

**CITY OF ESCANABA  
ELECTRICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
AUGUST 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2023**

A meeting of the Electric Advisory Committee was held August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, at 4:00 PM in Room 401 of Escanaba City Hall, 410 Ludington Street, Escanaba, MI 49829 by Chairperson Glendon Brown.

**PRESENT: Chairperson Glendon Brown, Vice Chairperson Ann Bissell, Committee Members John Mellinger (exiting @ 5:00PM), John Anthony and Tim Wilson**

**ALSO PRESENT:** Electric Utility Director: Gerald Pirkola and City Council Liaison: Ron Beauchamp-exiting @ 6:05PM

**ROLL CALL:** Jill Freeman conducted roll call at 4:05PM

**Approval of Minutes of January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Mr. Brown asked members if there were any corrections to be made to the minutes. None being heard, asked for a motion to approve.

**Ms. Bissell made a motion to approve the July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, minutes and this was seconded by Mr. Mellinger.**

**All Ayes, minutes were approved.**

**Approval/Adjustments to the Agenda**

Mr. Brown asked members if there were any adjustments to the agenda hearing of none the agenda was approved as presented.

**Conflict of Interest Declaration- None**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **#1: Update-Electric Department-General Operations**

Mr. Pirkola discussed with members the following topics.

- Energy Optimization Program
- Distribution Upgrade Projects
- Streetlight Poles
- Purple/Blue LED Streetlights
- AMI Update
- National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program (NEVI)
- Grants
- Services
- Miso Services
- MIRECS
- Wood Poles

During this discussion Ms. Bissell asked what types of advertising were being implemented to inform customers that the Energy Optimization Program exists. Mr. Pirkola agreed that we need more utilization when it comes to the Energy Optimization Program. An ad is being discussed and will be presented to the board and will be published in the Daily Press and/or U.P. Action. Mr. Pirkola discussed what the rebates cover and where to access the forms.

Jenkins Drive Lighting project is completed. Ms. Bissell asked if the lights on Lake Shore Drive can be shut off in the future for the Fourth of July. Mr. Pirkola stated not at this time. Mr. Anthony inquired if vandalism has decreased since the lights were installed. Mr. Pirkola did not have an answer at this time.

Mr. Wilson questioned costs related to purple/blue lights that are being replaced due to being defective. Mr. Pirkola replied that all the lights are being replaced under warranty. However, the Electric Department is covering the labor costs to replace these lights.

Ms. Bissell asked about the quantity of AMI Meters that are left to be installed and how many we can install daily. Mr. Pirkola responded that our Meter Technician can install approximately 30 per day with a goal of complete installation by the

end of June 2024.

There was discussion about EV's and speculation on where rates would be in the future. Current and potential grants were reviewed, and they are not open as of this time. Two new commercial services were mentioned with one completed and the other in progress.

Mr. Pirkola informed the EAC that the MISO Services Agreement with Great Lakes Utilities was canceled, and a new agreement was made with Manitowoc Public Utilities. He went on to explain that the City of Escanaba Administration has decided to not voluntarily participate in the MIRECS program which will save the City of Escanaba approximately \$50,000 per year. Mr. Wilson questioned whether this matter should have come to the EAC for discussion prior to canceling these services. Mr. Pirkola stated that he will investigate the Electrical Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure.

Mr. Pirkola gave an update on poles tested and changed out. Bucket trucks that are on order should be delivered soon. Transformers and wire along with other necessary materials are fully stocked. However, the lead times remain long. Mr. Wilson asked what our supply of back-up transformers looks like. Mr. Pirkola commented that we have an adequate supply of transformers in stock. Staffing updates were discussed. Mr. Pirkola did say that an offer of employment was made to a lineman. This will bring us to fully staffed.

### **Update- Solar Project Performance**

Mr. Pirkola turned it over to Mr. Brown who provided members with a handout (Attachment NB 2 EAC Solar Project Update through 06-30-2023). He discussed this handout with members along with Figure 1's repeatable pattern. For the Solar Project operations update Mr. Pirkola stated that Travis Keppler was contacted and that if nothing changes Justin will change out the inverter with no huge losses. It could also be more going on other than the inverter. Expansion was brought up and it was discussed that we are 2 years out before we are serious about looking at expansion.

### **West Side Substation**

Mr. Pirkola presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing the substation

improvement project. He presented the reason for the project, proposed upgrades, cost estimates and benefits. Mr. Pirkola answered several questions regarding the project and informed the members that EPS is the preferred engineering group based off Dave Krause's previous work history for the utility with the other substations. Mr. Brown questioned if the contingency was high enough. Tim Wilson motioned to move forward with the project with an increase in the contingency of 10 percent. The motion was seconded by Mr. Anthony and passed unanimously.

### **SCADA**

Mr. Pirkola displayed a PowerPoint presentation describing the SCADA Upgrade. He explained the reason as to why the SCADA system is necessary and explained how the electric utility would benefit from this upgrade. Mr. Pirkola recommends using EPS Engineering with Dave Krause who previously designed the two substations. EPS is proposing to use Ignition Software and build a custom SCADA system based on our needs. Mr. Brown asked if Mr. Pirkola had obtained any references from utilities who have utilized EPS and the Ignition Software. Mr. Pirkola commented that the City of Gladstone has an Ignition Scada System designed by EPS. Gladstone is extremely satisfied with the Ignition Software. The only issue they had was with communications, which is currently being resolved by updating the fiber.

### **GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

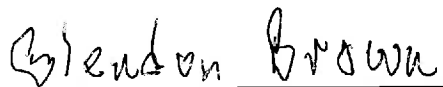
None.

**COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Next meeting date was tentatively scheduled for October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

### **Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned 6:40 P.M.

APPROVED:



Glendon Brown, EAC Chairman



Gerald Pirkola, Electric Utility Director