

City of Decorah
Municipal Electric Utility Task Force
January 6, 2021 – 5:30pm
Meeting Minutes

Electronic meeting pursuant to Iowa Code section 21.8 – In circumstances where such a meeting is impossible or impractical due to concerns about COVID-19 and social distancing for the safety of commission members and the public.

In support of Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds' proclamation declaring a State of Public Health Disaster Emergency in Iowa, the current COVID-19 situation makes it "impossible and impractical" to meet in one location. Due to this the Decorah City Hall was partially closed to the public for the January 6, 2021 MEU Task Force meeting. Seating was limited to ensure distancing. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

Members present included: Pete Espinosa, Carly Hayden Foster, Larry Grimstad, Doug Hamilton, Kristine Jepsen, Andy Johnson, Mark Lovelace. Jim Beeghly (6:01pm) and Karen McLean (6:24pm) joined the meeting at a later time.

Others present: Council Liaison Steve Zittergruen, Sustainability Commission chair Jim Martin-Schramm, and City Manager Chad Bird.

There was a total of 12 people on the Zoom link.

Call to Order

Bird opened the meeting and asked each member to provide a brief bio as part of the roll call.

Review of rules, regulations, open meeting requirements

Mayor Borowski welcomed each of the members to the task force and thanked them for their service to the community by serving.

Bird reviewed several housekeeping items and covered Iowa's open meetings and open records laws. There was discussion regarding quorums and ex parte communications amongst group members. Bird stated his opinion that the group should communicate as if open meetings laws applies in more situations than not.

Bird said he would be the city staff person responsible for keeping record of meeting agendas, minutes, and communications.

Discussion of task force's charge and duties

a. meeting dates and times

Martin-Schramm reviewed the resolution from the Sustainability Commission covering the duties and outline of the issues for the task force.

He asked the task force, "What do you want to study?" He challenged the group to think of others they may wish to contact and discuss the key issues with. He encouraged them to engage the public through individual conversations and with public input sessions.

Martin-Schramm and Bird noted the feasibility study and information is on the City's website and Bird stated he had placed much of the information in the group's Dropbox folder.

Lovelace asked where opportunities to learn may be identified. There was discussion about speaking with large companies and larger user group organizations like Luther College and Decorah Schools.

Grimstad mentioned that maybe the group Decorah Power would be interested in providing an educational opportunity for the task force.

Bird and Grimstad discussed providing links to various pieces of information from the city website.

Review of objectives and goals and assignment of responsibilities

Zittergruen thanked the group for serving also and thought there were three or four points the group should be thinking about in the formation of their thought processes.

- 1) *Selecting a chair and secretary*
- 2) *Meeting people and organizations in the community*
- 3) *Time and dates to meet*
- 4) *Grant or funding opportunities for the study, or portions of a study*

There was general discussion on these points.

Consider election of Chair and recording secretary

- a. City Council liaison appointment – Steve Zittergruen

Grimstad recommended Hayden Foster for the chair position. There was no other name offered.

Motion by Grimstad and second by Lovelace to appoint Hayden Foster as chair of the MEU task force

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Lovelace volunteered to serve as secretary and Bird stated he really needed someone to assist with note taking to be sure information is compiled more efficiently.

Motion by Grimstad and second by Hayden Foster to appoint Lovelace as Secretary of the MEU task force

Roll call vote: Ayes, unanimous.

Motion passed.

Other business

In other business, Martin-Schramm, Grimstad, and Jepsen discussed a USDA grant that may assist in funding if the group proceeds with a feasibility study.

Jepsen noted the application is due around the end of February. She noted the study would be an eligible program as the grant source was used the last time the community commissioned a feasibility study.

There was discussion about using the grant for the study, for outreach and education, and perhaps marketing if allowed.

Hayden Foster said she would send out a Doodle Poll to determine when to meet next. The group suggested meeting in about two weeks.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03pm by Grimstad / Hayden Foster.

Respectfully submitted,



Chad A. Bird
City Manager

Sustainability Plan

E.3 ACTION: *Establish a Municipal Electric Utility (MEU) task force and commission a MEU Feasibility Study to be completed by fall 2021 (potential update of previous plan).*