

OSAGE MUNICIPAL UTILITIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Special Joint Informational Meeting
February 10, 2017 9:00 a.m.
Heartland Power Cooperative, St. Ansgar

1) **Call Meeting To Order, Introductions, Recognize Guests**

Meeting called to order at 9:16 a.m. by General Manager Byrnes.

Present: Heartland Power Cooperative (HPC) Representatives: Richard Rosenberg (Board President), Roger Tjarks (Director), Vince Morische (Director), Larry Tjaden (Director), Don Knudtson (Director), Gary Pearson (Director), John Leerar (CEO/General Manager) and Karrie Pringnitz (Director of Finance/Admin Services). Osage Municipal Utilities (OMU) Representatives: Jen Frein (Chairperson), Royce Tack (Trustee), Tom Kenny (Trustee), Nan Jakobson (Trustee), Kelvin Palsic (Trustee), Josh Byrnes (General Manager) and Laura Kuennen (Accounting/Finance Director and Board Secretary). Absent: Roger Solomonson (Director). Guests: None.

2) **Opening remarks** – Opening remarks were given by Josh Byrnes, General Manager of OMU and Jon Leerar, CEO/General Manager of HPC. General Manager Leerar shared HPC's organizational chart and General Manager Byrnes shared high level OMU operational and organizational information with the group.

3) **Current sharing arrangements with others**

General Manager Leerar discussed current sharing arrangements that HPC has with others.

4) **Discussion on other areas/items of possible sharing arrangements**

a) **NISC ASP**

The billing systems currently being utilized by OMU and HPC were discussed along with the similarities, differences and challenges.

b) **Meter Testing**

Discussed the current metering systems used by HPC and system enhancements they are looking into moving forward. Also discussed meter testing and the potential for OMU to need assistance in this area in the future.

c) **Social Media**

General Manager Byrnes shared successes OMU has experienced in communicating issues with customers via social media. HPC representatives also shared some of their best practices with customer communication.

d) **Grassroots**

The importance of getting to know our elected officials and engaging with them in conversations impacting OMU and HPC was discussed.

e) **Common software: OMS, Staking, PYXIS**

Heartland Power Cooperative explained software programs they currently use that may be of interest to OMU.

f) **Information Technology (IT) shared position**

HPC may have a need to utilize some of OMU's IT service capabilities and there may be future opportunities to share IT services.

g) **Redundancy of staff (ex. Billing)**

HPC and OMU discussed helping each other, as part of a back-up plan, with respect to staffing if a need or hardship were to occur.

h) **Office Operations: Lock Box, Cash Manager, Smart Hub**

HPC shared information on how they handle office operations with respect to customer billing and collection of payments.

i) **Sharing of equipment**

HPC and OMU discussed the potential for sharing equipment. Equipment inventory lists will be created that can be referenced by both parties should a need arise.

j) Human Resources

OMU has a Human Resources employee and could potentially provide support to HPC in this area if needed.

k) Potential Collaboration on helping students enter into the energy industry

OMU and HPC discussed the shortage of skilled workers in the energy sector and discussed the potential for partnering together to educate high school students about career opportunities that exist in the energy sector. The potential for setting up a training facility for area high schools to learn more about energy distribution and equipment was discussed.

l) River Road customers who don't have affordable internet...pole attachment issues

In many cases, OMU and HPC share customers. One example of where this occurs is along the River Road. General Manager Byrnes inquired about whether the potential exists to work with HPC regarding pole attachments to improve telecommunications connectivity to residents along the River Road.

Heartland Power Cooperative provided a tour and overview of their GIS mapping and system monitoring capabilities.

5) Adjournment

Chairperson Frein declared the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.