



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Water and Light Advisory Board

Wednesday, May 3, 2023
8:00 AM

Regular

701 E Broadway
Conference Room
1A/1B

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Switzer called the meeting to order at 8:02 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; David Storvick, Engineering Manager; Todd McVicker, Energy Services Supervisor; Matt Nestor, Communications Specialist; Jim McDonald, Assistant Director of Finance; Chris Kisch, Sr. Administrative Support Assistant

Public: Mike Murphy, Dick Parker, Mark Haim, Jack Miesenbach

Present: 4 - Thomas Jensen, David Switzer, Gregg Coffin and Amanda Jacobs

Absent: 1 - Philip Fracica

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 April 5, 2023 meeting minutes were approved with changes with a motion by Mr. Tom Jensen and a second by Mr. Gregg Coffin. Motion passed unanimously.

The April 18, 2023 TEA Presentation minutes were approved as submitted with a motion by Mr. David Switzer and a second by Mr. Tom Jensen. Motion passed unanimously.

Attachments: [Meeting Minutes Draft 04 05 23](#)
[Meeting Minutes Draft 04 18 23 TEA](#)

V. PUBLIC EMAIL COMMENTS

The Water and Light Advisory Board (WLAB) discussed the comments presented by

Mr. Dick Parker with the Climate and Environment Commission (CEC) regarding the rationale for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) rebates. Mr. Coffin noted there were already heat pump rebates, saying he did not quite understand what the memo was intending. He then asked Mr. Parker for clarification. Mr. Parker stated the rebates were based on summer use to reduce peak. GHG needed to be added to summer peak. He said additional rebates were needed to encourage the replacement of natural gas with electric. Mr. Coffin replied it needed to be based on financials, along with the need to ensure viability. He did not feel it made sense to change the rebate. Mr. Switzer noted the CEC had not requested an endorsement, therefore, he did not feel the WLAB needed to address this at this time. This could be re-visited at a later time with the WLAB agreeing.

Attachments: [RATIONALE for GHG REBATE FY14](#)

VI. FINANCIAL REPORTS as available

a) Monthly Financial Report

Ms. Talbert noted this was updated information based on the month of March. The Cash and Cash Equivalents were down for both water and electric. The monthly billed usage was also down for both water and electric. Ms. Talbert noted this was due to the weather being colder in the month of December. The operating revenues were up for water and electric while the operating expenses were up for water but down for electric. The operating expenses for electric was noted to be up due to the rise in chemical costs. Mr. Switzer asked for clarification as to if and how rate increases were included. Mr. McDonald explained anything after January, 2023, rate increases were included; however anything prior to January, 2023, increases were not included. The monthly billed usage was down for electric as March had been mild, it was noted to be the second lowest for the month of March in the last 10 years.

Attachments: [06-March 2023 Statement Memo](#)
[March Financial Statements comments](#)
[06-March 2023 Financial Statements](#)
[Summary Change in Billed usage for Water and Electric](#)

b) FY 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR)

Ms. Talbert said she had asked Mr. McDonald to come in and explain the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). Mr. McDonald explained the ACFR was done annually each year. This year there were new auditors so the process took a little longer. After the audit was complete the auditors had stated that in their opinion, the financials for the City of Columbia were presented fairly and was materially correct. This was the desired outcome. Mr. McDonald explained each of the graphs in the report for the WLAB, noting that water, electric, sewer, solid waste, and the regional airport had to show as combined, even though it was just water, electric, sewer, and solid waste under the utilities department. Mr. Coffin asked what the contract term was with the consultants. Mr. McDonald explained these consultants would stay with the City for the next two years. The fourth and fifth years would be

reviewed at that time. It was anticipated that every five to ten years there would be a Request for Proposal (RFP) sent out for consultants.

Attachments: [FY 2022 ACFR](#)

VII. DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

a) 2023 Annual Renewable Energy Plan

Mr. Renaud stated the plan covered energy costs over the year 2022. The standard for 2022 was 15 percent, however, Columbia Water & Light (CWL) had purchased or generated 18.15 percent of its total electric usage through renewable energy sources. Wind generated 12.9 percent, landfill gas generated 2.9 percent, and solar generated 2.3 percent. Mr. Renaud advised the cost of renewable energy had been increasing in recent years and that trend had continued and accelerated in 2022. The additional cost for renewable energy compared to non-renewables was a 58.45 percent increase over the rate impact limit. The majority of the cost increase could be attributed to the two Crystal Lake contracts as a result of congestion on the grid. While this additional cost would not immediately result in a recommended rate increase, consideration for this increasing cost should be made when evaluating the need for rate increases. Mr. Renaud stated in late June, 2022, Boone Stephens Solar provided notice of termination of its 64 MW Purchased Power Agreement (PPA) citing increased project costs as the reason for termination. The developer was still interested in proceeding with construction and was evaluating options for development. Staff had finalized the RFP for Boone Stephens Solar replacement which included an expansion of renewable resources through 2025. Staff had started the process of evaluating the different options toward meeting a goal of 100 percent renewable by 2030. A consultant would begin work on the study during the first quarter of 2023.

Attachments: [2023 Renewable Energy Plan](#)

b) 2023 Energy Star Partner of the Year Sustained Excellence Award

Mr. Renaud announced that CWL had received the Energy Star Partner of the Year-Sustained Excellence Award for the fourth year in a row. This award was received from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy and was something to be very proud of. It was the sixth year CWL had been named Partner of the Year to qualify for the Sustained Excellence Award which was the highest honor bestowed by the Energy Star program. Mr. Renaud noted Sustained Excellence Award winners were part of a distinguished group that had made a long-term commitment to fighting climate change and protecting public health through energy efficiency. He ended noting this was the last year for this award as the government was removing the program.

Attachments: [2023 Energy Star press release](#)

c) 1st Quarter Renewable Energy Report

As of the first quarter the utilities renewable percentage was at 25.49 percent which

was up from the same time last year.

Attachments: [1st quarter renewable report](#)

d) Window A/C Exchange Report

Mr. Renaud explained this program was established in 2006 to assist low-income customers to be more energy efficient. CWL and Boone Electric Cooperative (BEC) partner with the Voluntary Action Center (VAC) to provide efficient window air conditioners for qualifying customers. VAC provide the customer engagement, manage income verification, and handle the exchanges with assistance from CWL staff. Qualifying customers must have an older, less-efficient window unit to exchange, have their income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and cannot have participated in the program in the prior year. These customers will also receive water and energy efficiency usage tips and kits, which include shower heads, faucet aerators, LED light bulbs, and weather stripping. VAC conduct all the necessary income verification and eligibility requirements. The Window Air Conditioner Exchange program will begin Tuesday, May 2, 2023 and run through Thursday, August 31, 2023. Tuesday and Thursday mornings will be the days VAC will be doing exchanges.

Attachments: [2023 ACx Memo](#)

e) Quarterly Utility Disconnection Update

The number of delinquent accounts went down in April as disconnects started back up in March. Delinquent accounts went from 400 on April 6th to 129 on April 24th for commercial, residential went up, from 3,733 to 4,191. Pending disconnects went from 57 on April 6th to 15 on April 24th for commercial, residential again went up, from 377 to 405. Pledges are still coming in, mostly through Central Missouri Community Action (CMCA). The utility assistance programs CASH and HELP were noted to be dropping off.

Attachments: [Pending disconnects for WLAB](#)

f) 2nd Quarter CIP Progress Report

Ms. Talbert said this was progress information only. If there were specific questions she would help provide clarification. There were none.

Attachments: [2nd Quarter Electric CIP Report](#)

[2nd Quarter Water CIP Report](#)

g) Discuss FY 2024 Water & Electric CIP

Ms. Talbert noted the prioritization was brought to the front as the WLAB had requested. Mr. Coffin asked when staff would begin this process. Mr. Sorrell noted it had already begun. This process began almost immediately after the last ended.

Attachments: [Electric CIP Summary for WLAB](#)
[Electric FY 2024 CIP Projects with changes between FY 2023 budget and FY 2024 budget](#)
[Electric Proposed FY 2024 CIP](#)
[Water CIP Summary for WLAB](#)
[Water FY 2024 CIP Projects with changes between FY 2023 budget and FY 2024 budget](#)
[Water Proposed FY 2024 CIP](#)

h) Council Item Updates

The April 3rd Pre-Council Meeting staff discussed the Cost of Service Study Follow Up, Electric Transmission Improvements, Substation Improvements, and Use of Bond Funding. The April 3rd Council meeting one Bill was introduced and then approved at the April 17th Council meeting. One Bill was introduced at the April 17th Council meeting and then approved at the May 3rd Council meeting. Two Bills were introduced at the May 3rd Council meeting and scheduled to be approved at the next meeting. There were three items still for Council consideration.

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

i) 2018 Water Ballot Project Update

Mr. Carrico noted staff was preparing responses to additional comments received with the Water Treatment Plant. West Ash Pump Station would be out for bid in just a few more days. Permit application would be submitted for the Southwest Water Tower very soon. The WLAB briefly discussed the impact of stalling projects and how delays equaled to more cost. Staff asked if this was a report they were still wanting monthly or quarterly. The WLAB felt quarterly would be sufficient unless there were changes.

Attachments: [WaterBondProjStatus 20230425](#)

VIII. CHAIRMAN'S REPORTS

a) Rate Affordability

Mr. Switzer said he had last introduced a document on affordability programs with a few cities/states processes. The question now was how the WLAB want to proceed. Mr. Switzer said his preference was to have a couple of meetings within the next six months to come up with a short report for recommendations. He knew the gentlemen in Austin, TX and could possibly get a Zoom meeting with him if needed. Mr. Coffin was agreeable to that, his only concern was that it be open to the public. He felt a consultant would also be required to run metrics, affordability tests, etc. for both water and electric, with a report at the end that showed those metrics. After some discussion, the WLAB agreed this was something that could be set aside for a later date.

b) Customer Satisfaction Survey

The WLAB briefly discussed questions they wanted to see in the survey, such as what citizens felt about the water quality, where citizens drink their water from, was it from

the tap or bottles, etc. There were numerous questions, noting the questions may need to be prioritized.

c) Federal Funding Opportunities

Mr. Jensen stated he would be meeting on Thursday, May 4th with the Finance Director, Matt Lue to discuss this funding. He said the IRS would not be issuing funds all at one time but he would be discussing all funding opportunities with Mr. Lue.

d) Rolling Calendar Update

The TEA report was added to the June agenda as long as it would be available.

Attachments: [WL Rolling Agenda May](#)

IX. GENERAL COMMENTS BY PUBLIC, MEMBERS AND STAFF

Mr. Miesenback declared it was very difficult for him to hear the meeting, stating the meeting should be conducted in Council Chambers for microphone use. He said the Renewable Energy Plan was a great plan and he watched the WLAB set and talk for 20 minutes about how it was unachievable. He said the WLAB needed to make Council understand. Next, he said congestions on the transmission was not getting better and the WLAB needed to face reality they would have to do something like putting solar panels everywhere, on homes, commercial buildings, everywhere possible but there had to be a plan. The CIP he said, had all projects funded from 2015, asking if anyone had gone back and looked at those estimates. Those projects would be much more now. He said he hoped the WLAB could get this problem worked worked out, he said people were being killed every day by not getting this done. Mr. Switzer advised they were an *ADVISORY* board only and had limitations on what they could do. Mr. Coffin agreed adding the WLAB did not make decisions for the City or staff; Council was the decision maker. The WLAB was only there to help.

Mr. Coffin said he had the opportunity to participate in the RFP for Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and was very impressed and that staff was very informed. It was still in progress, no consultant had been chosen yet but he felt there would be many good ones to choose from.

X. NEXT MEETING DATE

June 7, 2023

XI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m. on a motion by Mr. Tom Jensen with a second by Mr. David Switzer. 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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