

**PERU UTILITIES  
MINUTES OF THE PERU UTILITIES SERVICE BOARD MEETING OF  
AUGUST 8, 2018**

The Peru Utilities Service Board held a meeting at the Peru office at 335 East Canal Street, Peru, Indiana, on Wednesday, August 8, 2018. Mr. Akers called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. pursuant to notice as required by law. The following Board members were present: S. Akers, G. Ward, J. Edwards and M. Burnell. Absent: M. Costin. Others present, Attorney Dustin Kern, J. Chance, B. Tillett, B. Hall, M. Svantner, S. Hines, J. Beisiegel, B. Zartman, and J. Clark.

**1.) APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES OF JULY 25, 2018:**

*Mr. Burnell moved to accept the minutes of July 25, Board meeting. Mrs. Edwards seconded the motion. Motion carried.*

**2.) PAYMENT OF CLAIMS:**

*Mr. Ward moved to approve the claims as presented. Mr. Burnell seconded the motion, motion carried.*

**3.) NEXT REGULAR MEETING:**

The next regular meeting will be held Wednesday, August 22, 2018, at 4:00 p.m. in the Utility Service Boardroom.

**4.) PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**5.) OLD BUSINESS:**

**A.) APPROVAL TO PURCHASE REPLACEMENT TRUCKS FOR THE DIVISION OF WATER MANAGEMENT:**

Mr. Chance said that the original quote from O'Daniel West of Ft. Wayne was for two 2018 model year pickup trucks. Due to the passage of time, they were no longer available, so we requested that they submit bids for the 2019 model years. The price had increased by \$500 for each truck. O'Daniel West quoted one truck at \$24,473.25 and another at \$24,758.25, equipped with Bluetooth technology, as we required. O'Daniel West is \$10,000 cheaper than Ford and \$5,000 cheaper than the GM midsize. Mr. Chance stated that while we would prefer to purchase locally, the local dealers could not compete with the large commercial dealerships. Mr. Akers inquired if the local dealers ever followed up on their bids. Mr. Chance said that the local dealers find out when their respective bids are either accepted or rejected. It was noted that in the future, we would ask for bids from dealerships that specialize in commercial vehicles.

*Mr. Burnell made a motion to accept the bid of \$24,473.25 and the bid of \$24,758.25 from O'Daniel West, of Fort Wayne, Indiana for two new pickup trucks for the Division of Water Management. Mrs. Edwards seconded the motion and the motion carried.*

**B.) PHONE ANSWERING SYSTEM:**

Mr. Chance passed out information regarding the old phone layout and the new layout noting that staff had gotten together and reviewed the old phone answering instructions for during hours, after hours, and outages and created a new procedure. Mr. Ward noted that a customer had no way of knowing if they were the only one with an outage or if there were other customers involved. Mr. Chance said that the Voicemail would now hold up to 500 messages and that it is serviced by 24 phone lines. We now have a new system in place to mobilize office staff to assist in answering calls. The very first thing you will hear when you call in during hours if you are experiencing a service interruption is “press ‘9’” which automatically goes to an Outage Hunt Group (multiple people). During hours, we are able to answer as many phone calls as possible with a live person. After hours, customer calls will go to voicemail with instructions of how a customer should proceed. Mr. Chance said that immediately after we instituted the new plan a squirrel took out Substation #3, we felt we should make one small adjustment to the new plan. In addition, we have a phone tree setup so that our employees are organized in such a way that we can quickly spread information amongst each other. It was noted that the staff has talked about the progression to post outage details and restoration updates on both Facebook and our website. Mr. Chance explained that part of the problem was that 700 customers lost power all at once. Mr. Ward asked what the voicemail said for a major outage. Mr. Chance said after hours, outage calls would go to a voicemail that states: “*we are aware of a major service interruption; we are attempting to answer all phone calls as they come in. Please visit our Facebook page or Peru Utilities.com for updates. To leave a voicemail message now, press #, otherwise stay on the line*”. Mrs. Edwards asked for a change to the Off Hours voicemail to state: “*Thank you for calling Peru Utilities, our office is now closed, but if you are experiencing a service interruption please stay on the line*”. The Board agreed to the change in verbiage for Off Hours voicemail. Mr. Zartman pointed out that Peru Utilities had not experienced a major outage since the new phone system was installed and that the new software shows the time and date stamp, caller ID and how many times the customer attempted to call. Mr. Ward asked that the Board be informed after any future outages as to how the new procedures are working. Mr. Chance noted that we have committed ourselves to resolve any problems with the new process the next day after an outage. Mr. Beisiegel said that there were few complaints during the second outage. Mr. Svantner reported that customers on Facebook had thanked Peru Utilities for being prompt and informative.

6.) **NEW BUSINESS:** None

7.) **CITY ADMINISTRATION UPDATE:** None

8.) **CITY ATTORNEY’S UPDATE:** None

**9.) MANAGER'S REPORT:**

**AMI UPDATE:**

We have 7,581 electric meters installed 70% complete; we have 5,283 water meters installed 83% complete. The 3-phase commercial meters are due in no later than September 1. We still have 3,000 residential electric meters yet to be replaced.

**ADDITIONAL ROOF PANELS:**

Mr. Chance said their Board packets included a letter from Wessler Engineering about the roof panels. Kokosing has determined that upon closer inspection 30 of the 31 roof panels located over the filtration filters need to be repaired. Since the scaffolding is already in place in the filtration room now would be the best time to fix them.

**CUSTOMER INITIALLY REJECTS UTILITIES OFFER TO UPGRADE WATER LINE:**

While replacing water meters on Fremont it was discovered that, a customer had a galvanized line, which normally would be something that the customer would pay for. The customer was extremely upset and vented their anger, refused our offer and asked our employee to get off their property. The contractor has since moved to another installation elsewhere since the time the customer refused. Just a few days ago, the customer called us and now wants the galvanized water line replaced. We informed the customer that the contractor has moved on with no plans to backtrack. Mr. Chance explained that if Deichman's were to work again in that area, we would take into consideration changing the line out. It will cost both Deichman's and Peru Utilities three times as much to change the line now. Mr. Beisiegel noted that the project on Fremont is complete except for the seeding of the grass. Mrs. Edwards felt that we should move forward.

**FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN:**

Mr. Chance reported Peru Utilities receives calls from our customers with concerns about the amount of their bill. We get most of these calls during the high usage of summer and winter months. Peru Utilities is addressing questions regarding electric, water usage and our rate structures on Facebook. Previously, we had posted information under "Did You Know" which stated that Peru Utilities has not raised electric rates since 2013 and the City Council had approved a small decrease in 2016.

**POWER PLANT DEMOLITION:**

Deichman's is finishing pouring the sidewalks at the high school and will soon be pouring new sidewalks for the green space where the power plant formally stood.

**PORTAL FOR NEW METERING SYSTEM:**

Mrs. Edwards inquired if a portal will be available for customers to review their water and electric usage. Mr. Chance said a portal would be available for information when the new system goes live, it will give the customers the ability to monitor their usage.

**August 8, 2018 – Cont'd.**

**WATER PLANT SHUTDOWN:**

Mr. Chance reported yesterday we completely shut down the water plant for repairs, we were very apprehensive about it, but it turned out just fine. During the course of the upgrade, we will have to shut the water plant down five more times.

**2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER 2018 ACCOMPLISHMENT SUMMARY:**

Mr. Chance gave Board members a copy of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Accomplishment Summary for all departments for the Board to review. Mr. Chance complimented the staff and all employees for a job well done.

**10.) ADJOURNMENT:**

*There being no further business to bring before the Board, Mr. Ward made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Edwards seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned.*

---

Geoff Ward, Secretary Peru Utilities Service Board