Utilities Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Mach 28, 2023 at 12:00 p.m.

City Hall, Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue | Winter Park, Florida

Present

Michael Poole, Alison Yurko, Linda Lindsey, Paul Conway, Mary Dipboye, Leon Huffman, and Fred Guitton; Board Coordinator Tatia Ghviniashvili.

Staff Present

Director of Electric Utility Dan D' Alessandro; Director of Finance Wes Hamil; Electric Utility Operations Manager Miguel Cruz; Electric Utility Engineer Manager Mourad Belfakih; Assistant Director of Water and Utility Jason Riegler; Virtually: Director of Water and Wastewater Utility David Zusi.

1) Call to Order

Chair Michael Poole called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

2) Consent Agenda

a. Approve the minutes of regular meeting February 28, 2023

Motion made by Paul Conway to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Linda Lindsey. Motion carried unanimously with a 5-0 vote.

3) Public Comments (for items not on the agenda):

There were no public comments.

4) Action Items

a. Electric, Sewer, & Water Strategic Plan - Dan D'Alessandro and David Zusi

Mr. Poole spoke briefly on how the renewable energy study (presented at the City Commission Work Session), if approved, can have a potentially significant impact on the strategic plan, specifically for electric. For this reason, he suggested deferring this item until the City Commission makes a definite decision to move forward with the sustainability plan. The water and sewer portions of this plan can be pushed forward, however, scope of services needs to be completed beforehand.

The board held a brief discussion and asked questions pertaining to the renewable energy study; staff answered appropriately.

Alison Yurko arrived at 12:06 p.m.

b. Septic to Sewer Conversion - David Zusi

Mr. Zusi gave minor input on the previous discussion regarding the scope of services for the sewer and water component of the strategic plan.

He also provided the board with an update to the septic to sewer conversion, indicating that the city attorney provided a final draft of the conversion for staff review, and once reviewed, it will be brought before this board to make recommendations to the City Commission. A clarification was made, indicating that this conversion is only for incentivizing those residents who already have sewer available to connect to it. Amended on April 25, 2023.

c. Fuel Adjustment Policy Draft - Wes Hamil

Mr. Hamil presented on the Fuel Adjustment Policy for board approval and recommendation to the City Commission. A chart was presented to illustrated the unstable fuel prices over the past couple of years contrasting fuel cost, fuel rates and the city's fuel cost stabilization fund. The fuel cost stabilization fund represents the cumulative fuel revenues that are billed to customers minus the cost paid by the city. Another chart was presented, highlighting the trend comparison for Henry Hub Natural Gas Spot price and Winter Park average fuel cost recovery rate. Amended on April 25, 2023.

Fred Guitton arrived at 12:13 p.m.

Mr. Hamil explained the modifications to the existing policy. The proposed policy provides for a higher balance to account for extreme changes in fuel costs and highlights 10% of the fuel budget rounded up to the next $100,000 as the target. With the modification, there is now a bottom trigger point of 5% of the fuel budget, and a top trigger point (to reduce fuel rates) of 15% of the fuel budget. In the cases where fuel rates need to be increased, the difference will be spread over six months. Conversely, when fuel rates need to be reduced, the difference will be spread over four months.

The board asked questions and staff made the appropriate clarifications. A long discussion ensued about choosing the appropriate trigger points and targets to smooth the extremes and take out volatility of fuel rates. After discussing, the board agreed to amend the policy to adjust the maximum and minimum trigger points for adjustment to 12.5% and 7.5% of the fuel budget, respectively. The rate will be adjusted to spread over nine months for an increase, and six months for a decrease, with changes made being kept to once a quarter.

Staff will present the adjusted policy to the City Commission on April 12, 2023.

Motion made by Fred Guitton to approve the Fuel Adjustment Policy, with proposed modifications; seconded by Paul Conway. Motion carried unanimously with a 7-vote.

5) Non-Action Items

a. Private Lift Station Policy - David Zusi

Mr. Zusi informed the board that city attorneys are currently in the process of reviewing proposed language for the policy to add to the Code of Ordinances. A request had also been made for the reclassification of an open job position to manage this process. He explained this policy wouldn't be for maintaining lift stations, but for ensuring they are maintained. This would include annual inspections and contract binding partnerships with qualified parties to maintain the lift stations.

Staff is currently in active discussion with City Management and members of the Lake Killarney Advisory Board to ensure the language of the policy is acceptable to all parties. The policy will not be available for this board to review at the April meeting, but staff will continue to work on it and provide any updates as needed.

b. Discussion of joint work session with Keep Winter Park Beautiful & Sustainable Advisory Board

Mr. Poole spoke on the sustainability study conducted by Quanta Services and presented at both the Keep Winter Park Beautiful & Sustainable/Utilities Advisory Board Joint meeting and the City Commission Work Sessions. This subject will be discussed by this board on a deeper level at the April meeting, and a representative from Quanta Services will be available then for answering outstanding questions. He urged the board to read/review the report created by Quanta before the next meeting, focusing on the portions related to power and consumption.

A long discussion ensued and Mr. Poole encouraged the board to submit any questions they might have for the consultant prior to the April meeting. Questions to be sent to Mr. D'Alessandro.

6) Staff Updates

a. Electric Utility - Dan D'Alessandro

Mr. D'Alessandro presented updates to ongoing projects. The undergrounding project continues to move at a drawn-out pace due to ongoing supply issues. He spoke briefly about meter cans throughout the city and the need to fix/replace them.

A brief update to solar was provided, with Mr. D'Alessandro highlighting that network meters are beginning to come in and staff is working to program them. The solar panel on the compound is up and running successfully at about 130 kW.

Per board request, staff will upload the undergrounding map back onto the city website, removing dates but including general progress so customers can get an idea of what has been completed, and what hasn't.

A brief discussion followed about customer reaction and feedback to undergrounding.

b. Water & Wastewater Utility - David Zusi

Mr. Zusi spoke on an ongoing issue with fiber optic installation efforts by private fiber optic companies (i.e. Lumen Technologies) who are hitting and damaging water and sewer mains around the city. Staff has held meetings with Lumen to discuss the issue and urge immediate change.

The board asked what steps are in place for crews conducing fiber work, and Mr. Zusi explained the entire process, making note that the party responsible for damages is being billed for the repairs.

c. Performance Measurement - (attachment only)

Mr. Hamil highlighted a few notable numbers in the performance measurement. Customer wait time has gone down significantly, with February and March calls being down to below two minutes.

A discussion ensued about accounts receivable sixty days past due, and staff noted that the number should decrease as disconnects continue. Mr. Hamil will send an email to the board containing the utility performance measurement data from February. The board asked a few questions pertaining to the data and staff made the necessary clarifications.

A proof of the revised bill format will be available in two weeks for staff and board review.

7) Board Comments

a. Broadband and Smart City Ad-Hoc Committee Update - Paul Conway

Mr. Conway gave a brief update on the collaboration the Broadband and Smart City Ad-Hoc Committee has been in with Magellan. At the upcoming March 30 meeting, a network design and milestone schedule should be presented by Magellan.

A brief discussion ensued about fiber optic installation around the city as it relates to Magellan and the committee.

8) Upcoming Agenda Items

Action-items:

- Renewable Energy Discussion
- Sewer and Water Strategic Plan
- Septic to Sewer Conversion

All staff updates will carry over every month.

9) Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:37 p.m.
Date of next meeting: April 25, 2023.

Minutes approved by the board on April 25, 2023.
/s/ Tatia Ghviniashvili, Board Coordinator.