



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Water and Light Advisory Board

Wednesday, June 7, 2023
8:00 AM

Regular

701 E Broadway
Conference Room
1A/1B

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Switzer called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Staff: Sarah Talbert, Assistant Utility Director; David Sorrell, Utilities Director; Shawn Carrico, Engineering Supervisor; Ben Edes, Energy Services Supervisor; Erin Keys, Acting Utility Director - Electric; Ron Wyble, Power Production Superintendent; Brandon Renaud, Energy Services Manager; Steve Hunt, Acting Utility Director - Water; Matt Nestor, Communications Specialist; Chris Kisch, Sr. Administrative Support Assistant

Public: Mike Murphy, Dennis Bennett

Present: 5 - Thomas Jensen, David Switzer, Gregg Coffin, Philip Fracica and Amanda Jacobs

II. INTRODUCTIONS

A round robin was done for introductions.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Gregg Coffin made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted with a second by Ms. Amanda Jacobs. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The May 3, 2023 meeting minutes were approved as submitted with a motion by Mr. Tom Jensen and a second by Ms. Amanda Jacobs. Motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: [Meeting Minutes Draft 05 03 23](#)

V. PUBLIC EMAIL COMMENTS

None.

VI. FINANCIAL REPORTS as available

a) Monthly Financial Report

Ms. Talbert stated she would not go into detail, if there were any questions to just ask. She began with the Electric side noting the month to month operating expenses were in the middle compared to this time last year. Operating expenses were up due

to salaries and wages and Purchased Power. Ms. Talbert noted Council had approved a salary increase at the last Council meeting that was not included with these statements. Year to Date (YTD) Operating revenue was up slightly due to MISO being higher than this time last year. Operating Expenses were slightly below this time last year. Operating Revenue was at 56 percent of the budget and Operating Expenses were at 45 percent of the budget.

The Water side was similar to the Electric side. The month to month Operating Revenue was up slightly for both residential and commercial. Operating Expenses were up as well, again due to salaries and wages, and materials and supplies which was noted to be for the Water Treatment Plant (WTP). YTD Operating Revenue was up slightly, Ms. Talbert said if the drought continued, this would continue to rise. YTD Operating Expenses were up, again due to salaries and wages, and materials and supplies, but also services and miscellaneous, which was noted to be the sludge hauling. The Operating Revenue was at 48 percent of the budget and Operating Expenses were at 45 percent of the budget.

The monthly and annual billed usage was said to be information only. Water was up for the year compared to last year while electric was seven million kilowatt hours below last year. It was noted last year the summer was dry but there had been rain in May and June and that was not the case this year.

Attachments: [Electric Statements-April 2023](#)
[Water Statements-April 2023](#)

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

a) CEC Council Electric Rate Memo

Mr. Coffin noted he was present at the Climate and Environment Commission (CEC) meeting and presented the WLAB's deliberations and actions for electric rates. In his opinion the CEC felt the need to respond to that and tried to tie affordability in. The WLAB had a brief discussion and concluded this was information only and a response was not required.

Attachments: [CEC Memo](#)

b) Planning Public Input Meeting

The WLAB noted the last public input meeting was last October, 2022 with a start time of 6:00 p.m. and felt this could be done annually. Ms. Talbert advised she would check for available dates for the month of October in Council Chambers asking if there was any dates that did not work in order to avoid those. The first week of October was noted to be avoided if possible. There was some discussion on agenda topics. Ms. Talbert suggested including the utility was moving forward with Community Solar with a final draft that would be submitted to Council with the hope of a January implementation time frame. The WLAB would be looking for more agenda topics.

c) Annual Water Quality Report

Mr. Switzer began by saying he liked the adjustments made to the front page, it was much less overwhelming. Mr. Coffin agreed adding it made it so non-technical individuals could read and understand it. He said with the human attention span becoming smaller and smaller, he suggested more bullet points would make it even less overwhelming.

Attachments: [2022 Water Quality Report](#)

d) Council Item Updates

Ms. Talbert noted this was a monthly update only, then explained what was presented and approved at the May 1, 2023 Council meeting as well as the May 15, 2023 Council meeting. One bill was introduced at the June 5, 2023 Council meeting, there was no discussion, just an introduction. There were two items outstanding for Council consideration that included the Community Solar Program Ordinance and the The Energy Authority (TEA) evaluation 100 percent renewable energy by 2030. Mr. Sorrell noted there would also be two Public Hearings, one for Perche Creek Substation and another for Bolstadt Substation. He believed this to be in August, 2023 but would verify. Ms. Talbert noted the utility was still waiting for the scope for Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI). She also reminded the WLAB of the upcoming June 20, 2023 meeting with Council. The WLAB briefly discussed the June 20th meeting noting they felt it would be beneficial for the WLAB to be present and able to speak if needed.

Attachments: [Council Item Updates - May 2023](#)

VIII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS**a) Upcoming Board Meetings**

Options for upcoming board meetings were discussed by the WLAB and staff. Mr. Switzer noted the July WLAB meeting was the day after a holiday then asked two questions:

1. If the WLAB felt the July, 2023 meeting should be moved to another date
2. If the dates for all regular meetings should be changed to a different week

The WLAB felt the July meeting would be best scheduled for the following week, July 10, 2023. Ms. Talbert noted the TEA meeting was also that date and TEA could provide the presentation before the WLAB meeting. The WLAB agreed to that.

Next the WLAB discussed their normal scheduled meetings. Mr. Coffin stated he did prefer mid-week versus a Monday morning. The WLAB asked staff for their opinion. Mr. Sorrell noted he was not fond of the first Wednesday due to Council meetings being the first Mondays. After further discussion it was decided the second Wednesday of each month worked well for all.

Mr. Coffin noted issues with people in the back of the room hearing what was being discussed then asked if the hearing could be improved. It was noted there was no audio or microphones in the room but the tables could possibly be pushed to the center of the room to allow the public to be spread more around the room for better hearing. Ms. Talbert would check in to that.

Mr. David Switzer made a motion to reschedule the July 5, 2023 Water and Light Advisory Board meeting for Monday, July 10, 2023 with a second by Mr. Gregg Coffin. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gregg Coffin made a motion to move the regular scheduled Water and Light Advisory Board meetings from the first Wednesday of each month beginning at 8:00 a.m. to the second Wednesday of each month beginning at 8:00 a.m. with a second by Mr. Philip Fracica. Motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: [Upcoming Board Meeting Options](#)

b) Rate Affordability

Mr. Switzer noted the WLAB had discussed a potential Rate Affordability plan. He said he had a colleague that could come to the October meeting for a presentation on Rate Affordability. He noted if the WLAB was up for that he could check the availability. Mr. Coffin felt it would be beneficial adding maybe some others such as the Columbia Housing Authority (CHA), Finance, etc. could attend as well. Ms. Talbert noted she could reach out the Mr. Randy Cole with the CHA. Ms. Jacobs mentioned the Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA), noting they dealt with a broader group. Mr. Jensen agreed. Mr. Coffin stated he remembered as a young adult being stretched for funds and the difficulty it was at times to afford certain things and felt the lower income customers were in that same position. He asked as the utility moved toward AMI if there was a way to help customers with payment options. Ms. Jacobs felt there were a number of people that did not completely understand the budget billing program as well. Ms. Talbert noted with the budget billing program there were certain guidelines such as the customer had to maintain service for a year, the customer could not have any late payments for a year, and a few other guidelines. Mr. Coffin understood that but felt with the different pay cycles these days that it would make sense for the utility to work with customers for a best pay period. Mr. Switzer suggested extending this discussion to other Boards and Commissions (B&C's) such as the CEC and the Finance Advisory and Audit Committee (FAAC), etc. Mr. Jensen noted Mr. Mark Haims had spoken at the last meeting about clean energy, adding he was energy conscience and very well-practiced on reducing energy and expense, suggesting maybe to reach out to some of the regular public attendees as well.

c) Customer Service Survey Discussion

Mr. Switzer noted Mr. Coffin has submitted a list of questions a while back and he was wanting for the WLAB to dig down for any other questions to ask and to also think about how the questions would be perceived and answered. Mr. Sorrell

advised they would need to keep in mind there were five utilities that would need to be included; Electric, Water, Solid Waste, Sewer, and Wastewater, and not just limit the questions to water and electric. The WLAB discussed the questions presented, what fit, what did not, and what other topics to include. Mr. Coffin felt it was important to ask a question on the level of support and the willingness to pay more. Ms. Jacobs suggested a question regarding the rate of knowledge for renewables. Mr. Jensen suggested there may be different ideas after they met with TEA on July 10th. Mr. Coffin agreed. Ms. Jacobs noted she felt it was important for the WLAB to let the public know something *was* going to be done and the WLAB was looking for ideas of what was needed and wanted from the public. Mr. Switzer noted he was very interested in finding out where customers got their drinking water from within the home. Was it from the tap, filtered water, or bottled water. He said it would capture the level of confidence in the City's water, he also felt it would be very concerning if customers were drinking bottled water in the home over tap or filtered. Mr. Coffin noted the energy efficiency programs asking if suppliers were aware of them. Mr. Renaud advised most did come from contractors as most contractors had built the programs into their practice. He did suggest three questions for energy efficiency:

1. Have you made any efficiency upgrades?
2. Are you planning to make efficiency upgrades?
3. Are you aware of the City's programs to help with efficiency upgrades?

Mr. Renaud said this would give some idea of the public's knowledge of the programs available.

Attachments: [Draft Questions for Citizen Survey](#)

d) Rolling Calendar Update

Ms. Talbert noted what was listed for the next meeting. It was noted the Electric Vehicle (EV) charging impact topic had been pushed out and that TEA would have their presentation prior to the July 10, 2023 meeting.

Attachments: [WL Rolling Agenda June](#)

IX. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Mr. Bennett stated he was interested in understanding more about the Community Solar and Perche Creek. He asked if Perche Creek was overloaded or if transmission was just not large enough. Mr. Renaud requested Mr. Bennett get with him after the meeting and he would help him with the Community Solar. Referring to the survey, Mr. Bennett wished the WLAB luck adding surveys were very difficult.

Mr. Jensen began by announcing his term was up this month, he had re-applied and was hoping to be re-appointed. If by chance he was not, he thanked everyone for the time he was able to serve. He advised he had met with staff and finance staff regarding the Federal Funding opportunities available to come up with a way to monetize items received. Mr. Jensen said the input received from both staffs was very encouraging, there was full willingness to get any funding possible.

Mr. Switzer also announced his term was up this month as well and had re-applied and was hoping to be re-appointed. He too thanked everyone for his time to serve.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE

July 10, 2023

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m. on a motion by Ms. Amanda Jacobs with a second by Mr. Tom Jensen. Motion passed unanimously.

To submit questions or comments to the Water & Light Advisory Board, please email: wlabpublic@como.gov.

Members of the public may attend any open meeting. For requests for accommodations related to disability, please call 573-874-CITY (573-874-2489) or email CITY@CoMo.gov. In order to assist staff in making the appropriate arrangements for your accommodation, please make your request as far in advance of the posted meeting date as possible.

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