

Board Regular Meeting
 Board of Public Works
 Electronic (Virtual) Meeting
 December 15, 2020

The regular meeting of the Board of Public Works Commission was held at the Howard Miller Library/Community Center, 14 S. Church Street, Tuesday, December 15, 2020. Chairperson Boerman called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners – Chairperson Boerman, Query, Dykstra, Vice-Chairperson Walters
 ABSENT: Commissioners – Cooney

Staff Present: General Manager Boatright, Accountant Collins, Electric T&D Manager DeKraker
 Operations Manager Manager DeKraker, IT Manager Carlton, Electric Power Supply & Market Mulder, Water Manager Levandoski and City Clerk Holmes (electronically)

Motion was made by Commissioner Dykstra and seconded by Commissioner Query to approve the minutes of the November 17, 2020 regular meeting. Motion carried. All voting aye.

Public Comment

No public comment given.

20.101 Approve Cash Disbursements and Regular Monthly Transfers

Motion was made by Commissioner Query and seconded by Commissioner Walters to approve the November, 2020 cash disbursements and the regular monthly transfers for the month of December, 2020 as follows:

Cash and Investments as of: November 30, 2020

	Electric	Water
Receiving	\$2,932,644	\$518,754
Accumulated Debt Service (in Receiving Fund)	-	-
Plant Improvements and Contingencies	\$26,777,291	\$12,524,448
Bond and Interest Payment Reserve*	-	-
Totals	<u>\$29,709,935</u>	<u>\$ 13,043,203</u>

* Reserve required per electric and water revenue bond ordinances.

Recommended Transfers for the Month: December, 2020

	Electric	Water
Receiving	(197,198)	(232,700)
Accumulated Debt Service	-	-
Plant Improvements and Contingency	155,000 -	232,700
General Fund (per charter provision)	42,198	-

Motion carried. All voting aye.

Water Operations

Manager Levandoski reviewed the Water Department report and updated the Board on the Water projects and current activities along with the Calendar Year 2020 Water Demand Chart. He also gave an update on the Holland Water Contract Reconciliation.

Electric Transmission & Distribution

Manager DeKraker reviewed the Electric Department report and updated the Board on the Electric projects.

DeKraker explained the Electric Department is often needing a dump trailer when bringing dirt to job sites for projects such as filling holes after poles are removed or restoring lawns after a project is complete. Also, a trailer is needed to carry the larger transformers and switchgear to job sites - 11,000 lbs. payload requirements. In the past we have put these on our digger truck to take to a job site. Our new digger truck doesn't have as much room and often this doesn't work well with getting this larger equipment on/off the truck itself. We have borrowed Holland BPW's trailer several times when we weren't able to transport a large transformer ourselves. Therefore, we added a new trailer to our budget for this year. This recommendation is included in the current budget. Five bids were received and the low bidder was Holland Trailer Sales for the requirements we need.

20.102 Dump Trailer Bid Recommendation

Motion was made by Commissioner Dykstra and seconded by Commissioner Query to approve the purchase of a Dump Trailer from Holland Trailer Sales for the purchase price of \$9,911.25. Motion carried. All voting aye.

Information Technology

Information Technology Manager Carlton updated the Board on current activities, the on-going IT Projects list and the Cyber Security Managed Services RFP.

Electric Power Supply & Market Operations

Mulder updated the Board on current operations status, activities and projects including updates on the proposed Interim Office remodel and proposed Warehouse.

COVID-19 Business Operations Update:

Customer Service Counter Hours: With the Holiday Power Dollars program having concluded on December 13, customer support should return to a more normal pace. To mitigate COVID-19 transmission, starting just before the Christmas holiday and through the New Year's Holiday, we will begin to rotate customer service staff between working on-premises and remotely. We would like to temporarily reduce our customer lobby operating hours for the period from December 21, 2020 to January 4, 2021 to 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In addition, there may be a period of up to two (2) weeks in early January 2021 when we completely close the customer lobby to accommodate construction of the office renovations which are scheduled to begin in earnest the week of January 4, 2021. As of this memo, staff has not established firm dates for temporary closure of the customer lobby. As you may recall, we did close the main office to customer traffic during the pandemic stay-home order earlier this year. We also held operating hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for a substantial period after the re-opening. Although we are unaware of any complaints from customers during this phase, we have attempted to reduce the potential for frustration on the part of customers with continued customer support, albeit in remote fashion. The option has always been available for arranging customer in-person appointments, but this option has been exercised rarely, if at all. Customer service representatives have and will continue to remain available via phone and email (and even WebEx if necessary) regardless of customer service counter posted hours of operation, especially during anticipated peak periods in the billing cycle. Although we will continue the issuance of overdue notices, we have a moratorium on electric and water disconnections in effect until April 2021. Our ability to accept all forms of electronic payment has substantially reduced foot traffic in the customer lobby and we expect this trend to continue well into the future. We will provide advanced public notice of any changes in customer service hours using all available means including press releases, website updates, and social media. I will keep the Board of Commissioners apprised of developments and we welcome the Commissioner's input on this and any matter.

BPW COVID-19 Testing Policy: The BPW leadership team has developed a new voluntary COVID-19 testing program (see policy document under Item 7.A.2) that is available to all employees, both full- and part-time. The issue with COVID-19 testing has typically been associated with the untimely scheduling of testing and subsequent receipt of results. The BPW has partnered with a local medical office, Wellness Co., located at 400 South State Street, Ste 250, Zeeland who is capable of prompt test scheduling (during their

normal business hours) and expedited result reporting (within one hour – we have observed as soon as 15 minutes). We feel this could be a very useful tool in providing a level of certainty for workplace job planning, but most importantly, improved workplace safety. The attached policy provides much greater detail on the logistics of the testing process. In addition to the BPW-funded employee COVID-19 testing in the event of a known or suspected exposure, the BPW offers to all employees, on a voluntary basis, the first test for free (paid for by the BPW), as well as the availability of COVID testing for family members for an out-of-pocket fee of \$100 per test. Wellness Co. does not currently accept insurance for COVID-19 testing. This program is also available to all BPW Board of Commissioners and their family members.

Customer Service Utility Billing Metrics Update: Staff provided a verbal update on utility billing metrics.

Holiday Power Dollar Update:

The 2020 Holiday Power Dollars program officially kicked-off on Monday, November 30th and concluded on Sunday, December 13th at 11:59 p.m. This year's program was administered entirely via electronic means and all indications are that BPW residential electric customers have enthusiastically embraced the new way of doing things. In actuality, the program soft-started on Friday, November 27th (Black Friday). We launched the program early to mitigate the first day rush. The early launch also allowed us to observe that the program was working as designed. As of this memo, unaudited numbers are:

- Holiday Power Dollars issued – \$20,175
- Number of customers who have received electronic Holiday Power Dollars – 1,345

We estimate conservatively that the new electronic program eliminated over 1,200 customer visits to the customer lobby during the Holiday Power Dollars program. Even though we miss having so many of our amazing customers come visit us in-person, we are so very pleased that they continue to stay engaged with us through alternate means.

Power Dollars recipients (Economic Advantage & Holiday issuances) have until January 31, 2021 to redeem Power Dollars. In consideration of the current shutdowns and possible extension of shutdowns due to COVID-19, staff will assess certificate redemption rates throughout the coming weeks and make a determination regarding extending the expiration date for certificate redemption. As of this memo, a total certificate value of \$34,855 (unaudited) has been issued between both the Economic Advantage and Holiday programs with a total of \$9,405.00 redeemed. I would characterize this new method of certificate distribution as a resounding success. Staff has taken notes on how to make next year's program even better.

Personnel Committee Meeting:

The Personnel Committee will be meeting on Thursday, December 17. Staff is asking the Board to take things out of the normal sequence of events this month due to the timing of Board, Personnel Committee and City Council meetings. We are requesting Board consideration of the following items and if approved would be contingent on Personnel Committee and City Council approval:

1. Employee Handbook Update – Whistleblower Policy:

Protecting Whistleblowers is an essential component of an ethical and open work environment. Whistleblower protection should be viewed as a way to improve transparency, by protecting whistleblowers from retaliation and a mechanism for giving management the opportunity to learn about unethical or unlawful practices directly from their employees. Effective Whistleblower protection helps foster a work environment in which all employees are held accountable, thereby improving performance and empowering employees. During the September 15, 2020 Board of Commissioner's meeting, a Commissioner requested that consideration be given to inclusion of a Whistleblower policy. Staff engaged HR Solutions to assist with the development of Whistleblower policy language, a draft of which is attached for Personnel Committee consideration. If approved, this new language will be included in a future update of the City of Zeeland Employee Handbook.

20.103 Employee Handbook Update – Whistleblower Policy

Motion was made by Commissioner Dykstra and seconded by Commissioner Query to recommend approval of the Whistleblower Protection Policy for inclusion in the City of Zeeland Employee Handbook contingent on approval by the Personnel Committee and Zeeland City Council. Motion carried. All voting aye.

2. Federal COVID-19 Hours:

The Federal Government has authorized payment of up to 80 hours of employee pay to cover eligible time-off due to COVID-19 staff reductions. As you are aware, the City of Zeeland has also authorized 120 hours of Emergency Pay for similar use. The Federal pay policy is set to expire on December 31, 2020. The Personnel Committee will be asked to consider rolling the Federal hours in with the City Emergency Pay hours and allow all hours to be utilized without concern for date certain expiration.

20.104 Federal COVID-19 Hours

Motion was made by Commissioner Query and seconded by Commissioner Walters to approve the inclusion of any available employee Federal COVID Pay hours into the City's COVID-19 Emergency Pay Policy contingent on approval by the Personnel Committee and Zeeland City Council. Motion carried. All voting aye.

3. IT Services Job Descriptions and Pay Ranges / Authorization to Hire an IT Director:

Job Descriptions for the IT Director and Senior IT Manager Position were presented to the Board of Commissioners at the time of the meeting. Staff is recommending establishing a Pay Grade of 10 for the Information Technology (IT) Director position and a pay grade of 9 for the Senior IT Manager position. Furthermore, staff is requesting authorization to hire an IT Director.

20.105 IT Services Job Descriptions and Pay Ranges/Authorization to Hire an IT Director - TABLED

Motion was made by Commissioner Query and seconded by Commissioner Dykstra to table approving the job description for the IT Director with a pay grade of 10, to table approving the job description for the Senior IT Manager with a pay grade of 9, and to table authorizing the hiring of an IT Director until the Commissioners have had a chance to review documentation. This action will be taken up for consideration on December 17th by the Personnel Committee and on December 21st by Zeeland City Council. The Board of Commissioners requested that this action be placed on the January 19 2021 Board Meeting Agenda for consideration at that time. Motion carried. All voting aye.

Steve Collin's Retirement:

Steve Collins has announced he has decided to retire. He has not set an official date but is targeting sometime in January or February 2021. Steve has offered to be available to assist in the transition of his replacement. Steve has been with the BPW since August 2010 serving in the role of Accountant. He has done amazing work for us and we are fiscally healthy in large part due to his efforts and he will be greatly missed. Since we are not sure how and when we will be able to celebrate Steve's retirement, please extend your well wishes to Steve whenever you get the opportunity. We will keep the Board apprised of the timing of Steve's retirement celebration.

Upcoming Events

- **Next Regular ZBPW Board Meeting, January 19, 2021, 3:30 p.m., Howard Miller Public Library West Activity Room**

Motion was made and supported that the regular meeting be adjourned at 5:07 p.m. Motion carried. All voting aye.