

Special Board of Public Works  
September 8, 2014

The Board of Public Works of the City of Tecumseh, Nebraska, met in special session in the Utilities Conference Room at the Utility Shop on the 8th day of September 2014, at 7:00 o'clock p.m., in a publicly convened session, the same being open to the public and having been preceded by advance publicized notice.

The following Council Members were present: Charles Murphy, James Philippi, Larry Carmine, Kim Jansen, Kris Brase and Jesse Grof. Absent: None. The following Board of Public Works' members were present: Lynn Campbell, Dan Blessing and Fred Pooch. Absent: None.

Others present: Ann Wickett, Doug Goracke, Lavern Bartels, Bruce Dalluge, Paula Darling, Bev Puhalla, Susan Kerner, Delmar Badertscher, Ruth Holben, Carol Behrends, Russell Behrends, Densel Fankhauser, Nick Bergin, Glen Bohling, Raymond Ensor, Mark McDonald, Don Ensor, Beth Rossi, Jack Stinson, Mike Davison, Jim Seckman, Kaleb Kuhlman, Jim Rieken, Rhett Meints, Moaner DuPreez and Wayne Minchow.

Mayor Montz addressed the visitors, the Board of Public Works and Councilmembers concerning the review of the employee wage adjustment agenda item by stating that all employees of the city and utility are excellent employees and that the utility is now working with one less employee and that the step increases were determined by using the League of Municipalities' salary survey. He stated that in his 12 years as a Councilmember and/or Mayor, the Council had not taken the advice of the Board of Public Works only one time and that he trusts them.

Former Councilmember Beth Rossi asked if she could address the Council and asked "How many of the council members or mayor knew what the utility wage increases were at the budget workshop or when they voted at the August Council meeting?" All responded they did not know what the raises amounted to. Board of Public Works' member Fred Pooch stated that the Board is in place to help the Council and to make recommendations to them about equipment needs, projects and budgets. He stated that the Board and employees had been working on the step raises for some time and that City Council members should attend the Board meetings if they would like to be familiar with what goes on at the meetings. He also stated that if he could have given larger raises he would have but the utility employees did not agree with him.

Councilmembers Carmine and Murphy stated that by not using the step raise pay scale that was developed in 2011, the utility employees' pay rates became less and less comparable with those in the surrounding communities. Councilmember Philippi stated his research of several communities showed that Tecumseh's pay scale was probably more average than low.

Former Mayor Bartels stated he thought the Board of Public Works should be dissolved and that a supervisor and the City Council could handle the work load of the Board. He also felt the raises were too high for a community the size of Tecumseh and that no employee pay raises should have been given.

Mayor Montz responded that the utility department would have issues with employee retention if no raises were given.

Ms. Rossi expressed concerns whether or not the vote for wage increases was legal because it had been the practice of the Council to know what the wages were at the time of the budget workshop and that this year no one knew what the wages were. Mr. Pooch again stated that the information was available at the Board of Public Works' meeting.

Tecumseh Chieftain publisher, Bev Puhalla, expressed her concern that the step raise information had not been given to her reporter or to the City Clerk at the August Board of Public Works' meeting.

Following several comments from the audience, a visitor asked if there would be a revote of the wage increase and the City Attorney stated it was not on the agenda and would not be voted on. The Mayor asked if there were any other questions and there were none.

The Board of Public Works' meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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Lynn Campbell

Secretary

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Dan Blessing

Chairman