

WORK SESSION MINUTES – WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2023

STATE OF KANSAS)
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CITY OF KANSAS CITY)

The Board of Public Utilities of Kansas City, Kansas (aka BPU, We, Us, Our) met in Work Session on Wednesday, August 16, 2023 at 4:30 PM. The following Board Members were present: Rose Mulvany Henry, President; Thomas Groneman, Vice President; Robert L. Milan, Secretary; Jeff Bryant, Mary Gonzales, and David Haley.

Also present: William Johnson, General Manager; Wendy Green, Senior Counsel; Lori Austin, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer; Johnetta Hinson, Executive Director Customer Service; Steve Green, Executive Director Water Operations; Andrew Ferris, Director Financial Planning; Randy Otting, Director Accounting; and Robert Kamp, IT Project Manager.

A video of this meeting is on file at the Board of Public Utilities and can be found on the BPU website, www.bpu.com.

Ms. Mulvany Henry called the meeting to order at 4:32 PM.

Roll call was taken. All Board Members were present, Mr. Haley by zoom until 4:53 PM when he arrived in person.

Item #3 –Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the Agenda by Mr. Bryant, seconded by Mr. Groneman, and unanimously carried.

Item #4 –Board Update/GM Update

Mr. Haley provided an update on the Unified Government (UG) Standing Committee-Economic Development & Finance meeting. They spoke about the responsibilities the community college would acquire as part of the downtown campus, including the Willa Gill Center.

Mr. Johnson spoke about a meeting he attended with Representative Sharice Davids office and members of the private and public sector. They discussed working together, within the region, to meet the criteria the federal government had outlined in order to bring more funding to our communities. He spoke about the importance of identifying and relaying the needs of Wyandotte County residents. He would continue to provide updates as they become available.

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Item #5 – Utility Rebate Program

Mr. Andrew Ferris, Director Financial Planning, provided details and staff recommendations regarding the Utility Rebate Program requested by the Board. (See attached PowerPoint.) Items discussed during the presentation included:

- Using the current recipients of the UG’s Low Income Senior Rebate Program for prompt implementation. There were 552 approved recipients for the 2023 review period.
- The UG was in the process of modifying the current requirements of their Senior Rebate Program.
- Setting an initial budget cap for the program of \$150,000.00. Each year following, staff would recommend and the Board would approve the budgetary value for the program.
- Having the age restriction removed in the future, to allow all low-income residents to apply for the program.
- The Board asked if BPU staff could provide the proposed cost associated with creating a new application process internally.

Staff and the Board concluded the first cycle would begin September 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Each eligible electric only customer would receive a monthly rebate credit of \$5.00 and each eligible electric and water customer would receive a monthly rebate credit of \$7.00. The initial budgetary cap was set for \$150,000.00.

Item #6 – 2024 BPU Budget Schedule

Ms. Lori Austin, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Administrative Officer, reviewed the 2024 budget preparation schedule. (See Attached.)

The Board talked about their participation in the budget discussion.

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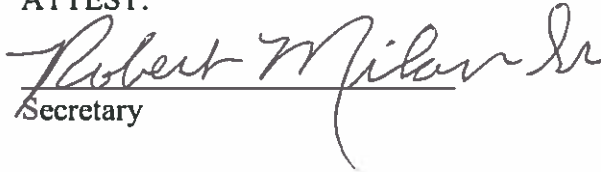
Mr. Johnson said he would work with Ms. Austin to send presentations the week before a budget topic was on the next Work Session Agenda. To be productive, the Board could review and submit questions which staff could provide answers at the meeting.

It was suggested to have a Work Session with staffing on the agenda the meeting prior to the Staffing Budget Presentation.

Item #6 – Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn the Work Session at 6:00 PM by Mr. Groneman, seconded by Ms. Gonzales and unanimously carried.

ATTEST:


Secretary

APPROVED:


President



Kansas City Board of Public Utilities Low Income Rebate Program

August 16, 2023



LOW INCOME REBATE PROGRAM

- Staff recommendation is to utilize the UG's Low Income Senior Rebate Program as the criteria for BPU's Low Income Rebate Program for the period of September 2023 - May 2024.
- This would allow the applicant to submit one set of documents and only go through one review for qualification.
- The current UG Low Income Senior Rebate program uses an application window of January-March.
- The UG program is currently based on all of the following:
 - Resident of Kansas City, KS
 - 65 years of age or older
 - Have a gross household income of \$25,000 or less during the calendar year
- The UG approved 552 recipients during the 2023 review period (based on 2022 documentation)
 - This is lower than previous years as 2018 (2019 review period) had approximately 1,200 recipients.



LOW INCOME REBATE PROGRAM

- Staff recommendation is to automatically accept all BPU Customers that are recipients of the UG Senior Rebate Program into the BPU Low Income Rebate Program.
- Staff recommends that during the current rebate cycle (September 2023 - May 2024):
 - Each recipient will receive a monthly electric rebate credit of \$5 per month, from September 2023 through May 2024 if remain an active BPU customer.



LOW INCOME REBATE PROGRAM

- The UG is currently working on a revision to their Senior Rebate Programs, which if adopted will modify the current program requirements. The application period is January 1-April 15.
- Those new requirements, pertaining to this program, would be based on all of the following:
 - A BPU Account Holder (Electric and/or Water)
 - Is 65 years of age by January 1 of the current year OR is Disabled
 - This program is for both Kansas City and Edwardsville residents
 - The individual applicant's gross income must be \$37,750 or less
 - Only includes 50% of Social Security and SSI payments
 - Excludes Social Security disability payments
 - Excludes Veteran and Railroad disability payments



LOW INCOME REBATE PROGRAM

- If the UG adopts the new Low Income Senior or Disabled Rebate Program the BPU will adopt the new UG program requirements and recipients into the BPU Low Income Rebate Program.
- If the UG retains the current Low Income Senior Rebate Program, staff recommends the BPU maintain the adoption of those requirements and recipients.
- Staff recommends the following during the 2024 - 2025 rebate cycle (June 2024 - May 2025) based on new UG program:
 - Each recipient that is an Electric only customer will receive a monthly rebate credit of \$5 per month
 - Each recipient that is a Water only customer will receive a monthly rebate credit of \$2.50 per month
 - Each recipient that is both an Electric and Water customer will receive a monthly rebate credit of \$7.50 per month



LOW INCOME REBATE PROGRAM

- Staff recommends setting an initial budgetary cap of \$150,000 for the BPU Low Income Rebate Program.
- Each year staff will recommend and the Board will approve the budgetary value for the BPU Low Income Rebate Program as part of the annual budget process.
- BPU will pay out the full monthly rebate to each recipient awarded under the program for the full rebate cycle or until all funds allocated through the budget process are exhausted.



ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

- There are numerous programs and agencies providing assistance and weatherization and we encourage all customers to explore the various programs:
 - Utility Assistance (BPU Funded)
 - Hardship Assistance (BPU Funded)
 - Agency Assistance
 - LIEAP
 - EWAP
 - K-WAP
 - Utility Rebate Program
 - Homestead
 - HOMES and HEERA (IRA Funding coming soon)

QUESTIONS

