

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, Chair Ardner called to order the regular meeting of the Mora Public Utilities Commission at 3:00pm on Monday, June 20, 2022, in the city hall council chambers.

2. **Roll Call:** Present: Chair Greg Ardner, Commissioners Brett Baldwin, Ryan Christianson, Dave Chmiel, and Alan Skramstad

**Staff Present:** Administrative Service Director Natasha Segelstrom, Public Works Director Joe Kohlgraf, and Accountant Sara King. **Absent:** General Manager, Glenn Anderson

3. **Adopt Agenda:** MOTION made by Skramstad, seconded by Christianson, and unanimously carried by the PUC to approve the agenda as presented.

4. **Consent Agenda:** MOTION made by Skramstad, seconded by Baldwin, and unanimously carried by the PUC to approve the agenda as presented.

a. **Regular Meeting Minutes-** *May 16, 2022*

b. **Claims-** *May 2022*

c. **Consideration of Probation Release:** *Dylan Ramthun*

5. **Open Forum:** No one spoke at open forum.

6. **Special Business:**

a. **Utility Account Setup for Deposits:** Segelstrom brought forward for consideration the establishment of a new back account to accept utility payments via Automated Clear House deposit. She explained that an increased number of businesses would no longer be submitting payment via check due to internal organizational change and streamline accounting practices. She detailed the current process which encompasses the customer's bank account details provided are provided to MMU, and MMU initiates the ACH payment. The requested payment method would provide MMU bank details to the customer and the customer initiates the ACH payment. Segelstrom detailed that the additional account would be used for the sole purpose of the ACH payment for customers that do not wish to provide their banking details and further explained that there were large customers who currently used this method, which had been approved by previous administration. The PUC further discussed the intent of the account as an added measure and whether there would be an added expense for the account. Christianson expressed concern of current customer-initiated ACH payment method and requested additional information as to why they were not using the MMU initiated ACH payment. Additional questions were brought forward that detailed the number of customers that use the customer-initiated ACH deposit, average amount of ACH deposits that would be associated with a new account and reason for not using established MMU initiated ACH payment. Segelstrom stated she would follow up with additional information with the PUC. Baldwin asked if the ACH payment was initiated each month on the same day and King confirmed that the ACH took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month. Christianson and Baldwin stated that could be the issue as to customers not electing the MMU initiated payment. The consensus amongst the PUC was to have staff gather additional information and report back to the PUC.

b. **MMUA Designation:** The PUC approved the designation of Glenn Anderson to Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association delegated representative to cast votes on all matters that come before the membership of MMUA and designated Joe Kohlgraf and

Gary Bergstadt as alternative to the designated representative. MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Baldwin and unanimously carried to approve Glenn Anderson as delegated representative for MMUA.

- c. **Resignation Water / Wastewater Operator – Bontjes:** Kohlgraf brought forward recent resignation of Water/Wastewater Operator III, Gunnar Bontjes and the previous discussion of postponing the hire of the Water/Wastewater Operator III position and begin recruitment for a Water/Wastewater Operator II based on labor trends amongst the Water/Wastewater operators statewide. Kohlgraf explained that with the increased certifications, there have been recruitment challenges and that the current Water/Wastewater Operator II had been hired without any experience in the field. Ardner asked about the existing Water/Wastewater Operator III position. Kohlgraf explained it would remain vacant and revisit in the future. MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Baldwin and unanimously carried to accept the resignation of Gunnar Bontjes and approved the recruitment for Water/Wastewater Operator II position.
- d. **Federated Co-Op Utility Rate Discussion:** The PUC reviewed email communication from Federated Co-Op CEO Mike McMahon in response to recent notification of an electric rate increase. The request for consideration to maintain current electrical rate use category due to loss of business and Federated Co-Ops. The PUC discussed the request and the MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Baldwin and unanimously carried to deny Federated Co-Ops request to maintain their current electrical rate use category.

**7. New Business:**

- a. **Capital Improvement Infrastructure Plan Proposal:** Greg Anderson of SEH, brought forward a proposal for long rate infrastructure plan. He explained this was a tool that would help address areas of concern in the City and would also assist with prioritizing future projects based on the condition. Kohlgraf further explained that part of the cost could be split with the city budget due as this would also encompass the street department. The PUC further discussed how much of the infrastructure proposal would be paid from the PUC and percent of future project costs that would be associated with the utilities and the city. MOTION made by Christianson, seconded by Baldwin and unanimously carried to approve the Capital Improvement Infrastructure Plan Proposal not to exceed \$7,500.
- 8. Public Hearings:** The PUC reviewed a list of two past-due utility accounts for consideration to certify to the respective property taxes for the 2023 payable year. The public hearing was opened at 3:27pm; no one spoke at the public hearing, and it was reported no responses were received from the account owners. MOTION made by Chmiel and seconded by Skramstad and unanimously carried to close the public hearing at 3:28pm. MOTION made by Baldwin, seconded by Christianson, and unanimously carried by the PUC to recommend the certification of the entire list of unpaid utility charges to the Mora City Council.

**9. Old Business:** There was no old business.

**10. Communications:** There were no communications.


**11. Reports:**

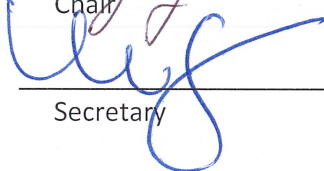
- a. **Administrative Services Director:** Segelstrom provided the PUC with an update on the driver's license office operation that the City had been exploring with Kanabec County. She further explained that the City has been looking at a different approach to address

the need for childcare and there has been discussion with several large employers that could benefit the city and utilities. That David Geschwind of SMMPA had visited Mora and detailed solar programs and SMMPA's Solar Garden. She explained that is Segelstrom explained that staff have begun budget preparations for the 2023 budget and if there were any Capital Improvements or areas to address to bring them forward at the Joint Meeting. She further explained that she would be on military orders through from June 27-July 8.

- b. Public Works Director: Kohlgraf detailed upcoming testing and recent power outage and provided an update on the water treatment plant. He noted the Grove Street construction is going well. Ardner asked if Princeton had assisted with the outage and Kohlgraf stated that ECE had a significant amount of damage and outages due to the recent storm.
- c. Commissioner Chmiel: Nothing new to report.
- d. Commissioner Baldwin: Nothing new to report.
- e. Commissioner/Mayor Skramstad: Nothing new to report.
- f. Commissioner Christianson: Nothing new to report.
- g. Chairperson Ardner: Asked for an update on the Driver's License Office. Segelstrom stated the City and County had met with Chad Gramentz and that we had been looking at it as a joint effort for the operation and the space to be used could be one that MMU owned and that the renovation expenses would be shared. The Kanabec County Board of Commissioners had expressed to Gramentz that they wanted a shorter term of repayment and reassess the operation. Ardner explained he reviewed the estimated construction proposal for the MMU building and believed it could be done for a lot less.

**12. Adjournment:** MOTION made by Skramstad, seconded by Baldwin, and unanimously carried to adjourn at 3:50 pm.

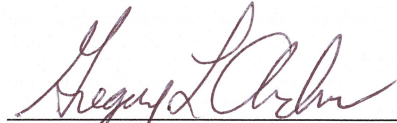
  
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Chair

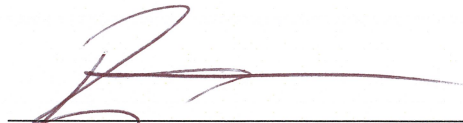
  
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Secretary



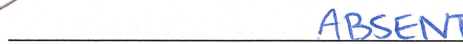
MORA MUNICIPAL UTILITIES  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION CHECK LIST

THE JUNE/JULY 2022 CLAIMS HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR PAYMENT BY:

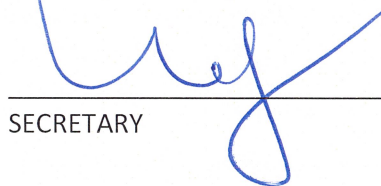
  
CHAIRMAN

  
COMMISSION MEMBER

  
COMMISSION MEMBER

 ABSENT  
COMMISSION MEMBER

  
COMMISSION MEMBER

  
SECRETARY