

City of Decorah  
Municipal Electric Utility Task Force  
August 6, 2021 – 12:03 pm  
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, Reg Laursen, Mark Lovelace, Andy Johnson, Larry Grimstad, Kristine Jepsen and Doug Hamilton.

**Others present:** Mayor Lorraine Borowski, Council Liaison Steve Zittergruen, Sustainability Commission chair Jim Martin-Schramm. Several other community members were present.

**Items for discussion and possible action**

1. Hayden Foster call to order.
2. Approval of July 8, 2021 minutes – Laursen, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jepsen
3. Review of the Decorah City Council's E.3 Resolution establishing this taskforce and establishing our duties (Hayden Foster) – reviewed the letter from the IUB encouraging the community to get the IUB involved and that Alliant needed to be more transparent going forward.
4. Report from feasibility committee on Alliant's response to our data request, and our next steps (Johnson)
  - a. Goal is to use a common data set if there is another study and referendum
  - b. Alliant's initial response referenced public information and responses that were used during 2018, but this information isn't specific to Decorah
  - c. Preparing a response to Alliant asking for more specific Decorah related data.
    - i. Zittergruen confirmed the letter has been sent, but it did not request a response from Alliant within a certain timeframe.
    - ii. Johnson suggested asking Interim City Manager (Hemesath) to send Alliant a "please respond by" update to Alliant.
5. Report from City Council MEU Worksession Monday July 26 (Zittergruen)
  - a. Focused on 3R's and challenged community leaders to prioritize community projects (Reliability, Response Time, & Rate)
  - b. Council has valued the work that has been done, deliberate, methodical, and building trust in the process.
  - c. Zittergruen would like to see continued work with other subgroups of the community & Randy Schissel echoed working on shared projects in the community
  - d. No further discussion by council at this point, but if monies are requested, then council will have further conversations.
  - e. Hayden Foster, Johnson, & Zittergruen all added that it will be good to hear from other groups of the community and looking forward to educational opportunities.
  - f. Lovelace added that it may be a tangible project to put together a timeline of the process as an educational tool for the community. One that everyone agrees is

- the appropriate timeline, where potential dollars may be spent, how much, and who is involved in each of the stages.
- g. Laursen said educational process would need to be easily accessible for a large percentage of the public, and they would need to know about it!
  - h. Grimstad agreed that with a variety of resources, we can reach a large cross section of the community in a very transparent way.
  - i. Lovelace mentioned that the goal would be to reach different age groups, socio-economic groups, possibly even coffee groups.
6. Reliability comparisons, power interruption data from the US Energy Information Administration (Hayden Foster)
- a. Reach out to experts to help answers questions that exist. Reach out to communities and businesses within communities that are currently in a MEU structure.
  - b. Showed the EIA.org website with reports
    - i. Last June, average downtime for consumers was 6 hours
    - ii. Public owned had the lowest average downtime compared to investor owned and cooperative rural
    - iii. Laursen stated that this information looked compelling, but would the data holdup when scrutinized, and then if dialed back to Alliant & Decorah specifically.
7. Discussion of potential guest speakers, and other means of gathering and sharing information
- a. Laursen posed the question, what happens if Alliant delivers the data that is requested. How will this change things?
  - b. Johnson responded that it would allow feasibility study to be done or updated, giving one set of data which would also align with the data that the IUB would eventually use if the process moved that far along. Even if there were still two separate studies using their own rates, analysis and conclusions, one would hope that the two studies would land much closer than last time in 2018.
  - c. Johnson & Lovelace added that it should be a priority to build out what the process and timeline would look like so that the community (& council) can use as a consistent resource in discussions.
8. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:59 pm.
9. Future meetings – September 3, October 1, November 5, & December 3.

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).