

**UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**  
**October 30, 2023**

A regular meeting of the City of Jackson Utilities Commission was held in the Council Chambers of City Hall at 4 p.m. on Monday, October 30, 2023 with the following persons present: Utilities Commission Chairman Kevin Siepker, Vice-Chairman Mike Schwartz and Commission members Jenna Schwartz, Sara Mix and Sandy Phillips. Also attending were City Administrator Matt Skaret, MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Tony Nitchals and Recording Secretary Dave Maschoff. (Utilities Commission members Dennis Hunwardsen and Joe Marthaler were absent.) (A quorum of the Utilities Commission was present.)

**OPEN THE MEETING**

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Chairman Kevin Siepker called the regular meeting of the Utilities Commission to order. Siepker noted a quorum of the Utilities Commission was present.

**APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 31, 2023 MEETING**

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Siepker asked if there were any additions, corrections or issues regarding the minutes of the July 31, 2023 Utilities Commission meeting. Hearing none, Siepker asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

**SANDY PHILLIPS/MIKE SCHWARTZ moved and it was unanimously carried to approve the July 31, 2023 Utilities Commission minutes.**

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

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Skaret explained Public Works Director Tony Oxborough was on vacation and would not be present at the Utilities Commission meeting.

## **Electric Department**

MRES Jackson Distribution Maintenance Foreman Tony Nitchals reported the Emily Street Underground Electric Project is 100 percent complete.

Nitchals said the Electric Department has replaced a three-phase electrical transclosure at Vet's Oil located near Vet's billboard along Highway 71 in Jackson.

Nitchals said they've also been working on three-phase junction boxes that have been rusting out. He noted one was falling over. Nitchals said a junction box was replaced at Ziegler Cat and a junction box was also replaced south on Highway 71. He said the Electric Department has one more three-phase junction box to replace at AGCO. Nitchals noted before they replace that junction box, they have a section of underground line to install along the County Road so they can back-feed the AGCO track building all the way down to Warmka Towing. He said once that underground line is installed, the Electric Department will replace the three-phase junction box at AGCO.

Nitchals said he's been compiling the list of electrical materials needed for the new Belmont Heights housing subdivision. He said he's also been making a list of items needed for next year's underground electric conversion project along Oak and Maple Streets.

Nitchals reported there's one house in Jackson where the property owner won't let the Electric Department personnel into the house to move the electric meter from the inside to the outside of the house so they convert it over to an AMI meter. He said that was one of the last AMI meters to be installed. Because the property owner doesn't have an AMI meter, the owner is paying an extra \$50 a month on their utility bill. Nitchals said he doesn't understand why the property owner won't let the Electric Department change the old electric meter to an AMI meter.

Nitchals said Mitch Jasper is requesting underground electric lines be installed to his property at 805 Bailey Street. He said he informed Jasper that the Electric Department would install underground wire to the electric box, but would not turn the electricity on until sewer and water are installed to that property. Nitchals said Jasper was alright with that. He said Jasper indicated he was planning to install the sewer and water hookups to the house at 805 Bailey on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Nitchals said Jasper wanted to get the underground electric line installed so it's ready to go when the sewer and water is installed. Nitchals said the electric power won't be turned on until the sewer and water is hooked up.

### **Public Works Department**

Skaret reported the Water Plant Media Filter Rehab Project is underway. He said the project hit a big snag. Skaret said the first thing was the sand blasting. He explained the contractor had to basically sandblast the tank. Skaret said it ended up being a lot more to sandblast once the media filter was removed. He said there was no way to know that until the tank was empty and the media filter was removed. Skaret said there were a lot more layers of paint and grime to sandblast so that was one holdup. He said the other issue is the subcontractor that was doing the sandblasting went bankrupt. So, Skaret said the General Contractor had to scramble to find someone else to do the sandblasting. He said they worked all weekend.

Skaret said the initial goal was to get the Water Plant back on line by November 1<sup>st</sup> but it will probably be somewhere between November 15<sup>th</sup> and Thanksgiving before it's back on line. He said people will have to endure sub-quality water for a little bit longer.

Mix asked if the City would issue a notification about the Water Plant delay to give residents an update.

Skaret said the City can do so. He noted the City hasn't received a lot of comments about the water quality since the Water Plant Media Filter Rehab Project started. Skaret said a notification can be issued to inform residents of the delay.

Siepkner asked if the City was late in replacing the media filter or should have it been done five years ago considering the amount of sandblasting that had to be completed.

Skaret explained 20 years is about the life expectancy of a media filter and we're right at that 20-year mark. He said 2002-2003 was the last time the media filter was replaced.

## **ELECTRIC RATE STUDY PROPOSAL**

Skaret said it's time for an Electric Rate Study for Jackson. He said the last Electric Rate Study was done in 2019. Skaret said that study was good through 2023.

Skaret said a lot has changed in the electric industry since 2019. He said the City has received a proposal from Missouri River Energy Services for an Electric Rate Study. Skaret said the Electric Rate Study would cover a five-year period from 2024 through 2028. He said the study would take a deep dive and look at projects and equipment that would be needed throughout that period and try to do some projections on the cost of electric power and what the City's needs are going to be and how much revenue is going to be needed to support those needs.

Skaret said Missouri River Energy Services put together a pretty detailed proposal about the Electric Rate Study they would do. He said Electric Rate Studies generally take several months to six months to complete.

Skaret said the actual cost to do the study would be \$19,000 but because the City of Jackson is a member of Missouri River Energy Services, they would give the City a 50 percent discount so the City's cost would be \$9,500.

Mix asked Skaret if the City had budgeted for the study.

Skaret said the Electric Rate Study has been included in the City's 2024 budget. He said the funding would come out of the City's Electric Fund.

Phillips asked if the Electric Rate Study will also take into account the anticipated increase in the number of electric cars, charging stations, phone charging along with other things.

Nitchals said Missouri River Energy will look at the trend in usages.

Phillips noted with the increased usage of electric vehicles, there will be more things like home charging stations and extra demand for electricity which may lead to more electric infrastructure needs. She said she hopes those things are part of the study.

Nitchals said those items will be included in the Electric Rate Study along with the projected growth of the City.

Siepkner asked if the study would also look at electric transmission costs.

Nitchals said the study will look at everything and narrow it down to what the City's electric rates should be.

Skaret said a motion would be needed from the Utilities Commission recommending to the City Council approval of the Electric Rate Study Proposal from Missouri River Energy Services.

**SARA MIX/JENNA SCHWARTZ moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to approve the Electric Rate Study Proposal from Missouri River Energy Services.**

**DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE SECTION 54 REGARDING SEWERAGE SERVICE: IF REPAIRS OR REPLACEMENTS ARE NECESSARY BETWEEN THE RIGHT OF WAY AND THE SEWER AT A LOCATION WHERE THE STREET IS PAVED, THE CITY AT ITS EXPENSE, SHALL REMOVE AND, AFTER NECESSARY REPAIRS ARE MADE TO THE SEWER SERVICE, REPLACE THE SUBSURFACE ROAD MATERIALS AND PAVING ALONG WITH CURB REPLACEMENT**

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Skaret said this agenda item was brought up by Public Works Director Tony Oxborough. He said Oxborough is just trying to get some consistency in the City's ordinances.

Skaret explained currently the City has wording in the ordinance regarding water that if someone is replacing a water service line and they end up digging in the street, the property owner pays for the digging and the City pays for the blacktop to patch up the street when the work is done.

Skaret said the City doesn't have the same verbiage regarding sewer if a property owner is replacing a sewer line. He said it's been kind of the City's practice to do the same thing as replacing a water line but the City doesn't have it anywhere in the ordinance specifically stating that when it pertains to replacing a sewer line.

Skaret said Oxborough is recommending the City make their Sanitary Sewer Ordinance consistent with the Water Ordinance where it states the City, at the City's expense, shall pay for the necessary repairs to the street and curb and gutter.

Siepkert entertained a motion regarding Chapter 54 of the City's ordinance.

**JENNA SCHWARTZ/SARA MIX moved and it was unanimously carried to recommend to the City Council to add verbiage to Chapter 54 of the City's Ordinance regarding Sewerage Service that when a property owner digs up a sewer line, the property owner pays for the digging and the City, at its expense, shall pay for the necessary repairs to the street, curb and gutter.**

#### **DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE SECTION 52 REGARDING REFUSE COLLECTION: ALL CARTS BE PLACED ON CURB AT THE EDGE FOR EASE OF STREET CLEANING**

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Skaret said Public Works Director Tony Oxborough also requested this item be put on the Utilities Commission agenda.

Skaret said Oxborough would like an ordinance requiring people when they put their garbage can out to be picked up by the garbage truck, that it must be placed behind the curb line.

Skaret explained there are instances, for example, when the Street Department is street sweeping and snow plowing and garbage cans that are put out on the street on garbage day get either knocked over very easily or the Street crews have to plow around them.

Skaret said the issue came up when the streets were being seal coated this summer. He said the contractor was seal coating the streets on a Thursday and people had their garbage cans out on the street. Skaret said there were questions of why the sealcoating was taking place on Thursday when there were garbage cans out on the street.

Skaret said this agenda item was put on the Utilities Commission agenda for discussion.

Skaret explained when the City is snowplowing, a lot of times you can have the garbage can back behind the curb and it's still going to get knocked over. He said it's not from the plow itself, but from the snow and the windrow. Skaret said placing the garbage can back behind the curb during the winter when snow plowing is occurring is not going to be an end-all, be-all.

Jenna Schwartz asked if the requirement would be to place garbage cans on the grass.

Skaret said the proposed ordinance would require garbage cans be placed on the grass behind the curb or place it at the end of the driveway, just not in the street.

Mix said she's been paying attention since Oxborough and her spoke about the proposed ordinance. She noted when the Street Department is sweeping the streets on garbage day, they go around a lot of trash cans. Mix said when it rains, it takes less water to sweep the streets and if it happens to be trash day, it takes a lot more time and they miss a lot more when the trash cans are placed out on the street. She said she thinks it makes a lot of sense to have the trash cans placed behind the curb instead of on the street.

Sieper noted he puts his garbage can at the end of his driveway, but when he comes home in the evening, he finds it out in the street.

Mike Schwartz said he has a similar problem. He said those that pick up the garbage never put the garbage cans back where they were originally placed. Schwartz said the garbage cans are always in the driveway, or the street or in the yard. He said some of that responsibility is up to Waste Management. Schwartz said he's pretty frustrated with Waste Management anyway. He said getting people to switch to placing their garbage cans behind the curb could be a challenge.

Sieper said Waste Management also has to get on board to place the garbage cans back where they found them.

Jenna Schwartz asked if the proposed ordinance has been discussed with Waste Management. She also noted that in the winter, when the snowplow has gone by and leaves a windrow of snow along the boulevard, her garbage can won't sit on the snowbank behind the curb. Schwartz said she agrees with what's being said regarding the garbage cans being in the way for street sweeping and snow plowing, but is thinking about how it will work in practice.

Siepker asked how far can the garbage truck's arm reach to retrieve and put back the garbage cans.

Mike Schwartz asked what day is residential garbage pickup in Jackson.

Skaret said garbage day in Jackson is on Thursdays.

Mike Schwartz asked why does the City have to sweep streets on Thursdays?

Skaret said sweeping the streets depends on if it's raining. He said also not everybody wheels their garbage cans back. Skaret said some people permanently leave their garbage cans out on the street.

Mix asked Skaret if a meeting could be set up with Waste Management and talk to them to see how feasible it would be to have residents place their garbage cans behind the curb.

Siepker said information could be gathered on how far does the garbage truck's arm reach to retrieve a garbage can and put it back.

Phillips noted there may be a problem placing garbage cans behind the curb in the winter when there's a lot of snow piled up. She said the snow isn't always plowed up to the curb and there's snow also piled up at the end of driveways.

Siepker said in those cases, the garbage can could be place at the end of a person's driveway since the driveway will be cleared.

Phillips said you could place the garbage can at the end of the driveway, but if the snowplow comes by and leaves a windrow of snow, then you can't get the garbage can close enough to the street so you'd have to re-shovel.

Mix said she thinks the next step is to reach out to Waste Management.

Skaret said he would reach out to Waste Management and see what they can do.

## **Other:**

### **Sandy Phillips**

Phillips asked how the HomeServe Program is going in Jackson.

Skaret said HomeServe is just getting their literature together. He said HomeServe hasn't actually sent their marketing materials out yet. Skaret said it should be sent out to all the homeowners in Jackson soon.

Phillips asked if City staff will approve whatever marketing materials HomeServe is putting together.

Skaret said they would.

Jenna Schwartz asked if the HomeServe information would be inserted with the City utility bills.

Skaret said HomeServe's marketing information will not be included with the City utility bills.

### **Mike Schwartz**

Mike Schwartz noted the apartments in the former Leach Decorating Center building across the street from his business in downtown Jackson are being remodeled. He said he wanted to inform City staff that the big dumpster the remodelers have been using is full and the wind has been blowing debris off the dumpster. Schwartz asked if the City could contact the owner about getting the dumpster emptied so debris doesn't blow around.

Schwartz said he's hasn't seen the owner of the building to talk to him about it.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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With no further business, Chairman Siepker asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**SANDY PHILLIPS/JENNA SCHWARTZ moved and it was unanimously carried to adjourn the Utilities Commission meeting at 4:27 p.m.**

Skaret thanked everyone for attending.

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**David A. Maschoff, Recording Secretary**

