

City of Decorah Utility Committee Meeting

Monday, June 3, 2019 – 6:30pm.

Immediately following the regular session of the City Council (actual start – 7:30pm)

The City of Decorah Utility Committee met on Monday, June 3, 2019 at 7:30pm. Chairman Andy Carlson called the meeting to order and the following answered roll: Dan Bellrichard, Johanna Bergan, and Randy Schissel. Steve Luse was also in attendance. Others in attendance: Staff, Water Superintendent Todd Ihde and City Manager Chad Bird.

Agenda

Discussion and update on continued service of Decorah Business Park Well

Bird and Ihde shared with the committee the operating conditions of the well in the business park.

Ihde stated the business park well was constructed in 2000, this well served as a temporary supply for early businesses in the business park for many years. He noted, with high iron contents it was mainly for sanitary use only. This well was taken out of service in late 2015 with the completion of the Highway 9 Water and Sewer project.

Ihde continued, upon removing the well from service, it was designated an emergency standby well in 2017 with the Department of Natural Resources. With the completion of the 2019 Water Supply Sanitary Survey for the City, it was suggested by the DNR to pull the well and plug the casing to eliminate any possible contamination to the aquifer. Ihde concluded that for this reason he is asking this be discussed by the committee.

Ihde's recommendation is to close the well, plug the casing and abandon it.

Bird noted he and Ihde had reached out to Lindsay Erdman and Decorah Jobs regarding input from them and were awaiting a reply.

In discussion, the committee agreed with Ihde's assessment and recommendation and noted as long as Erdman and Decorah Jobs concurred with the recommendation, they gave Ihde direction and permission to proceed as he saw best for the water supply and the department.

Discussion regarding utility franchise agreement with Alliant Energy

Carlson opened this portion of the meeting by welcoming Dustin Mohs and Marty Mensen from Alliant Energy to the table.

There was general discussion about the often-discussed Alliant "pilot project" and the proposed electric utility franchise agreement. Alliant reiterated they would seek a 10 – 15-year franchise agreement. The committee members responded with a 10 – 15-year agreement but wanted as little as six months to opt out based on conditions in the community.

Alliant noted they are looking at several projects in the community and believed these investments warranted a longer franchise agreement. Mensen discussed a large scale battery project, a solar array and perhaps car charging stations.

Bird asked if a 15-year agreement with open sections at three years, five years and ten years might be workable between the parties. He noted this would allow for the council to consider the electric utility municipalization again in three years.

There was some minor discussion regarding joint trench agreements and other localized projects.

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There was little additional discussion and the two side seemed unsatisfied with the discussions.

There was no other business and the meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

