

City of Decorah
Municipal Electric Utility Task Force
September 3, 2021 – 12:01 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, Karen McLean, 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.

Agenda:

1. Hayden Foster call to order & approval of August 6, 2021 minutes – Jepsen, 2nd by Johnson
2. Education Planning Discussion (Laursen & Grimstad) –
 - a. Subcommittee has met several times and talked about gauging the pulse of the community, and at this point Grimstad mentioned in these meetings that he's hearing that other community projects are priorities for the community (Childcare & Elementary School in particular). (Laursen)
 - b. Education comes and this process comes from 4 levels:
 - i. Task Force
 - ii. Sustainability Commission
 - iii. City Council
 - iv. City Voters
 - c. How much data do each of these levels need to have to make a decision, with or without the release of information from Alliant? Does Decorah have the operational ability and expertise to start a MEU?
 - i. As we gather data and become educated on the topic throughout the 4 levels above, it seems to be apparent that reliability and recovery is going to be comparable, so does the potential rate savings have enough to proceed? Question for the Task Force prior to moving forward with the education of the voters.
 - ii. Alliant says "partnership", but won't provide information on the data request. We should press Alliant as to why their rates are different/more, otherwise their lack of transparency is forcing the city to proceed in order to gather additional information and data.
 - iii. Need to gather the process that would run through the IUB
 1. Gather data, answer questions at each level (above), then decide at each level if it is worthwhile to proceed.
 2. If Task Force and Sustainability Commission make this determination, then the council can determine timing. Also give council time to digest for future action.
 3. McLean asked about prioritizing and timing
 4. Grimstad talked in general about the timeline process, but mentioned that a true timeline of the overall process could be very helpful moving forward.

3. Alliant's 2nd response to the data request --
 - a. Hamilton mentioned that the subcommittee has met and discussed potential actions from here, meeting again next week to try to determine next moves.
 - b. Johnson mentioned that the Alliant declination creates a disruption for the Task Force's charge to pursue either an update or new feasibility study. Without a common set of data, we will have a difficult time meeting this charge from the commission.
 - c. Laursen asked if this group could make a determination without the feasibility study and Johnson responded that it would be very difficult to make any economic decisions without the feasibility study being accurate.
 - d. Martin-Schramm presented prepared remarks
 - e. Zittergruen stated that filing a complaint should be a City Council decision. If Task Force wants to file a complaint, then run it up to the council to determine. McLean and Martin-Schramm agreed that everything should run through the council.

4. Steps in a municipalization process overview (Hayden Foster) – move to next meeting

5. Future meeting schedule (Hayden Foster)
 - a. October 5, November 5, and December 3

6. New Business - none

7. Adjourn (Hayden Foster) – 1:00 pm

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).