



# BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

8027 Highland Scenic Rd • P.O. Box 373 • Brainerd, Minnesota 56401

**Business Office:** 218.829.8726 ■ **Repair Service:** 218.829.2193

www.bpu.org

The regular meeting of the Brainerd Public Utilities Commission was held at 9:00 AM on April 29, 2025.

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

## Commission Roll Call

Mike Angland – Present

Dolly Matten – Present

Mark O'Day – Present

Mike Higgins – Present

## Utility Staff Present

Finance Manager

Operation Manager

Water/Wastewater Manager

Business Office Supervisor

Recording Secretary

Danny Loch

Trent Hawkinson

Charlie Gammon

Jana Pernula

Becky Ridlon

## Others in Attendance

City Administrator

HR Director

Public Works Director

Community Development Director

City Engineer

City Council Liaison

Bolton & Menk

Widseth

City of Baxter

Block Metrix

Block Metrix

Citizen

Nick Broyles

Kris Schubert

Mike Habighorst

James Kramvik

Jessie Dehm

Jeff Czczok

Morgan Salo, PE

Bill Westerberg, PE

Brad Chapulis

Clark Swanson

Ro Shirole

Brian Timmers

Commissioner Angland opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

## Approval of Agenda Items

Commissioner Matten requested to pull item C. Sign/Approve Rotary Solar Project Construction Contract for discussion and that it be moved after public forum.

**Motion by Commissioner Matten and seconded by Commissioner Higgins to approve the amended agenda. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

## **BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 29, 2025**

### **Approval of Consent Items**

**Motion by Commissioner Matten and seconded by Commissioner Higgins to approve the minutes from March 25th, 2025, regular monthly meeting, current month's bills and to approve sale of surplus item – Dodge Durango on the state auction website. There was a unanimous roll call vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

### **Public Forum**

None

### **Sign/Approve Rotary Solar Project Construction Contract**

Commissioner Matten asked who drafted the agreement and if the City Attorney had yet to review the contract. Hawkinson confirmed Wolf Track Energy LLC drafted the agreement and that if concerns were sent over, we can send them to the city attorney. Staff directions were to send the contract to the City attorney for review.

**Approve/Deny BlockMetrix Purchased Power Agreement Extension - See board packet for agenda request.**

Finance Manager Danny Loch opened the presentation then passed to Clark Swanson via Phone conference call and Ro Shirole from Blockmetrix to present their request for an extension on the purchased power agreement.

Discussion occurred related to the extension, why it was needed, and whether an additional extension might be needed in the future. BlockMetrix answered the requests of Commission and Commission directed staff to schedule a joint meeting with the Economic Development Commission and Brainerd City Council to discuss, and that the discussion not include BlockMetrix at this time and that an additional meeting with BlockMetrix be scheduled subsequent to all governing bodies coming to a decision.

### **Commission Committee Reports**

#### **Personnel**

No meetings occurred, however, discussion included Matten requesting clarity with what the committee's roles and responsibilities are with a clear definition of what the committee's roles are supposed to do. Angland did agree clarification would be appreciated and requested a review of the organizational chart should be reviewed and to make sure everyone on the personnel committee is on the same page.

Discussion on the interim director followed, O'Day would like to hold off on hiring an interim director. Broyles would like to meet and go over this recommendation with the personnel committee. The Personnel Committee, HR, and City Administrator will meet after the commission meeting to discuss it.

## **BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 29, 2025**

Finance/Operations Committee

Approve 5-year Rate Plan

**Motion by Commissioner O'Day and seconded by Commissioner Matten to approve the next 2 rate increases with a 6-month review of the rate plan. Discussion occurred.**

Discussion included:

- Higgins said he would like to approve the four adjustments total of 24 months, noting that with his research BPU is the cheapest in the whole state. As a business owner he would like to be able to plan at least the next 2 years of rate changes, with those adjustments BPU would still be the lowest in the state with current rates.
- O'Day said presently we are at \$.086 and even with the 10% increase we would be below 9 cents. O'Day amended his motion, seconded by Matten to approve the next four adjustments with a 6-month review of the rate plan.

**Motion by Commissioner O'Day and seconded by Commissioner Matten to amend the original motion and approve the next 4 rate increases with a 6-month review of the rate plan. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

Approve Bolton & Menk Quote – Wastewater Facility Plan

**Motion by Commissioner Higgins and seconded by Commissioner Matten to Accept the original quote submitted by Bolton & Menk inc. not to exceed \$468,480. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

Discussion included:

- Higgins does not like the price, but a sense of urgency is needed to move forward.
- City of Baxter Brad Chapulis stated they support this Wastewater Facility Plan.

**Approved Dying to Film Quote - \$3,200 Hydro tour video - See board packet for agenda request.**

Finance Manager Danny Loch presented the quote; Commissioner Higgins expressed his interest in the Hydro Dam and is excited to see it in video form for advertising and marketing purposes.

**Motion by Commissioner Higgins and seconded by Commissioner O'Day to Accept Dying to Film Quote of \$3,200 for hydro tour video as part of the \$5,000 promotional video budget. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

## BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING

April 29, 2025

**Approve Credit Card Transaction Fee-** See board packet for agenda request. Discussion occurred.

**Motion by Commissioner O'Day and seconded by Commissioner Higgins to approve staff recommendation of amending the previously approved 4.75% transaction percentage fee on credit card payments to \$1.25 incode fee and 3% transaction fee to all customers utilizing credit card payments, online and in-person. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

**Ratify Project Priority List Submission for Water-** See board packet for agenda request.

Finance Manager Danny Loch presented.

**Motion by Commissioner O'Day and seconded by Commissioner Higgins to accept Bolten & Menk project priority listing submission for water. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

**Approve Budget Amendment -Evergreen Lift station Pumps-** See board packet for agenda request.

Finance Manager Danny Loch presented.

Discussion included.

- Higgins said Water/Wastewater Manager Charlie Gammon did an excellent job of being initiative-taking with all the work that went into this project.
- Matten asked Gammon about the quotes and if all the charges are on the quote. Gammon stated that he has tried to get everything in writing with the quotes.

**Motion by Commissioner Higgins and seconded by Commissioner O'Day Approve budget amendments an increase of \$135,727 in 2025 and a reduction of \$100,000 in 2026 and 2027 and move forward with the lowest quotes from Quality Flow for the pumps and DeZurik equipment for gate valve and check valve replacement. There was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried.**

### **Direction Requested on Hydro Generation Project Funding**

Operation Manager Trent Hawkinson presented.

Discussion included.

- Higgins got some feedback from some political people from the presentation Hawkinson and Evans presented at the Capitol, and said it was well received. Higgins would recommend moving forward and figure out the cash flow for the generators.
- O'Day asked Hawkinson if we need to get bids on this project? Hawkinson said we need to go out to get procurements on the generator specs we want to install for when they fit best for our facility.

Loch stated the Commission needs to decide whether to bond for the project. That would require a recommendation to the City Council, and if the Commission does not want to bond in for the project, then we will have to go back to the drawing board and produce a new plan. Higgins wants to find out how much money we will need to put down to move forward and make a more informed decision. Loch noted we

## **BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING**

**April 29, 2025**

can check on how much money is needed to be down to move forward. The recommendation is to move forward on one generator present to the City Council Meeting to get their feedback.

### **New Business**

**Discuss Draft 10-Year-CIP-2026-2035** -*See board packet for agenda request.*

City Engineer Jessie Dehm Presented.

Discussion included.

- Higgins said his understanding of how the money flows between BPU and the City according to the charter BPU oversees electric, water, lift stations and waste treatment plant and wanted clarification.
- Loch stated part of the engineering water infrastructure for this project is in the BPU budget for the street side.

### **Staff Reports**

#### **City Administrator Report**

- Administrator Broyles reported that the city council had a productive work group at the council meeting, council members talked about parks, economic development, staffing infrastructure, and utility distribution and had many innovative ideas. The work group is making a priorities list and continuously working on the betterment of our community.

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

- Czczok thanked Broyles for giving an update on the work group meeting.
- Some of the highlights from that work group included a priority list, Infrastructure was high on the list.

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

#### **Manager's Reports**

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

- Audit update: the audit is complete, and the representation letter needs a signature from Angland, and a few minor adjustments needed for the presentation at next month's meeting.

**Operations Manager Report** - *see board packet for report.*

- *Wanted to thank some staff-Tyler, Brent, and Nick for helping with the safety presentation for Anderson Brothers, this presentation was well received.*
- Private service lines project we will be facilitating all the work to be done. Only public funding for two years is currently available.

**Water/Wastewater Manager Report**- *see board packet for report.*

## BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION MEETING

April 29, 2025

### Commission Members – Report

#### **Commissioner Higgins reported on the following:**

- Mentioned the value of updating or improving infrastructure, i.e. roads/trails/sidewalks/waterlines adds per capita income and value to the City. Looking ahead, continued investments in road repairs and waterline upgrades between BPU and the City will play a crucial role in supporting further economic growth.

#### **Commissioner Angland reported on the following:**

- Asked if Bolton & Menk, Morgan Salo, could email a summary to the Joint Wastewater Board and Commission on the outcome of the quote.

#### **Commissioner Matten reported on the following:**

- None

#### **Commissioner O'Day reported on the following:**

- None


#### **Adjournment**

**Motion by Commissioner Matten and seconded by Commissioner Higgins to adjourn the meeting and adjourn to wastewater management board meeting, there was a unanimous vote in favor of the motion. Motion carried at 11:10 AM.**



---

Mike Angland, Commission President



---

Danny Loch, Finance Manager/Secretary