

***ELECTRICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EAC)***  
***City of Escanaba, Michigan***  
***Regular EAC Meeting***  
***Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024***

The Electrical Advisory Committee (EAC) meeting was called to order by Chairperson Glendon Brown at 4:03 PM in The Council Chambers of Escanaba City Hall, 410 Ludington Street. Roll call conducted at 4:03PM by Electric Department Clerk Jill Freeman.

PRESENT: Chairperson Glendon Brown, Vice Chairperson Tim Wilson, Committee Members John Anthony, and Ann Bissell

ABSENT: NONE

ALSO PRESENT: Electric Utility Director: Gerald Pirkola and City Council Liaison: Ron Beauchamp (exiting at 5:31PM) and Electric Department Clerk Jill Freeman

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Brown asked if there were any changes to the minutes. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Wilson made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Bissell, **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**, to approve Regular Meeting Minutes from October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as submitted.

**APPROVAL/ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

Mr. Brown inquired if there were any adjustments to the agenda, hearing none, the EAC members approved the agenda as presented.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION**

Mr. Brown asked EAC members if there were any conflicts of interest. No conflicts heard amongst EAC members.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **NB-1: Election of Officers**

The EAC has elected Mr. Glendon Brown to another term as Chairperson with Mr. Tim Wilson as Vice Chairperson. Motion to approve by Mr. Wilson and seconded by Ms. Bissell, carried **UNANIMOUSLY**. Mr. Anthony thanked Mr. Brown for agreeing to another year.

### **NB-2: Approve-2024 Meeting Schedule**

Mr. Pirkola provided a handout regarding the 2024 Meeting Schedule for the EAC for 2024. EAC members reviewed the schedule, and they confirmed that October 9<sup>th</sup> is the correct date for October's meeting date. Mr. Wilson made an action to approve this schedule, seconded by Mr. Anthony and approved **UNANIMOUSLY**.

### **NB-3: Update- Electric Department-General Operations**

Mr. Pirkola provided members with a copy of the departmental updates. These updates included a discussion on Poles, Purple Streetlights, AMI Updates, NEVI, Outages, Budgets and Tree Trimming-Applied for 40101d Grant. There were a considerable number of poles replaced and added throughout the year 2023. The Electric Department changed out wooden poles that were reject poles or hit by vehicles. The Electric Department is continuing to replace streetlight poles along with poles on Ludington Street which is a part of an ongoing project to replace all streetlight poles on Ludington. There were streetlight poles added to Jenkins Drive and to the midblocks on the Southside of Escanaba.

The purple streetlights are diminishing with lights still needing to be changed out. Mr. Brown questioned if all the lights that are replaced are with LED lights. Mr. Pirkola responded with yes, they all should be LED.

There was discussion on the number of meters that the Electric Department have installed and read along with the Outage Management System to integrate with the GIS. The Management System, managed by Josh, will eventually help our line crew in identifying outages, for example.

The NEVI program has customers who have applied for this grant with no further information. Mr. Wilson asked if there is initially one approval in each area. Mr. Pirkola responded with no, there have been five customers who have applied for the grant, with the majority being commercial customers.

Mr. Pirkola presented the members with a graph regarding the outage response time and discussed CAIDI, SAIFI, and SAIDI. These three graphs displayed a timeline from 2007-2023 with 2007 and 2015 being the highest. This is because in 2007 lightning strikes occurred and in 2015 the substation at the powerplant had a major fault. Ms. Bissell questioned if we had the data from WI and UPPCO to compare our data to. Mr. Pirkola commented that he did not have the data but will try and get the information for the next meeting. Mr. Pirkola added that initially when we did maintenance, and it caused an outage we did not count this as an outage and will be counting going forward. Ms. Bissell asked if we had any metrics on outages. Mr. Pirkola explained that we have information on all outages and 90%-95% are from squirrels. Mr. Pirkola mentioned three years ago we implemented an on-call system. Mr. Anthony thanked Mr. Pirkola for having this data.

Mr. Pirkola discussed budgets with the members. Mr. Pirkola suggested that a rate study should be done in the Fiscal Year 2024-2025, with the last rate study completed in 2018-2019. The Westside Substation & SCADA projects are continuing and will be for the next 16-18 months. Mr. Pirkola added that the city could run off one substation. There are no overloaded circuits at this time and will continue to keep an eye on it as time passes.

A Skid Steer with a brush mower discussed as a piece of equipment needed for the Electric Department. Mr. Pirkola also mentioned that we are looking to build an Equipment Garage. Ms. Bissell questioned if this would be near the Cold Storage Building. Mr. Pirkola commented, "I have an idea of where I would like the building to be and yes it will be near the Cold Storage Building."

We will be continuing to add more streetlights in the city. There is talk of adding more lights on the island down at Ludington Park. We need to replace underground conductors which will build circuits, so we have a backup. We

started our Winter tree trimming this week and will continue until March sometime. We will be utilizing tree trimming contractors to perform part of the work. For the 40101d Grant we received confirmation that they received the application but have no updates at this time. Mr. Wilson raised the question regarding infrastructure planning. Mr. Pirkola noted that electric vehicles will define it; however, changes are not likely over the next couple of years. Mr. Anthony asked if there were any plans for improvements that we should be informed about. Mr. Pirkola replied that he does not think there will be major changes to the operating budget. Six million dollars is in the Electric fund per Mr. Pirkola. Ms. Bissell asked if we were looking for any personnel. Mr. Pirkola stated not at this time.

#### **NB-4: Update- Escanaba Solar Project Performance**

Mr. Pirkola turned it over to Mr. Brown to review solar performance for the year 2023. Mr. Brown provided members with a handout regarding the EAC Solar Project through December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023. This summary covered the avoided costs, a graph showing the monthly production for the year 2023, data showing ATC Peak Loads, operation updates and key future activity of updating the total avoided cost for each kWh of the solar generation. Mr. Brown discussed the costs that solar generation has avoided in purchased energy costs and the transmission costs. Mr. Brown commented on the graph that it showed very constant patterns with the low graph points being operation issues. There were no significant operating problems experienced with the original project in 2022 & 2023.

#### **NB-5: Discussion- Clean Energy Legislation**

Mr. Brown reviewed the new Michigan Energy Bill that Legislation passed in November 2023 along with types of renewable energy sources. This legislation has both renewable energy requirements and clean energy requirements. Mr. Brown summarized the Renewable Energy Certificate (REC), Existing NextEra Energy & Capacity Contracts Review, New Energy Waste Reduction Plans along with Legislation's key actions and steps to comply with the new Michigan Energy Legislation.

**NB-6: Discussion and Recommendations-Energy Optimization Program**

Mr. Anthony made a motion to recommend the continuation of the Energy Optimization Program. Mr. Wilson seconded this motion and agreed upon **UNANIMOUSLY**. There was discussion on increasing the individual incentive for residential customers and increasing the maximum allowable incentive for commercial customers. The capped-out amount on the Commercial & Industrial Energy Optimization Application is now \$10,000. Mr. Pirkola will provide members with a revised application.

**GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**COMMISSION/STAFF COMMENT & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

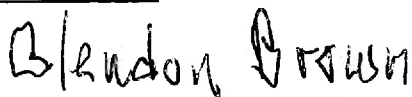
Mr. Brown and Mr. Pirkola made an announcement regarding legislative changes that are happening. Ms. Bissell shared that Bay College is holding a voters rights meeting January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. and is open to the public.

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. will be the next meeting.

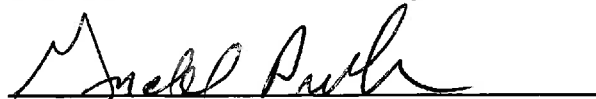
**Adjournment:**

Mr. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Bissell. The meeting concluded at 5:45 PM.

**APPROVED:**



Glendon Brown, EAC Chairperson



Gerald Pirkola, Electric Utility Director