

CITY OF SALEM UTILITY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

September 13, 2023

The City of Salem Utility Committee meeting was called to order by Utility Committee Chairman and West Ward Alderman, Kyle Williams. The following individuals were present: Catherine Dent, John Hambacker, Harold Hamilton, Nathan Kinsey, Rick Letchworth, and David Weiss.

Recognition for their attendance was given to City Administrator, Sally Burbridge; Finance Director, Stacy Houston; Director of Public Works, Mark Nash; and Chris McGuirt, from the utility department. Reports and financials for utility usage were presented by Stacy Houston, Financial Director for the City of Salem, and the minutes of the August 9, 2023, meeting of the utility committee were approved.

John Hambacker inquired about the number of transformers on poles and if they were performing and if not, could they be taken down. Mark Nash stated that some transformers had been removed and rebuilt.

John Hambacker also remarked on the need for some kind of notification regarding peak alerts and noted that in other cities there are speaker systems telling everyone when there was a peak alert. The City system is set up only for one siren sound (tornado) and Joe Chase stated he was working on a proposal with the City Administrator on a new system regarding an alert.

City Administrator, Sally Burbridge, spoke on the Execeleron program and stated work has been done to make sure payments are routed to the specific banks, etc. She noted that in the next few weeks, the city will be moving to launch two pieces of the billing system (online payments and 24/7 automated phone system) and there is a cost for these systems. Work is still progressing on emailing utility bills and Encode is hoping to deploy this system soon.

Sally also told those in attendance she will be attending the MPUA annual conference September 27, 2023, and will also be representing the city at the MMMPEP committee meeting in November.

The water testing quote of \$3691 per well that was given at the last meeting was brought before the committee. The water has been exceptional but there has been some residue that may provide discoloration. The committee was asked if they wanted to pursue additional water testing and no motion was made to do so.

The Board of Aldermen asked committee members to meet in closed session in a privileged consultation with an attorney regarding the cost of utilities for individuals outside the city limits. This meeting would follow the Board of Aldermen meeting September 26, 2023. Members of the committee agreed to meet.

The meeting was then opened to questions and comments from those persons in attendance who do not serve on the committee.

The committee heard from Frank Rauhe on his installation of solar panels and net metering, and individuals concerned about the trash service and recycling. Debbie Murphy stated she was tired of fees going up and down and that the City should look at cuts that might help with this situation. Lisa French asked for an explanation about kilowatt hours and charges and expressed her distaste in the 4% COLA increase for the City coming from the electric fund. French also wanted to know why the city was buying wire for McDonalds and it was explained that McDonalds was reimbursing the city for the wire.

With no other business occurring, a motion was made by Catherine Dent and seconded by John Hambacker that the meeting close. Motion carried.

The next meeting of the City Utility Committee will be October 11 at 6:15 at the Community Center at the Armory.

Prepared by: Catherine Dent