



# BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

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The regular meeting of the Brainerd Public Utilities Commission was held at 9:00 AM on December 31, 2024.

Commission President Matten called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

### Commission Roll Call

Mike Angland – Absent	Mark O’Day – Present
Patrick Wussow – Present	Tad Erickson - Absent
Dolly Matten – Present	

### Utility Staff Present

Public Utilities Director	Christopher Evans
Finance Manager	Danny Loch
Water/Wastewater Manager	Charlie Gammon
Business Office Supervisor	Jana Pernula
Recording Secretary	Mandy Selisker

### Others in Attendance

City Administrator	Nick Broyles
HR Director	Kris Schubert
Public Works Director	Mike Habighorst
Community Development Director	James Kramvik
Bolton & Menk	Morgan Salo, PE
Widseth	Bill Westerberg, PE
Country Manor	Kevin Hargruth
Country Manor	Anthony Fenstad
Country Manor	Scott Keho
Citizen	Brian Timmers

Commissioner Matten opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Approval of Agenda Items

Commissioner Matten made a request to amend the agenda to add item C under New Business, a letter for consideration from Mr. Matthew Burich.

**Motion by Commissioner O’Day and seconded by Commissioner Wussow to approve the amended agenda. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

### Approval of Consent Items

**Motion by Commissioner O’Day and seconded by Commissioner Wussow to approve the minutes from November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024, regular monthly meeting, current month’s bills, regular commission meeting**

## BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING

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**dates, and the 2025 schedule of fees. There was a unanimous roll call vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

### Public Forum

None

### Commission Committee Reports

#### Personnel

None

#### Finance

None

#### Operations Policy Committee

Commissioner O'Day reported on the Hydro walkthrough held on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Highlights included: Those in attendance were Josh Heintzeman, Justin Eichorn, and a member from the Energy Commission. BPU staff, Finance Manager Loch, Public Utilities Director Evans and Commissioners O'Day and Angland attended. The project goals were presented, and the consensus was that they liked the facility, goals and overall seemed to think that there was a good chance at obtaining funding. Next steps for BPU will be to present and testify to both the senate and the house side; this will be coming up in February, Flaherty & Hood have been engaged to assist with this process.

**Unfinished Business - See board packet for staff memo.**

#### Reclamation and Backwash Project

Finance Manager Loch reported that there were additional costs incurred during the design phase which were outside Bolton & Menk's scope of work. The additional services and costs in the amount of \$33,800 are being requested from Bolton & Menk.

**Motion by Commissioner O'Day and seconded by Commissioner Wussow to approve the additional fees related to the design and bidding of the backwash and reclamation project with Bolton & Menk in the amount of \$33,800. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

Commissioner Matten requested additional clarification on the items listed as completed on the unfinished business memo to provide more clarity on what was completed or what action was taken, especially for future Commissions.

### New Business

#### Approve Barr Contract Work Order for the Hydro Facility - See board packet for contract

Finance Manager Loch presented. Loch summarized prior three-year contract expenses as well as current proposed. The current three-year contract is \$10,399.50 less than the 2022-2024 contract. Barr Engineering assists with all the required licensing requirements for the facility.

**Motion by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner O'Day to approve the 2025-2027 Contract Work Order with Barr for the Hydro Facility. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

## BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING

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Consider Country Manor WAC/SAC Deferment – See board packet for application

Public Utilities Director Evans presented the request. Highlights included:

- The request is to defer the SAC/WAC fees and repay on an installment basis over a five year period with the payments being divided into 5 equal installments. The first payment is to be paid 30 days after the building opens for services and additional payments would be made on the anniversary day of the first payment each year for four consecutive years.

CEO from Country Manor, Anthony Fenstad, presented the project and associated request. Commission had a discussion on the requested deferment. Community Development Coordinator Kramvik noted that the February 3<sup>rd</sup> City Council meeting would allow for the commission to make an additional recommendation on the topic of a potential interest rate.

**Motion by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner O’Day to approve deferment of SAC/WAC fees for the Country Manor project. The deferred fees would be repaid over a 5-year period with additional discussion to occur around potential interest or security rate on the deferred fees. There was a vote in favor of the motion with Matten and O’Day voting in favor and Wussow opposed. Motion carried.**

Letter Requesting Waiver of Fees

Commissioner Wussow presented a letter that was received by staff and Commission to waive excess fees for the month of September related to lawn irrigation. Discussion included:

- Dispute of charges were related to use of his sprinkler system and current sprinkling credit end date. A request to waive fees incurred on the owners’ September utility bill was requested.

**Motion by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner O’Day to deny the request for waiving the wastewater treatment and collection fees in the amount of \$138.92. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

Commissioner Wussow requested an addition to next month’s agenda be added to propose new dates for the applied sprinkling credit. The request would be to consider the start to be pushed back to May (currently April) and then to end after September is over. Commissioner O’Day noted that he had received another call on this. Shifting the time frame would cover the same amount of months but just start later and end later.

**Motion by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner O’Day to add to the January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025, meeting agenda, the topic of changing the billing dates to receive the sprinkling credit. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

## **BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**

**December 31, 2024**

### **Staff Reports**

#### **City Administrator Report**

City Administrator Broyles reported on the following:

##### City Council

- The City Council voted to annex the Riverside property.
- At the January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025, City Council meeting the new City Council President, Vice President, Liaisons, etc. will be named.

##### IT Department Integration

- IT/GIS Director Strong and Technology Supervisor Andersen have been working on creating a new Technology Director job description with HR Director and will be presented for approval at the January 6<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting. Once approved, staff will continue with the integration process.

#### **City Council Liaison Report**

None

**HR Director's Report** – *see board packet for report.*

**Public Utilities Director's Report** – *see board packet for report*

Commissioner Matten and Public Utilities Director Evans discussed the hurdles around transmission projects, revenue streams, and alternatives to rate increases. Matten encouraged staff to continue to work with third parties to advocate for BPU in obtaining grants.

#### **Managers Reports**

Finance Manager's Report – *see board packet for report.*

Operations Manager Report – *see board packet for outage report.*

Water/Wastewater Report – *see board packet for report.*

Wussow requested data in a chart format for the last 12 months incorporated into Gammon's monthly reporting.

- Start small with a couple of data points, showing last month vs. last year.

Matten discussed the lift station maintenance and financing costs, inquired why and how BPU acquired the financial responsibility of this. Matten would like to discuss this topic further with the City Council and the Streets department and potential allocation of costs for these.

Well #3 is currently shut down due to PFOS levels. This represents approximately 1,080 gallons per minute when in operation.

- Gammon is working with agencies and there will be an ongoing plan to mitigate and identify sources. Gammon confirmed that more testing is occurring on our side.

Commissioner Matten noted that a Town Hall meeting with the City of Baxter should be occurring around this. Gammon reported that once the 20-year plan is done, that is the goal. The timeline is looking to be in the February/March timeframe.

**BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**

**December 31, 2024**

**Commission Members – Reports**

Commissioner Wussow reported on the following:

**IT/Finance Integration**

- Confirmed with HR that there will soon be a new Department Head with the IT Department integration in the middle to end of January.
- Requested that BPU staff and HR work together to provide a timeline at the next meeting for when the job descriptions will be completed for the budgeted IT positions and timelines for advertising.

Next Commission meeting is scheduled for January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

**Adjournment**

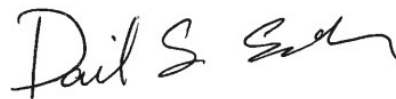
**Motion by Commissioner Wussow and seconded by Commissioner O'Day to adjourn the meeting.**

**Motion carried at 9:47 AM.**



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Dolly Matten, Commission President



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Danny Loch, Finance Manager/Secretary