of circuits.

8. ADJOURNMENT
   The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,