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 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)

4. Action Items

a. Disconnect utility service for non-pay during extreme weather 5 minutes policy

Staff presented a simplified policy to the board that determines if customer accounts would be suspended or disconnect for non-payment in the event of a heat advisory, freeze warning or hard freeze warning issued for Orange County by the National Weather Service.

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 Program

Staff recommendation in regards to the Heart of Florida United Way Emergency Utility Assistance Program is as such. It is suggested that the program criteria be made more assessable by not requiring customers to provide proof of financial hardship. Staff noted the vast majority of customers being denied results from the customer not providing proof of financial hardship. Staff recommends the City to relax their requirements to only require a written description of the financial hardship. 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 customers would apply for help with their Duke or OUC bills as applicable. Further discussion ensued.

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.

Further discussion ensued. The board requested an analysis from staff, reporting the amount of disconnects and customers that returned for assistance. The board requested the analysis be added to the non-action items for 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. The meters have been ordered. The current system for meters is not on a open network, it is proprietary. 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. Transformers have to be planted safely in specific areas, and there are policies to be followed.

c. EV - Rates for city charging stations

Staff stated current EV charging stations are free. Charges should be implemented with a proposed rate, the spaces are being used for parking. The board questioned if the revenue would go to the utility department. Further discussion took place. Staff will return to the board with a rate proposal, a map showing the EV's location, a plan increase and details on 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. Staff will present a draft to the board at the December 11th meeting, as an action item to present to the commission, once an agreement between staff and the board is reached.

d. Water and Wastewater Strategic Plan - David Zusi

David Zusi suggests the strategic plan be delayed until the first of the year. The board recommends staff halt the current process and explore 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.

Further discussion ensued between the board and staff. 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; IRP. Staff noted that currently materials are limited for new construction due to an industry wide delay. The board asked questions in regards to the utility budget not being used entirely. A brief discussion followed. Staff are comfortable with all electrical assets, fiber on average costs approximately $25000 a month.

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.

c. Performance Measurement – Wes Hamil

Staff presented the performance report and noted per 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, 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. Further discussion ensued between staff and the board.

d. Educational Campaign – Clarissa Howard

There were none.

e. Meet Lisa Vedder (Integrated Resource Program Manager)

Lisa Vedder introduced herself and answered a few questions from the board regarding the Quantum 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. Further discussion between staff and the board ensued.

7. Board Comments

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

The board gave an update on Broadband and Smart City. The findings from a previous meeting will be presented to the 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. Further discussion between the board and staff ensued.

8. 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

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Minutes approved by the board on <u>December 11, 2023.</u>
/s/ Charisma Lowery, Board Coordinator