



**Danville Utility Commission**  
4:00 p.m. August 22, 2016 Meeting  
Council Chambers, City Hall  
**Minutes**

**Commission Members Present:** Vanessa Cain, Bill Donohue, Ken Larking, Trina McLaughlin, Michael Nicholas, Fred Shanks, Phillip Smith

**Commission Members Absent:** Jim Turpin

**Staff Present:** Michael Adkins, Meagan Baker, Greg Disher, Barry Dunkley, Carolyn Evans, Jenny Holley, Becky Meadows, Joyce Obstler, Inez Rodenburg, Mike Spencer, Jody Tate, Clarke Whitfield and Allen Wiles

**Others Present:** Mike Jones and Phillip Kauneckas of Intertape, Jerry Shupe of Severn Trent and City Councilman Gary Miller

**Call to Order and Announcements**

Chairman Smith opened the meeting and asked that the attendance be recorded. As a quorum was present, the meeting was called to order.

**Discussion/Business Items**

**Minutes of July 25, 2016 Commission Meeting**

Chairman Smith asked for any corrections, deletions, or adjustments to the minutes of July 25, 2016.

Mr. Nicholas made a motion to approve the minutes. All members voted in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

**Review of Utilities' Financial Statements**

Michael Adkins reviewed the Utilities financial statements. Mr. Adkins noted that the material provided is pre-closing and is subject to change.

Mr. Adkins then addressed questions from the Commissioners. Mr. Donohue questioned the wastewater unrestricted fund balance.

Mr. Smith requested the formula that is used to determine how much each utility division's fund provides to the general fund.

#### Financial Impact on Absorbing Credit Card Fees

Jason Grey presented the commission with information on how to best absorb credit card fees. Danville Utilities currently allows customers to pay with credit cards. However, the customer is responsible for covering 100% of the transaction fee.

Grey presented two different options for absorbing the fee for customers, the absorbed model and hybrid model, with staff recommending the later.

Mr. Nicholas asked how many non-residential customers pay with credit cards and also asked if staff looked at any other service provider other than Paymentus.

Mr. Donohue questioned whether staff had discussed this with other municipal utilities to see how they handle fees.

He also asked what savings will be involved if they decide to move forward with this model. Mr. Grey stated it could possibly reduce foot traffic in collections, and may reduce some bad debt. He also mentioned that customers would be required to sign up for e-bill, if they pay online via credit card, so this could possibly save money on printing and mailing bills each month. Further, he stated it will not be a solution to all of the issues but will provide a convenience to customers.

Mr. Smith asked for the length of the contract with Paymentus, mentioning that it may be a good idea to have a "trial period."

The commission concluded that more information needs to be provided including other vendors and their costs, terms of contract, and what other similar utilities are doing.

#### Demonstration and Discussion of the City's New Utility Portal and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Solution

Inez Rodenburg, Director of Information Technology described the utility website portal that is currently in the implementation phase.

She stated that the goal of this project is to provide an intuitive web portal that will enable improved access to utility information for all customers, enhance the process for outage notifications and enhance e-notification regarding.

A few of the portal's features include eBilling, consumption details, email/text notifications, power outage notification, service area outage map, customer service representative support and more.

Mr. Shanks asked how this will benefit the customer without a smart phone. Ms. Rodenburg reported that customers can sign up for text alerts if they do not have internet access on their phones.

She opened the test portal to show the commission a visual of how the site looks as of today.

Mr. Shanks asked whether the customer will be able to access information on outages such as an estimated time frame of when power will be restored. She stated the portal will have the ability to post statements with information concerning outages.

Ms. Rodenburg then moved on to talk about the new IVR system. An RFP was issued last year and a hosted automated IVR system was selected. A few of the benefits of this include a 99.95% uptime, all calls recorded, 85% of call answered within 30 seconds, and it frees up utility dispatchers to focus on outages.

#### Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisor Seat on Danville Utility Commission

Mr. Nicholas stated that he believed the resolution provided by Danville City Council does not give Pittsylvania County what they are asking for. He mentioned it doesn't give them the voting right and because of this it doesn't give them more right than any other member or person from the public. He said it must be a voting member to mean something. He is also opposed to voting for someone who is currently on the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Whitfield was asked by the group what the current statute requires as far as the commission's membership. He stated there must be four members, who are city customers, one member who is a county customer, one member who is a general customer, the city manager and one non-voting member (who is currently a member of city council.)

Mr. Donohue mentioned that the utility serves other jurisdictions other than Pittsylvania County who also do not have representation.

Mr. Nicholas made a motion to a resolution of the Danville Utility Commission to recommend to Danville City Council that the City Code not be amended to appoint a member of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors, as recommended by the Board, to the Danville Utility Commission to sit as an Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member.

Mr. Donohue seconded the motion. All present members voted in favor with the exception of Mr. Larking.

#### Department Discussions

Mr. Larking mentioned the Bridge Street substation outage and how complicated the issue was for utility staff. Mr. Larking sat in on the switching order and was very impressed with the staff. In addition, he stated the equipment at the Bridge Street substation is being evaluated to see what needs to be done in order to prevent these issues in the future.

Ms. Evans reported that the CIS upgrade has been pushed out and the new go live date is September 19, 2016.

Mr. Dunkley reported that divers had been present this week to inspect the Schoolfield Dam and divers were also present today, to remove debris. He reminded the commission that the water level will be dropped next Tuesday for further inspections.

Mr. Donohue presented on the NASCAR Green award and recognized two of Danville Utilities customers, Blue Ridge Fiberboard for being selected and Intertape who received the designation for Virginia.

Mr. Mike Jones of Intertape talked about the experience and how it helped their company reduce greenhouse gases, improve recycling and save money. He mentioned how important partnerships can be and thanked Genedge for reaching out to them on this project. He also thanked Danville Utilities for their work during an outage last week.

Mr. Shanks reiterated what Mr. Larking stated earlier thanking the Power and Light crews for their hard work during the recent outages. He questioned if Danville Utilities has the proper resources needed for underground conversion in the River District. Mr. Disher stated that both in house and contractors are used depending on the many variables and difficulty of the work.

He also asked about the older transformers on the system and if Danville Utilities has sufficient funding to allow for the upgrades and replacements.

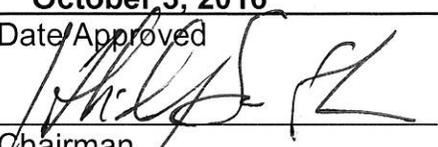
Ms. McLaughlin stated that the power outage communication has greatly improved and appreciates the efforts by staff.

Mr. Grey recognized Mike Spencer as the new Director of Telecommunications and congratulated Mr. Allen Wiles on his retirement and thanked him for his service to the city.

### **Adjournment**

Chairman Smith stated the next meeting is scheduled for October 3, 2016. There being no further business, Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Submitted by Meagan Baker  
Secretary to the DUC

**October 3, 2016**  
Date/Approved  
  
Chairman  
Danville Utility Commission