



# Utilities Advisory Board Regular Meeting Minutes

**October 24, 2023 at 12:00 PM**

City Hall Commission Chambers  
401 S. Park Avenue

## **Present**

Leon Huffman, Linda Lindsey, Mary Dipboye, Michael Poole, Paul Conway

## **Absent**

Alison Yurko, Fred Guitton

### **1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:13 p.m.

### **2. Consent Agenda**

- a. Approve the minutes of regular meeting September 26, 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): Three minutes allowed for each speaker**

There were none.

### **4. Action Items**

- a. Disconnect utility service for non-pay during extreme weather policy

Staff presented a simplified policy that determines if customer accounts would be suspended or disconnected for non-payment in the event of a heat advisory or freeze

warning issued by Orange County as prompted by the National Weather Service. The board held a brief discussion and asked questions to clarify the policy.

**Motion made by Linda Lindsey to approve revised policy for disconnecting utility services for non-pay customers during times of extreme weather; seconded by Paul Conway. Motion unanimously with a 5-0 vote**

b. Heart of Florida United Way Emergency Utility Assistance

Staff suggested that the program criteria be made more assessable by not requiring customers to provide proof of financial hardship. Since the vast majority of customers being denied results from the customer not providing proof of financial hardship, the recommendation is to relax requirements to only require a written description of the financial hardship. Staff also noted that the HFUW Assistance Program is only available to customers who receive their electric service from the City of Winter Park. Residents in Duke Energy or OUC territories can receive assistance from the program, however, those customers would apply for help with their Duke or OUC bills as applicable.

**Motion made by Linda Lindsey to relax the requirements for obtaining assistance from the HFUW emergency utility assistance program, to remove the requirement to provide proof of a financial hardship; seconded by Paul Conway. Motion carried unanimously with a 5-0 vote.**

A brief discussion followed. The board requested an analysis from staff, that would report the amount of disconnects and customers that returned for assistance. The analysis will be added to next month's agenda.

## **5. Non-Action Items**

a. Adapt smart meters to open network

Staff stated there are approximately 8000 meters that need to be replaced and those meters have been ordered. The current system for meters is not on the open network, therefore, research of potential brand companies is currently underway.

b. Discussion of Green Boxes being an issue (transformers)

Staff stated there is an ongoing complication with residents who believe utilities are not using the land use code properly. Transformers have to be planted safely in authorized

areas. Staff noted the safety of their employees is a priority and will not be jeopardized. Residents must adhere to utility's recommendations on the location in which transformers are planted.

c. EV - Rates for city charging stations

Brief background information was provided, based on information shared at the previous meeting. Staff noted that charges should be implemented with a proposed rate because spaces are currently being used for parking. The board questioned if the revenue would go to the utility department and a discussion ensued. Staff will return to the board with a rate proposal, a map showing the EV's location, and a plan that details who bears the cost. The wholesale cost is estimated at \$10,000 a year. Ben Pauluhn, Chief Executive Officer and founder of Optimus Energy EV charging stations, virtually answered questions posed by the board. Staff will present a draft to the board at the December 11 meeting, which the board can then recommend to the City Commission for approval

Water and Wastewater Strategic Plan - David Zusi

Mr. Zusi suggests the strategic plan be delayed until the first of the year. The board recommended staff to halt the current process and explore Request for Proposal (RFP) options for the plan. A guided plan was requested by the board.

**Motion made by Paul Conway to assemble the RFP through the procurement process, in January the board will determine how to proceed; seconded by Mary Dipboye. Motion carried unanimously with a 5-0 vote.**

A brief discussion followed. The next meeting will be December 11th from 12pm-2pm.

## 6. Staff Updates

a. Electric Utility - Dan D'Alessandro

Staff gave an update on undergoing projects and introduced Lisa Vedder; Integrated Resource Program Manager. Staff noted materials for undergrounding are limited for new construction due to an industry wide delay. The board asked questions regarding the utility budget not being used entirely and a brief discussion followed. Staff noted their comfortability with all current electrical assets, and highlighted fiber on average costs approximately \$25000 a month. A brief discussion followed.

b. Water & Wastewater Utility – David Zusi

Staff updated the board on their success in obtaining a 10-year permit for the waste water treatment plant. Staff also noted they are finalizing details in regards to filling a vacant position within the department.

c. Performance Measurement – Wes Hamil

Staff presented the performance report and noted that based on the data collected from the last fuel adjustment in May, rates have been the lowest in Florida. The target has changed from 1.9 million to 1.4 million dollars, the rate adjustments will be effective November 1. The large credit previously received by the Utility department, from May to October is no longer available, due to this change the current average rate of 22 cents, will increase to 30 cents. Staff noted the increase follows the policy of giving back access over a 6-month period. A brief discussion followed.

d. Educational Campaign – Clarissa Howard

There were none.

e. Meet Lisa Vedder (Integrated Resource Program Manager)

Ms. Vedder introduced herself and answered a few questions from the board regarding the Quanta business plan analysis. Staff will present a draft to the board at the upcoming meeting. The board asked questions on how to educate customers on using the billing system, including normal utility. Staff recommends implementing email communication with customers, community engagement will help.

f. Quarterly Finance Report - Wes Hamil

Staff gave an update on the finance report. Utility's ability to complete tasks has been impacted due to a lack of materials. A brief discussion followed.

**Board Comments**

g. Broadband and Smart City Ad-Hoc Committee Update – Paul mConway

Mr. Conway gave an update on Broadband and Smart City. The findings from a previous meeting will be presented to the City Commission at a later date. Recommendations for a vendor were discussed. The board recommends staff do the following: collect data on duties performed with cabling and its value, complete the said designs, research wireless networks, explore the open system option, and lastly hire a coordinator. A brief discussion followed.

## **7. Upcoming Agenda Items**

- EV Rates for city charging stations
- Quanta Report
- RFP/RFQ Water Strategic Plan
- Update on RFQ Process for Electric
- Analysis of frequent customers
- Update on solar options: Mary Dipboye

## **8. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Minutes approved by the board on\_\_\_\_\_.

/s/ Charisma Lowery, Board Coordinator