Utilities Advisory Board
Regular Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2024 at 8:00 AM

City Hall Commission Chambers
401 S. Park Avenue

Present
Alison Yurko (Virtual), Michael Poole, Paul Conway, Paul W. Smith Jr., Kathryn Sutton, Leon Huffman

Absent
Mary Dipboye

Staff Present
Director of Water and Wastewater Utilities David Zusi, Deputy Director of Water and Wastewater Utilities Jason Riegler Director of Electric Utility Jamie England, Director of Finance Wes Hamil, Electric Utility Operations Manager Miguel Cruz, Electric Utility Engineer Manager Mourad Belfakih, Integrated Resources Program Manager Lisa Vedder (Virtual), Administrative Coordinators Pamela Bracko and Madison Smith

1. Call to Order

Mr. Poole called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

2. Consent Agenda

a. Approve the minutes of October 22, 2024

Motion made by Mr. Conway to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Sutton. Motion carried unanimously with a 6-0 vote.

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

4. Action Items

5. Non-Action Items

a. Water & Wastewater Strategic Plan - Dave Zusi

Mr. Zusi introduced Raftelis Consulting representative Catherine Carter who coordinated the strategic plan for Water & Wastewater Utilities. This is sort of the final draft that we want to run by this group before we finalize the document. Board member, Mr. Conway had an integral part in the development along with the rest of the board, staff and city employees. Ms. Carter shared her screen presenting an agenda of the 2024 Water & Wastewater Utilities Strategic Plan. The following items were listed and discussed:

1. Strategic Plan Overview: This plan addresses three key questions: What do we know to be true today? What do we hope will be true in the future? How do we get there?

2. Strategic Planning Process and Timeline:

- Kick-off (July/Summer): Conduct interviews with the management team and the city, along with three employee groups.

- Fall: Hold a Management Team Foundation Session, along with a UAB check-in, and an implementation planning session for the management team.

- November/December: Develop the Strategic Plan document and present it to the UAB.

3. Department Operating Context: We discussed what we know to be true today about the department, the community and service population, and the utility industry based on input from stakeholders.

4. Vision, Mission, Values: This is the strategic framework. The vision statement is already in place; the mission statement has been revised, and the values have been aligned with the city's core values.

5. Priorities, Strategies, and Key Performance Indicators: With input from the UAB, we developed seven priorities: workforce development, water resources, customer relationships, communication and outreach, operational optimization, resilient infrastructure, and responsible budgeting and finance. For each priority, we have identified a series of 3 to 5 strategies and related measures.

Discussion:

Mr. Huffman corrected that the service area covers 23 square miles. Ms. Sutton suggested that with the 3 to 5-Year strategy, the planning out of the sequencing of those strategies and action items will be important. She asked if there are indications in the strategic framework regarding timelines. Ms. Carter explained the timeline piece of the sequencing was not part of the original scope. Mr. Zusi may have ideas about working with the management team to do sequencing and prioritization of initial activities.

Mr Zusi stated Jason Riegler will bring a fresh perspective, and also give real assistance in putting some of the sequences together. Staff can either work with Catherine or take her document, develop additional schedules, and add to it.

Ms Yurko suggested looking into AI, at how it might streamline operations. Mr. Zusi advised the city has been looking at AI, discussing where the opportunities may exist to help streamline operations, but we're not actively using it at this point.

The next step, is to finalize the document and present it to the Commission as the Water and Wastewater Utilities strategic plan. Mr. Poole suggested a commission workshop to discuss the strategic plan.

b. Electric Utility Ranking Survey - Mark McCain

Mark McCain Executive Consultant/ Strategic Planning Hometown Connections Inc. was welcomed back to present the results of the pre-workshop survey report. The following points were made and discussed:

Defining Planning Terms:
- mission
- vision
- Goals-
- strategies
- action plans

A 3-5 year plan was requested in the request for proposal (RFP).

Overview of the Planning Process:
- brainstorm
- rank
- A shortlist of strategies will be presented at the February UAB meeting
- decide

Pre-Workshop Survey Objectives:

1. To obtain feedback on Mission and ask about a Vision
2. To rank potential Goals and seek additional suggestions
3. To rank potential Strategies and seek additional suggestions
4. To obtain feedback on expectations for the planning meeting
5. To obtain any other comments associated with the planning process

The survey was launched online on November 5, 2024 and closed to responses on November 19, 2024.

Sixty-six percent agreed with the mission statement, 14% somewhat agreed 10% neither agreed nor disagreed. The recommendation from the board is to refine it and shorten the mission statement. Alternative mission statements will be proposed to the board in February. Electric utility does not currently have a Vision statement. Fifty-two percent said it would be good to have a vision statement, 28% neither agreed nor disagreed and 19% somewhat disagreed. Staff will work on a vision statement and propose it to the board in February.

Mr. McCain reviewed each of the following Ranking Potential Goals and discussed the strategies associated with each: Reliability, Power Supply, Renewables, Customer Service, Finance, Workforce

The UAB and staff concur with the top three priorities and top supported strategies:

Reliability - Outage Management System (OMS) and Maintenance

Power Supply - Cost-Effective Power, Supplier Diversity and Resource Flexibility

Customer Service - Outage Communication, Website/Portal, Call Center and Customer Engagement.

Discussion followed on renewables, power supply, workforce and job descriptions. It was suggested to note that the renewables strategy is the city's internal operations goal.

The last set of questions in the survey had the objective of reviewing the utility's mission and vision, establishing long-range goals, and identifying strategies to achieve goals. The workshop was not intended to develop action plans to implement strategies. A slide was shown that explained the difference between action plans and strategies.

After approval of the goals and strategies by UAB and the City Commission, the next phase will be implementation. Presented to the board were the three main aspects of implementation; implement the plan, communicate the plan and monitor and evaluate. The next step is meeting with the utility staff to discuss shortlisting the six goals and 26 strategies, along with defining the vision and mission to present to UAB at the February 2025 meeting.

c. Year-End Financial Report - Wes Hamil

With the time constraints, Mr. Hamil advised the financial year-end report was included in the agenda packet.

d. Decorative Lighting - Mourad Belfakih

Mr. Belfakih presented an update on the decorative lights and proposed the estimated cost of $10M. He suggested to start installation with the utility customers who bill for decorative street lights. Mr. England inquired if the board desired to pursue the decorative lighting initiative after the undergrounding project. The decorative lighting initiative will be an ongoing discussion on the agenda.

6. Staff Updates

Board members were advised to email staff with any questions on updates.

a. Electric Utility - Jamie England
b. Water & Wastewater Utility – David ZusiPerformance Measurement – Wes HamilEducational Campaign – Clarissa Howard

7. Board Comments

Board Chair Mr. Poole advised he will be absent for the January meeting. Board will discuss the strategic reports at the January meeting. The February and March meetings will wrap up discussions including bulk power and renewables. Ms. Bracko introduced her replacement Madison Smith.

8. Upcoming Agenda Items

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Approved with clarification by the board on January 28, 2025
/s/ Bahiyyah Layton, Board Coordinator