

**MINUTES
SPECIAL PIQUA CITY COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 11, 2019
6:00 P.M.**

Piqua City Commission met at 6:00 P.M. in the Municipal Government Complex Commission Chambers located at 201 W. Water Street. Mayor Hinds called the meeting to order. Also present were Commissioners Vogt, Martin and Lee.

SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING

NEW BUSINESS:

Utilities Impact Report

Mayor Hinds opened the meeting by reviewing the Ordinance which stated the Rules of Conduct for the meeting.

Commissioner Martin had questions as to if we had checked and tested AMI meters – that according to a recent article from the United Kingdom he had read, some AMI meters were reading wrong and asked if our meters were certified. City Manager Gary Huff stated that our meters were calibrated and tagged from the factory and verified for accuracy when they were installed.

Mayor Hinds stated that Ed Krieger, Power Director was not available for the meeting but that if there were questions he would need to answer, the answers could be obtained from Mr. Krieger and then shared at the next commission meeting.

Commissioner Lee commented on the thoroughness of the report and stated that he had questions for Mrs. Hungerford who was not in attendance so he will ask City Manager Huff to speak with her about some of his questions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Bill Jaqua 607 N. Sunset Drive stated that he has not read the report then spoke on problems of comparing the cost of utilities from various municipalities and the addition of other charges to the utility bills. Mr. Jaqua stated that he would like a meaningful analysis of how we compare to other municipalities.

Mayor Hinds referred to Exhibit 2 in the impact report which does list comparative costs.

Commissioner Vogt mentioned what items are billed for on the utility bills. Commissioner Vogt stated that storm water runoff is now on the utility bill and that the storm water runoff is mandated by the Federal Government Commissioner Vogt also explained the reason for building a new water plant, and the updates to the sewer plant as they were mandated by the EPA, and how the electricity is provided to the city.

Mayor Hinds commented on KWHs and ERUs and how the storm water fees were based on the square footage of the lot.

Jey Roman, 406 W. High Street, stated that even though regulations mandate changes there will still be a fight with regard to rates. Mr. Roman mentioned that the cost of water/sewage runoff was unclear with regard to the filling of swimming pools. Mr. Roman suggested that the residents should get one free meter check a year.

Mayor Hinds commented that the cost for personnel to check the meters would increase the cost of utility services to the residents.

Commissioner Lee asked about the policy for swimming pools. City Commissioner Huff stated that he will check on it.

Mayor Hinds said that the City will address this issue and make sure the correct information is being relayed to the residents.

Leslie Lewis, 510 Second Street also commented on information received from the Utility office with regard to the filling of swimming pools.

Law Director Patrizio and Commissioner Vogt commented on the possible reinstatement of separate meters for designated water usage. Ms. Lewis also expressed concerns about the City's disconnect policy, and reconnection fees.

Eva Silvers, _____ McKinley Avenue spoke with regard to housing and wiring issues and expressed concern over possible change of billing dates to accommodate residents who are on a fixed income and receive checks at a specific time of the month. Ms. Silvers also inquired about descriptions on the bills to explain the extra charges.

Mayor Hinds responded that to print it all would take more paper and incur more cost as far as paper, postage, etc. The breakdowns are available on-line and at the utility department.

Shawnda Faehl _____ also spoke with regard to the payment of utility bills.

Steve Langston, 1813 Park Avenue, spoke with regard to getting the utility bills to the customers sooner after the meters have been read and if the City was running the utilities department in an efficient manner and mentioned that the City needs to have a written policy with regard to utility shut off policies. Mr. Langston also asked if there was going to be another water increase.

City Manager Huff stated that nothing has been done yet.

Nick Ventura, 108 Jean Street expressed concern over bills from his previous residence compared to the home he currently occupies. Mr. Ventura thought that maybe the City could buy test meters to assist citizens with issues.

Charles Starrett, 4244 Demming Road, commented on water and sewer rate increases and calculations on the cost of utilities after the increases.

Tony Pitmann, 635 S. Wayne Street expressed concern that the number of his household has decreased from 7 to 2 and that the utility bills are still the same. Mr. Pittman also asked how the storm water fees were calculated.

City Manager Huff explained the process of the storm water calculation, as well as it is a set amount that is \$6.70 for residential citizens.

Mr. Pitmann stated that he received a large bill for storm water (\$587.04) because the bill had been delivered to an address in Troy for 13 years and subsequently has received a collection letter for the amount due.

Commissioner Lee inquired about the bill and Mr. Pitmann showed him the bill. Mr. Pitman stated that he had spoken with the Utilities Business Office and cut a deal for the payment. Mr. Pitman stated that residents are scared to talk to the City with regard to their utility bills.

Commissioner Lee stated that that should never be an issue and asked if the bill was for one month.

Mayor Hinds asked Mr. Pitman for his address to confirm the property that was being billed and Commissioner Lee asked if he had lived in the same place for the last 14 years to which Mr. Pitman confirmed.

Law Director Patrizio stated that Mr. Pitman never got his bill as it was sent to a wrong address in Troy.

Law Director Patrizio commented the bill was \$6.70 over 13 years and asked if it was for his house and asked where the bill for his house was going.

Mr. Pitman confirmed that the bill comes to his house. Mr. Pitman was told by the utilities billing office to let them know he wanted to pay an extra \$6.95.

Law Director Patrizio asked Mr. Pitman if he received an explanation as to why the bill was going to Troy?

Mr. Pitman was not told why.

Mr. Pitmann also expressed concern over the estimation of his utility bills due to the fact that the software was not up and running for the new meters and the threat of shutting him off if the bill was not paid.

Mayor Hinds stated that we would look into this to find out why he would be receiving two separate bills

Paige Stemen, 1501 Madison Avenue, asked about the solar panels on McKinley and in Shawnee and asked for answers as to how those will be working.

Commissioner Vogt explained how we purchase electric from the solar panels through AMP Ohio. The City has no money invested in those fields and that we can buy electricity at a reduced rate with no transmission charges.

Ms. Stemen also expressed concern over resident's utility charges and their ability to pay future bills and if residents would be receiving any type of refunds.

Mayor Hinds stated that we are more than happy to look at customer's bills and try to figure out the bill fluxuations and try to figure out usage.

City Manager Huff stated that if there is a city error that we do make adjustments.

Ms. Stemen aslo expressed concern over a previous tenant's delinquent utility bill being added to the new resident's bill.

City Manager Huff replied that new residents do not have the responsibility of paying for previous occupants' bill. If there is no connection between the parties, the utility bill would not be carried over.

Law Director Patrizio explained the situations and circumstances where a delinquent utility bill could be carried over to a new residence.

Dave Hitchings, 803 Camp Street spoke with regard to the citizen's benefits from use of the solar fields and asked if the new meters were certified? Mr. Hitchings asked if meters could be checked when bills are erratic.

City Manager Huff responded that the savings realized from purchasing the electric from the solar fields are passed to the citizens. With regard to the meters, they have to meet AWWA requirements and the company we buy them from has to be certified and calibrated and tagged so that when they are installed they check to make sure that certification is on there. City Manager Huff stated that the

city could check meters, there would be a \$50 fee and if it is replaced the money is refunded. There is a process.

Commissioner Lee inquired as to whether the \$50 fee was an arbitrary amount or if it could be changed.

City Manager Huff stated that it could be changed.

Mayor Hinds mentioned that information on AMP Ohio was also listed in the packet.

Shonda _____, 430 W. Ash Street commented with regard to the storm water rates for a multi-apartment complex and asked how the sewage was charged. Shonda also expressed concern over the fee from the city to check electric meters, and leniency with regard to payment of their bills.

City Manager Huff replied that the storm water charges depend on how the owner has is set up.

Paul Bubeck, 921 Camp Street stated that he has monitored his water usage for 4 months in a row and every month the bill is different for the same amount of water, however, he did not come in to talk to anyone with regard to the water issue. Mr. Bubeck also commented with regard to the enforcement of ordinances on conditions of properties in Piqua.

Jennifer Tufts _____ Fourth Street commented that she is upset with the City over not receiving any help from the city and the amount of abandoned homes in her area. She also questioned who previously owned the land that the solar panels are built on.

Law Director Patrizio advised Ms. Tufts that the land was sold by the School District and the money from the sale went into the (general?) fund for the school district.

Kyle Alcorn _____ Covington Avenue, had questions about the meters and stated that they need to be checked and re-calibrated yearly.

Leslie Lewis spoke and expressed concern about the reconnection fees.

Mayor Hinds asked the citizens to call, e-mail, communicate. Mayor Hinds stated that we are their voice and we will listen and thanked everyone who has shared their stories and information and that we will be looking into their concerns. Mayor Hinds stated that we would not be able to make any decisions tonight but that the discussion of these issues would continue when the meetings resume in July. On behalf of the Commission, thank you.

Commissioner Lee stated to call him, we can only help where we know there are issues. When we know, we can act.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Lee to adjourn from the Special City Commission Meeting at 7:34 P.M.; motion seconded by Commissioner Martin, motion carried unanimously.

KATHRYN B. HINDS, MAYOR

PASSED: _____

ATTEST: _____
KAREN S. JENKINS
CLERK OF COMMISSION