

# MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS

## of the Public Utilities Commission, City of Hibbing, St. Louis County, Minnesota

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Minutes of the regular meeting of the Public Utilities Commission, Hibbing, Minnesota, 1902 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., Hibbing, MN 55746, held on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Meeting held at Hibbing City Hall, 401 E. 21<sup>st</sup> St., Hibbing MN. Chair Bayliss called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m. In attendance were Chair Bayliss, Commissioner Hart, Commissioner Stokes, Commissioner Babich, Commissioner Sandstede, Legal Counsel, Andy Borland; General Manager Luke Peterson, OD & HR Manager, Kendra Powers; Manager of Operations ; Paul Plombon, Engineering Manager, Paul Skubinna; Interim Financial Controller, Tammy Mattonen; Customer Service Coordinator. Jill Hietala; and Grant Writer & Engagement Specialist Eliot Dixon. Also in attendance were HPU Employee George Pogachnik, HPAT Rep. Ron Wirkkula, and Community Members Chris Zubich, Nick Bougalis, and Mark Reger. Absent was

### **Item 2. ADDS/DELETES**

#### **Add –**

Item 5.K – Approve Commissioners to attend Joint City Council Workshop on Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026 following the regular Commission Working Session at Hibbing City Hall

Item 5.L – Approve Commissioners to attend South Water Treatment Plant Ribbon Cutting at 11871 Town Line, Hibbing, MN on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, 11:00 am

Item 6.A.iii – MMUA Presentation on Strategic Planning Questionnaire content & strategy

Item 5.M. – Approve resignation of HPU General Manager Luke Peterson

Item 5.N. - Closed Session: Employee Performance Review

### **Item 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Sandstede, to approve the regular meeting minutes of the March 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, & April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026 Commission Meetings.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Item 4. CITIZENS FORUM –**

Comments from Nick Bougalis expressed concern regarding the development of an internal HPU Construction Crew. Mr. Bougalis expressed concern regarding leasing of a HydroVac Truck.

### **Item 5. CONSENT AGENDA**

Item 5.A. Approving invoices >\$10,000 & approve the bills & ACH transfers >\$10,000 dated March 12<sup>th</sup> – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

Item 5.B. Approve the payroll paid & overtime report for the March 19<sup>th</sup>, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026 pay dates.

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- Item 5.C. Approve Annual Salary Increase for Management Staff
- Item 5.D. Approve Hiring of Chris Zubich, Procurement Supervisor, anticipate start date June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Item 5.E. Approve Plant Mechanic Crew Lead (26-02) to Mark Trenberth
- Item 5.F. Approve to award Line Crew Lead (26-03) to Chad Adams
- Item 5.G. Approve MOU for Materials Risk Coordinator
- Item 5.H. Approve Resolution 26-05; authorizing Hibbing Public Utilities to make application to and accept funds from Source Water Protection Plan Implementation & Competitive Grant
- Item 5.I. Approve Resolution 26-05; authorizing Hibbing Public Utilities to make application to and accept funds from Natural Gas Distribution Infrastructure Safety and Modernization Grant Program
- Item 5.J. Authorize Listed Requests for Contributions
- Item 5.K. Approve Commissioners to attend Joint City Council Workshop on Tuesday, May 19th, 2026 following the regular Commission Working Session at Hibbing City Hall
- Item 5.L Approve Commissioners to attend South Water Treatment Plant Ribbon Cutting at 11871 Town Line, Hibbing, MN on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026, 11:00 am
- Item 5.M. Approve the resignation of HPU General Manager Luke Peterson
- Item 5.N. Closed Session: Employee Performance Review

Commissioner Stokes requested Items 5.A., 5.D., 5.E., & 5.F. be pulled for discussion.

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Babich, to approve Consent Agenda items 5.B., 5.C., 5.G., 5.H., 5.I., 5.J., 5.K., 5.L., 5.M., & 5.N. as presented.

Motion carried 4-1  
No - Hart

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Item 5.A. Approving invoices >\$10,000 & approve the bills & ACH transfers >\$10,000 dated March 12<sup>th</sup> – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026

Commissioner Stokes discussed a well drilling invoice with HPU General Manager Luke Peterson.

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Hart, to approve Approving invoices >\$10,000 & approve the bills & ACH transfers >\$10,000 dated March 12<sup>th</sup> – April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2026.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item 5.D. Approve Hiring of Chris Zubich, Procurement Supervisor, anticipate start date June 1<sup>st</sup>

Motion by Commissioner Bayliss, supported by Commissioner Babich, to approve hiring of Chris Zubich to Procurement Supervisor.

Motion carried 4-1  
No - Stokes

Item 5.E. Approve Plant Mechanic Crew Lead (26-02) to Mark Trenberth

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Hart, to award Plant Mechanic Crew Lead (26-02) to Mark Trenberth.

Motion carried unanimously.

Item 5.F. Approve to award Line Crew Lead (26-03) to Chad Adams

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Hart, to award Line Crew Lead (26-03) to Chad Adams.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Item 6. FINANCIALS & RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Item 6.A.** Approve HPUC Calendar Year 2025 Audit

**Item 6.A.i.** Audit Presentation, Bonnie Schwieger, Abdo

**Item 6.A.ii.** Financial Metrics, Bethany Ryers, Baker Tilly

**Item 6.A.iii.** MMUA Presentation of Strategic Planning Questionnaire

Commission reviewed presentation and acknowledged 2025 audit.

**Item 6.B.** Approve February & March 2026 Financials

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Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Bayliss, to approve February & March 2026 Monthly financials.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.C.** (OF0004.2) Beltline Substation Reconstruction

**Item 6.C.i.** Approve Prefabricated Modular Block Wall Material Purchase for Beltline Substation Reconstruction from Eull's Manufacturing \$47,597.50

Motion by Commissioner Sandstede, supported by Commissioner Hart, to approve purchase of Prefabricated Modular Block Wall Material from Eull's Manufacturing in the amount of \$47,597.50

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.C.ii.** Approve Lake States Construction for Beltline Substation Feeder 1 Exit work: excavation, cabinet and cable work in the amount of \$46,500

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Babich, to approve Lake States Construction for Beltline Substation Feeder 1 Exit work in the amount of \$46,500.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.C.iii.** Approve Resco Materials Purchase: Beltline Substation Project in the amount of \$47,939.95

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Babich, to approve Resco Materials Purchase: Beltline Substation Project in the amount of \$47,939.95

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.C.iv.** Approve Wesco Materials Purchase: Beltline Substation Project in the amount of \$30,544.18

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Sandstede, to approve Wesco Materials Purchase: Beltline Substation Project in the amount of \$30,544.18

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.C.v.** Approve Spill Containment and Filter System material Purchase for Beltline Substation Reconstruction from Basic Concepts Inc. in the amount of \$25,580

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Babich, to approve Spill Containment and Filter System material Purchase for Beltline Substation Reconstruction from Basic Concepts Inc. in the amount of \$25,580

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Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.D.** (OF0009.0) AMI Meters

**Item 6.D.i.** Approve Purchase of AMI Gas Meters Project from Groebner in the amount of \$423,322

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Bayliss, to approve Purchase of AMI Gas Meters Project from Groebner in the amount of \$423,322

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.D.ii.** Award Request for Proposals 25-13: AMI Meter Installation for Gas Meters to Tromco Electric in the amount of \$182,968

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Sandstede, to Award Request for Proposals 25-13: AMI Meter Installation for Gas Meters to Tromco Electric in the amount of \$182,968

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.D.iii.** Award Installation of Electric AMI Meters to Hunt Electric in the amount of \$793,821.60

Commission discussed the requirements of bid and performance bonds.

Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Stokes, to Award Installation of Electric AMI Meters to Hunt Electric in the amount of \$793,821.60

Motion carried unanimously.

**Item 6.E.** (OF0002.2) E 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Water – Phase 2

**Item 6.E.i.** Approve Bids and Award Construction Contract: 23<sup>rd</sup> St. Water and Steam Improvements – Phase 2 to Bougalis Inc. in the amount of \$2,334,675.05

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Hart, to Approve Bids and Award Construction Contract: 23<sup>rd</sup> St. Water and Steam Improvements – Phase 2 to Bougalis Inc. in the amount of \$2,334,675.05

Motion carried unanimously.

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Item 6.E.ii. Approve Professional Services Agreement with Bolton & Menk Inc. for Construction Phase Services: 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Water and Steam Improvements – Phase 2 in the amount of \$ 144,057

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Sandstede, to Approve Professional Services Agreement with Bolton & Menk Inc. for Construction Phase Services: 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Water and Steam Improvements – Phase 2 in the amount of \$ 144,057

Motion carried unanimously.

Item 6.F. (OF0003.2) Lead & Copper Compliance – 2026 Annual Service Line Potholing

Item 6.F.i. Approve Lease to Own 2023 VA HXX PD 12YD Hydro Vac Truck from MacQueen

Commission discussed the cost of internal performance of pot holing.

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Bayliss, to Approve Lease to Own 2023 VA HXX PD 12YD Hydro Vac Truck from MacQueen

Motion carried 3-2.  
No – Babich, Hart

Item 6.G. (OF0002.0) Annual Hydrant & Valve Replacement

Item 6.G.i. Approve Professional Services Agreement for Construction Phase Services: Water Distribution Improvement – Annual Hydrant Replacements in the amount not to exceed \$104,929

Motion by Commissioner Sandstede, supported by Commissioner Hart, to Approve Professional Services Agreement for Construction Phase Services: Water Distribution Improvement – Annual Hydrant Replacements in the amount not to exceed \$104,929

Motion carried 4-1  
No - Stokes

Item 6.H. (OF0002.0) New Haven – Phase 1 Street Lighting

Item 6.H.i. Approve Cooperative Construction Agreement New Haven – Phase 1 Street Lighting in the amount of \$48,107.50

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Motion by Commissioner Hart, supported by Commissioner Babich, to Approve Cooperative Construction Agreement New Haven – Phase 1 Street Lighting in the amount of \$48,107.50

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Item 7. POLICY & GOVERNANCE-**

#### **Item 7.A.** Approve 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Sandstede, to approve 2026-2030 Capital Improvement Plan

Motion carried 4-1.

No - Hart

#### **Item 7.B.** Approve Annual Revisions of Management Staff Job Descriptions

Motion by Commissioner Babich, supported by Commissioner Stokes, to approve Annual Revisions of Management Staff Job Descriptions.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Item 7.C.** Approve Summer Students Hiring Policy

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Sandstede, to approve Summer Students Hiring Policy.

Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Item 7.D.** Approve Summer Students Job Description & Staffing

Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Hart, to approve Summer Students Job Description & Staffing.

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Item 8. NEW BUSINESS–**

### **Item 9. OLD BUSINESS –**

#### **Item 9.A.** County Solar Project

Commission discussed that it has no further interest in further pursuing the land fill solar project.

### **Item 10. ADJOURNMENT**

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Motion by Commissioner Stokes, supported by Commissioner Hart, to adjourn the meeting at 6:36 pm, immediately following the conclusion of the closed session.

Motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

  
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Jeff Hart, Commission Secretary

  
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James Bayliss, Chair

Meeting materials are available at  
The next meeting is a working meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026  
at 5:00 p.m. at the Hibbing City Hall, 401 E. 21<sup>st</sup> St., Hibbing MN 55746.

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