

City of Decorah
Municipal Electric Utility Task Force
March 25, 2021 – 9:00am
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 March 25, 2021 MEU Task Force meeting. Seating was limited to ensure distancing. The public was invited to participate via electronic means.

Members present included: Carly Hayden Foster, Larry Grimstad, Kristine Jepsen, Andy Johnson, Mark Lovelace, and Karen McLean.

Others present: Mayor Lorraine Borowski, Council Liaison Steve Zittergruen, Sustainability Commission chair Jim Martin-Schramm, and Interim City Manager Wanda Hemesath. Three other people were on the Zoom meeting.

Consider approval of minutes from the January 14, 2021 regular meeting
Minutes from the March 11 meeting were never completed with the transition of City Manager.

Items for discussion and possible action

1. Hayden Foster call to order & Introductions
2. Discussion of budget process & budget needs going forward

Council notified Hayden Foster on March 15th that requests for funding should come through the sustainability commission.

Martin-Schramm said that the council would like an estimate of funds between now and July 1, and then a separate estimate for the July 1, 2021 thru July 1, 2022.

Zittergruen mentioned that going through Sustainability Commission would be best practice, but if there were a time-sensitive request, then a direct request to the council would be acceptable as well. Providing a budget would be appreciated.

Hemesath reminded everyone that the communication from council was only during work session, there was no formal vote regarding these communications. During the work session it was discussed that ½ of the franchise fee would go to the local option sales tax fund and ½ would go to sustainability commission. Again, this was discussion only, no formal vote.

Lovelace asked approximately how much are we talking about from this fee.

Hemesath approximated \$96k per year for 1% fee. Fee is going up annually and capping at 4%.

Martin-Schramm & Zittergruen both reminded the group that sustainability makes recommendations, but the council makes the final determination.

Hayden Foster asks the subcommittees to present a budget request at the April 8th meeting.

Johnson mentioned that the feasibility subcommittee was slowing down the feasibility process to give the community time for outreach and education to take place. He also mentioned the USDA grant would be used to offset city money being requested/spent.

Jepsen said that this grant is for technical assistance, not the feasibility study itself. Requesting \$20,000 to pursue a shared data set (from Alliant and/or IUB) and education costs. Lovelace asked if there was a match for the grant. Jepsen responded that there were no matching funds necessary, but need to have a commitment for funding.

Johnson added that this request for a shared data set would include the willingness to sign confidentiality agreements, but no legal involvement initially.

McLean mentioned that the community outreach and education subcommittee is working on some final large user/employer meetings, then would start heading to other community groups. Lovelace added that at that point we will need more "boots on the ground" helping with this process in order

to reach a large cross-section of the community. Hayden Foster added that replacements for this group have not been found yet.

Jepsen added about their funding subcommittee, that this USDA grant was not the only funding resource, but this was the one that presented itself at this time. This can be requested again next year around the same time. Lovelace asked if there was a funding request to pay for the grant proposal process. Jepsen responded that at this time it was only her time, no cost at this point.

3. Other business

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35am by Grimstad/McLean.

Sincerely,



Mark Lovelace
MEU Task Force member

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).