

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the joint workshop of the Brainerd City Council and Utilities Commission was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Council President Bevans.

Upon roll call, the following members were noted as present: Czczok, Mike O'Day, Stunek Terry, Stenglein, Gabe Johnson, and Bevans. Mayor Badeaux was also noted as present. Public Utilities Commissioners noted as present: Angland, Tad Johnson, Matten, Mark O'Day, and Wussow.

Also noted as present were Administrator Bergman, Public Utilities Director Wicklund, HR Director Schubert, Finance Director Hillman, HR Assistant Boser, and Police Chief Davis.

Discussion on Water Lines in City Limits

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that Council Member Czczok requested discussion related to the materials that can be used for service lines. The materials that can currently be used are in the plumbing code. Previously, BPU only used to allow copper lines. The responsibility of who pays for potential damage will be a part of the ordinance that Council will hear at a future meeting.

Member Czczok asked who is informing developers that the City is no longer requiring copper lines.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that at this time they are not holding a public event until the water ordinance is in place. If they come to the City and are wanting to build, the building official can inform them of the materials they can choose from.

Member Czczok asked about the inspection of the lines, who has the final authority under the City to approve the lines.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that the Building Official for the City has the final approval. The Public Utilities Department will also sign off on the checklist.

Member Wussow stated that the Building Official will ensure that all other departments have approved their portion of the project before approving final occupancy.

Reorganization of the Public Utilities Department

HR Director Schubert stated that after being appointed as Public Utilities Director, Mr. Wicklund reviewed the department's staffing needs. The primary recommendations were to transition to a Business Office Supervisor, IT positions whether or not collaboration with the City is possible, filling the vacant Electric Department Supervisor position, and adding a Journeyman Electrician.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund gave an overview of the new maintenance and technical services divisions, the positions would not be new positions just realigning to give priority to projects.

Chair Bevans asked about the title changes for the Business Office Manager changing from the Accounting Supervisor and whether that changes the value of the position.

HR Director Schubert stated that that change is in name only, not value. The department has started the hiring process for the Finance Manager position. The updated job descriptions for the department have been reviewed and approved by the Public Utilities Commission and have been included with the Compensation Study.

Member Johnson requested that a conversation be had between the City and Public Utilities to find potential efficiencies in having one IT Department city wide like our HR Department.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that the IT personnel would need experience with SCADA systems.

Member Mike O'Day asked about personnel needs with the automation of the Hydroelectric Dam, whether these positions being created would eventually be replaced by automation.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that the added positions would be necessary in the future; further, only the positions at the dam are not being replaced.

Discussion on Future Public Utilities Capital Projects

Public Utilities Director Wicklund gave an overview of the current and future capital projects. Included in the plan are the new lights that the City approved with the new policy. Items that are on the plan also include items that have been ordered, but receipt of the items is two to three years out. Capital projects for the electric dam will potentially produce 3.5 megawatts of renewable energy.

Member Czczok asked about the lead service line assessment project and how this would be conducted.

Member Gabe Johnson asked whether we would rely on homeowners to assist with the assessment.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that an assessment of all accounts will need to be done, newer construction will not have lead pipes and the assessment will rely on homeowners to assist the department by taking pictures of their service lines inside their homes. The plan would be to replace 3% of lines each year once the assessment is complete and a plan is in place. Finally, he discussed the current solar projects and potential future development of a solar energy park in the area of the Wright Street Extension in the Industrial park. He encouraged future discussion on owning batteries to store power.

Administrator Bergman stated that if Council would like, there would be an opportunity in late September to tour all of the utility facilities.

Member Gabe Johnson asked about the energy produced by the turbines at the hydroelectric dam and how much more capacity replacement would produce. He also asked about the potential for biomass project.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that another 1.5 megawatts would be produced with the replacement of the generators. The new generators would be more efficient. There is potential for a gas burning facility that could produce 10 megawatts of energy. This facility would not run every day of the year, it would be used when MISO called for energy. With biomass would be difficult to have a facility. Hibbing does have a biomass facility that Brainerd could tap into for potential shortfalls.

Member Tad Johnson questioned the need for purchasing more capacity when we have allowed Krypto mining that takes up large amounts of megawatts. Could the City kick out the Krypto miners to make up for the deficit.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund stated that the Krypto miners are on a separate contract and does not contribute to the shortfall.

Chair Bevans asked about the status Robert's Property purchase.

Public Utilities Director stated that there will be a future closed session regarding the land.

Adjourn

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:42 p.m.



Jennifer Bergman
City Administrator

