



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Water and Light Advisory Board

Wednesday, November 3, 2021

8:00 AM

Regular

701 E Broadway
Conference Room
1A/1B

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Jensen called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

Staff: Sarah Talbert, Assistant Utility Director; David Sorrell, City Utilities Director; Christian Johanningmeier, Power Production Superintendent; David Storvick, Engineering Manager; Shawn Carrico, Engineering Supervisor; Brandon Renaud, Utility Services Manager; Matt Nestor, Community Relations Specialist; William Strawn, Water Distribution Manager; Matthew Lue, Finance Director; Kevin Wiggins, Water Productions Manager; Matt Lucas, Sr. Rate Analyst; Ricki Jones, Utility Customer Service Manager; Eric Hempel, Sustainability Manager; Chris Kisch, Sr. Administrative Support Assistant

Present: 4 - Jay Hasheider, Thomas Jensen, David Switzer and Gregg Coffin

Absent: 1 - Robin Wenneker

II. INTRODUCTIONS

A round robin was done for introductions.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. David Switzer made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted with a second by Mr. Gregg Coffin. Motion passed unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The October 6, 2021 meeting minutes were approved as submitted on a motion by Mr. Gregg Coffin with a second by Mr. David Switzer. Motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: [Meeting Minutes Draft 10 06 21](#)

V. FINANCIAL REPORTS as available

a) Monthly Financial Report Discussion

Ms. Talbert advised this was a quarterly report and was unaudited. Cash and Cash Equivalents as well as the Monthly Billed Usage were up for both water and electric. Operating Revenues and Expenses were also up for both water and electric. It was explained the electric side was up due to purchased power. Maintenance was noted to have increased due to construction materials and contractual work, as well as

additional meter purchases to replace old and failing meters. Water Utility Customer Distribution included both September, 2020 and September, 2021 for comparison. Mr. Hasheider stated he felt it would be beneficial to include the last quarter as well. Mr. Lue noted that could be added.

Ms. Talbert noted the Billed Usage report was an update on the annual monthly billed usage. She said the charts would look different as it too was quarterly not monthly. She noted August was lower than previous years for water usage and felt this was a timing issue due to the different billing cycles. Mr. Coffin noted it was more difficult to see the trend with the quarterly charts, noting there needed to be some adjustments. Mr. Coffin also requested to review the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget for the utilities. Ms. Talbert noted that would be presented to the Water and Light Advisory Board (WLAB).

Attachments: [September Financial Statements comments](#)
[12-September 2021 Statement Memo](#)
[12-September 2021 Financial Statements](#)
[Summary Change in Billed usage for Water and Electric](#)

b) Quarterly Utility Disconnection Update

Ms. Talbert noted this was an update. She explained the delinquent accounts were past due accounts only. The pending utility disconnects were accounts ready to be disconnected and were already more than 10 to 12 days late. These accounts were down considerably to what it had been. It was noted with winter coming up disconnections would begin to end once temperatures dropped below freezing. Mr. Coffin asked if there was a grace period. It was noted there was not. Mr. Coffin noted this report did not provide the WLAB who the frequent late payers were adding that was what he would like to see. Ms. Talbert advised the CASH and HELP programs would be discontinued and there would not be any new customers added, however there would be a new program added that would have more flexibility.

Attachments: [Pending disconnects for WLAB](#)

VI. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

a) Annual MISO Load Forecast

Mr. Lucas advised this was the annual MISO forecast and it was required at the end of October each year. He stated staff had looked at more variables especially the economic and efficiency variables, with the results being all models improved dramatically. He added staff had also tried to incorporate efficiency into the load this year as well as Electric Vehicles (EV's) for future years. He explained normal weather was assumed for the modeling. Mr. Lucas directed the WLAB to page 13 of the report showing a graph and explaining its purpose. Mr. Switzer confirmed the key takeaway was that weather was the driver for the variability. Mr. Lucas confirmed he was correct, adding the information in the document was what was expected by

MISO for confidence levels. Mr. Switzer asked if any of the information had been compared to the Siemens report to the Integrated Electric Resource and Master Plan (IERMP) Task Force. Ms. Lucas replied the model did not have the same bias's as the Siemens report and staff would continue with this model.

Attachments: [Annual MISO Load Forecast](#)

b) Smart Energy Provider (SEP) Designation

Ms. Talbert noted this was information staff felt the WLAB should be aware of. Mr. Renaud explained the designation lasted for a two year period and the purpose was to recognize public power utilities for demonstrating leading practices in four key disciplines;

- Smart energy program structure
- Energy efficiency and distributed energy programs
- Environmental and sustainability initiatives
- Customer experience

It was noted this was the second time Columbia Water and Light (CWL) had been recognized for the SEP designation.

Attachments: [Water & Light recognized as a Smart Energy Provider](#)

c) 2018 Water Ballot Project Update & Brief Summary of Alternative Treatment Analysis Report

Mr. Carrico noted there was not much change since the last report, all was moving along well. There was some information he provided regarding the Water Treatment Plant's (WTP's) pilot testing and alternatives analysis. He advised this information had been formally presented on October 11, 2021 and was also available on the city's website. Mr. Carrico provided a brief summary explaining there had been several alternatives tested and this was an extension of the studies. Mr. Carrico explained the WTP was a 32 million gallons per day (MGD) groundwater treatment facility with a process that included aeration and lime softening followed by conventional filtration, free chlorine primary disinfection, and chloramine secondary disinfection. He noted the system operated effectively with chloramines as the residual disinfection. The city originally employed free chlorine disinfection, then converted to chloramine to minimize Disinfection By-Products (DBP) formation. He explained there was interest within the community to revert back to free chlorine for secondary disinfection, noting the WTP would need to further remove the organic compounds that affect DBP formation to remain compliant with current and possible future regulations. Mr. Carrico advised the purpose of this pilot was to determine the treatment required and the recommended technology to revert to free chlorine. Bench scale and pilot testing were performed to determine the technologies capable of reducing finished water Total Organic Carbon (TOC) and in turn, DBP formation potential. He noted the three pilots evaluated were;

1. Post-softening ozonation with Biological Aerated Filter (BAF)
2. Post-softening with Granular Activated Carbon (GAC) filter absorption

3. Post-convention filtration GAC absorption

Mr. Carrico noted the GAC contactor outperformed all other pilot treatment trains for TOC and DBP removal. Mr. Carrico ended noting the findings from this study were used to recommend GAC contactor as a treatment alternative capable of achieving the water quality and treatment performance necessary. There was a question of cost. It was noted the cost information was in the final report but it was very costly with a significant impact on customers. Mr. Switzer asked about Per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances. Mr. Carrico noted there was not much data but there had been some annual tests that showed no cause for concern. Mr. Coffin asked about copper and lead testing, asking if there was any anticipation for corrosion. Mr. Carrico advised there was no anticipation for corrosion but could run into that with older buildings, adding there could be more additional testing as well.

Attachments: [WaterBondProjStatus 20210928](#)

[Columbia McBaine Alternatives Analysis Report 10-08-2021 EXEC SUMMARY FINAL](#)

d) 3rd Quarter Renewable Energy Report

Ms. Talbert noted this was an update of where things were for the third quarter, adding it was still below the 15 percent goal. There was a brief discussion of what renewables was in Columbia as well as the forecast for buying recs to meet the 15 percent goal. It was noted again, if there was no penalties for not meeting the 15 percent goal why the need to purchase the recs. Mr. Coffin felt if the city was continually not meeting the goal of 15 percent, the goal should be to find out how to get on track to get to the 15 percent. It was noted the utility was close to the same percentage as the prior year.

Attachments: [3rd quarter renewable energy update](#)

e) APPA Training Update

Ms. Talbert advised she had some American Public Power Association (APPA) training date information for staff training the WLAB could attend. This would be an in-person event noting there was a 20 person capacity with staff having priority. She advised a Doodle Poll would be sent out with the available dates of training for the WLAB to provide their availability. Mr. Hasheider was hoping for new information. Ms. Talbert replied the training was on the Basic Cost of Service and Key Financial Concepts.

VII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS

a) RubinBrown Audit Discussion - Utility Billing (8:30 a.m.)

Mr. Meyer with the RubinBrown Company introduced himself via Google Meet and provided a brief background of the company. He noted the firm did internal audits and this would be the second done for the City of Columbia. Mr. Meyer said they had planned for two discussions and this was the second of the two. He added that he and Mr. Feldt were here to enquire on what was needed for the utility. Ms. Orapallo advised the Finance Audit and Advisory Committee (FAAC) had met with

RubinBrown on October 21st and the idea from Council was for RubinBrown to put a list together on what could be reviewed and give a better understanding about rates. Mr. Meyer agreed, asking if there was interest in understanding the full billing process as well. Mr. Hasheider noted there was difficulty in assessing the water consumption, number of units used by different categories, as well as tiered water rates and the impact of potential rate increases. He said as the utility moved forward the emphasis would be on equity of rates and felt it was important for the city to assess that information. Ms. Orapallo noted equity came up many times, specifically the timing of the billing cycles adding her hope was this could be adjusted to help customers that struggle to pay their bills. She suggested aligning the billing cycle with the customer's ability to pay. Mr. Switzer stated he felt an analysis could be done to find where the timing would be for rate payers. He said the billing cycles made it so customers could not pay adding if the billing system could do that it should be done. Mr. Coffin also felt the timing of the billing cycles was an issue and anticipated the completion of the analysis, asking what the timeframe would be. Mr. Meyer noted they would like to begin in December, 2021, with the hope for a draft report in early January, 2022, then their final report in February, 2022. Mr. Jensen stated the WLAB looked forward to reviewing the draft and the WLAB was relying on them to discover what would be effective for the city of Columbia.

b) Discussion on Renewable Ordinance

The WLAB had a brief discussion regarding the renewable ordinance. The question was if they agreed with the Climate and Energy Commission (CEC) in promoting the year 2030 for the city to be 100 percent renewable and if it was achievable. The decision was a copy of the renewable ordinance was needed to continue this discussion at the December meeting.

c) Rolling Calendar Update

Added to the rolling calendar for the December agenda was the final version of the FY2022 Budget for the utilities only. Mr. Hashedier requested staff develop a report on battery storage in Columbia for a proposal for 2023 and provide at the December meeting. Mr. Coffin asked if he was wanting the report from a distribution standpoint or a user standpoint. Mr. Hasheider replied both, he would like some discussion on batteries as a starting point. He added batteries was something utilities would eventually be moving toward. Mr. Coffin agreed but felt it was mostly on the commercial side currently. Mr. Jensen replied he would have it in the Chairman's Reports for December. Mr. Switzer asked about the time line for submitting his information for his presentation for the December meeting on the Consumer Confidence Report. Ms. Talbert noted the 23rd of November.

Attachments: [WL Rolling Agenda November](#)

VIII. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Mr. Jensen shared an email he received from the CoMo Safe Water Coalition group referencing a visit to the WTP, their concerns with the alternative treatment analysis

and pilot testing, its updates, and dissatisfaction with staff. It was noted they believed the current design plans did not allow for resumption of free chlorine without the use of GAC. Another concern was the current phase would be constructing new ammonia feeds when the ultimate goal was to remove ammonia. It was noted the CoMo Safe Water Coalition group had worked with Mr. Bob Bowcock for many years and was under the belief Mr. Bowcock was familiar with CWL's system. It was noted he did believe GAC's in the filter beds would work well for Columbia but felt with other improvements CWL would not need to replace GAC media as often as currently expected. The group called attention to transparency and communication saying it appeared certain staff was running the operation asking where department leadership was and why the lack of visionary communication.

Mr. Carrico commented, saying GAC was reviewed in the report. It was deemed not effective and more costly; the struggle was with technicality. He advised both staff and the CoMo Safe Water Coalition group were striving for the same thing, it was just a difference in the time schedule.

IX. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 1, 2021

X. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

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.