

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the special meeting of the Brainerd City Council and Public Utilities Commission was called to order at 6:00 P.M. by Council President Bevens.

Upon roll call, the following members were noted as present: Terry, Stenglein, Johnson, Czezok, O'Day, Stunek, and Bevens. Mayor Badeaux was also noted as present. Public Utilities commissioners noted as present: Angland, O'Day, and Matten.

Staff present were BPU Operations Manager Hawkinson, Finance Director Hillman, City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn, Interim City Administrator Wussow, HR Director Schubert, BPU Finance Manager Loch, Public Utilities Director Wicklund, and WWTP Supervisor Gammon.

Public Utilities Succession Planning

Interim City Administrator Wussow stated that the red lined version of the proposed job description for the Public Utilities Director with a title change to Assistant City Administrator was included in the packet. Utilizing the market study and the current Public Utilities Director wage, staff is recommending a 10% increase to the proposed wage. He stated that the City Administrator is the lead staff person for the entire City. The proposed position description as Assistant Administrator reflects that.

Public Utilities Commission Chair Matten stated that when the work group met in March of 2023 the intention was not to update the job title to Assistant City Administrator. The proposed job description and title creates confusion for the Commission and the leadership that they hold.

Council Member Czezok asked whether the work group would be utilized for the hiring for this position.

Interim City Administrator Wussow that the personnel policy identifies that there will be a work group to fill this position.

Public Utilities Director Wicklund asked why the work done by the work group nine months ago is now insufficient. He gave an overview of the documents he submitted for the meeting. He stated that there are several big issues that are facing the Utility and City as whole in the coming years that will require someone with advanced knowledge. He would implore the Council to think about why there are changes being made to the position right now.

City Council Chair Bevens clarified Public Utilities Director Wicklund's points for simplicity. There is concern about the timing of the update to the position, the title, pay for the position, and communication between the Council and Public Utilities Commission.

Interim City Administrator Wussow stated that the title change would reflect the Council directive of the position reporting to the City Administrator.

Council Member Czezok stated that he viewed the Personnel and Finance Committee meeting from the last meeting. He stated that the conversation was concerning. According to the job description, the City Administrator is the supervisor of the Public Utilities Director for personnel issues. However, the Public Utilities Commission gives guidance on the operations. He asked whether the changing of the name was going to interfere with operations. When it

comes to personnel policy, would the Public Utilities Director be under the supervision of the City Administrator when it comes to performance and discipline. Which would imply the Director isn't following the direction of the Commission. Is there a scenario where the City Administrator would need to instruct the Public Utilities Director on operations contrary to the Commission.

Public Utilities Commissioner O'Day stated that the work group that was formed in 2023 approved the current job title for uniformity and consistency. The Charter changed only the personnel duties of the Commission. To answer Council Member Czeczok's questions, yes, the Commission gives guidance on operations only and there is confusion with the proposed title change.

Council Member Czeczok stated that he believes the answer Public Utilities Commissioner O'Day gave is correct. If there is no disagreement with the answer, he will take the answer as fact. The current title of the position describes the position he believes the title should be maintained.

Council Member Johnson stated that he supports the recommendation by Interim City Administrator Wussow as he has a unique position having been on the Commission previous to and after the Charter change as well as having been the City Administrator previous to and after the Charter change.

Council Member Terry stated that she does not support the title change of the position having been a part of the work group.

Council Member O'Day stated that he doesn't care one way or another what the position is called, but he is aware that it may cause an issue as far as hiring. If the position title is going to cause friction, then keep it the same.

Council Member Stunek stated that the Council generally listens to the findings of a work group. This is a great example of a work group done internally. What is the point of forming work groups if the Council does not listen to them. He would leave the position alone and move on.

Public Utilities Chair Matten stated that the issue is more than the title, there are job description changes. She pointed specifically to bullet point two of the essential functions. The job description was developed following the personnel guidelines. The job description as proposed says that the City Administrator is in charge of operations, which contradicts the Charter. Communication needs to be improved. She would suggest that the work group meet again.

Interim City Administrator Wussow stated that the timeline would require that the job description be approved at the next City Council meeting on January 16th. Referring to the current job description, the general definition of work states "Work is performed under the supervision of the City Administrator with oversight and guidance from the Brainerd Public Utilities Commission."

Council Member Johnson stated that the opportune time to review the job description is now since the job will be open. It was not perfect nine months ago, the proposed description isn't perfect either, but maybe the work group can meet to improve upon it. The Charter clearly lays out that the City Council does all of the hiring and terms of employment. The Public Utilities Commission can hate the description all they want. However, the Council is friendly and takes input from the commission.

Mayor Badeaux stated that the only time things get contentious is when the timeline is short. He greatly dislikes short timelines as people think that things are going on without the

public being aware to push something through. Now is the appropriate time to review the job description.

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS TERRY AND CZECZOK TO APPROVE THE EXISTING TITLE; FURTHER TO HAVE THE WORK GROUP GET TOGETHER TO REVIEW THE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES DIRECTOR.

Council Members Terry, Stenglein, Czeczok, O'Day, Stunek, and Bevans voted "aye". Council Member Johnson voted "nay". The Chair declared the motion carried. The work group will meet at 12:30 p.m. on January 9th.

Discuss Roles and Responsibilities of City Council and City of Brainerd Public Utilities Commission

The City Council and Commission felt that this was addressed throughout the discussion of the previous item.

Discuss Coordination of Future Street Improvement Projects

City Engineer/Public Works Director Dehn gave an overview of the memo that was included in the packet. Staff from Engineering and Public Utilities meet bi-weekly to coordinate projects to improve communication. The capital plan was developed from conversations with BPU and utilizing the previous capital plan. The priority of the projects was determined in large part with finances in mind. The State Aid funds are still advanced.

Council Chair Bevans asked Commission Chair Matten what staff can do to better coordinate future street improvements.

Commission Chair Matten stated that the Commission was not aware that there was coordination happening between the City and BPU staff. Communication needs to continue to improve.

Council Member Czeczok stated that he appreciates the memo put together. However, any projects that the underground be evaluated with each project regardless of the financial factors. The MnDOT mandated projects put the state aid account back 10 years. If something were to happen to a sanitary sewer line, the City and Utility could incur large fines.

Council Member O'Day stated that the capital plan would prioritize the utilities if there was more knowledge about the structures and conditions of the utilities.

Adjourn

MOVED AND SECONDED BY COUNCIL MEMBERS STUNEK AND O'DAY, DULY CARRIED, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.



Patrick Wussow
Interim City Administrator