MINUTES
Committee of the Whole
Monday, July 31, 2017 @ 5:30 p.m.
City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER
Council Vice President Wood called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT
Councilmember Brown Clarke
Councilmember Kathie Dunbar – arrived at 5:44 p.m.
Councilmember Tina Houghton
Councilmember Adam Hussain
Councilmember Patricia Spitzley- excused
Councilmember Jody Washington
Councilmember Carol Wood
Councilmember Jessica Yorko- arrived at 5:37 p.m.

OTHERS PRESENT
Sherrie Boak, Council Staff
Eric Brewer, Council Internal Auditor
Brandon Waddell, Assistant City Attorney
Dick Peffley, BWL General Manager
Calvin Jones, BWL
Annie Rzepecki, BWL Community Relations
Kellee Christenson, BWL
Rebecca Rostar, BWL
Kate Long, TCOA
Sara Aikman, TCOA
Kathy Miles
Elaine Womboldt
Mary Reynolds

Minutes
Council Vice President Wood pulled the minutes until the next meeting.

Public Comment on Agenda Items
Ms. Miles referenced information from a conference she attended on smart meter, and spoke in opposition to them citing her opinion of the dangers.

Ms. Womboldt spoke in opposition and asked that all residents get a choice on the install.

Ms. Reynolds asked for Council to inquire as to the cost of the smart meters, and if the residents have a choice to accept them.

Presentation

Lansing Board of Water and Light; Smart Meters

Council Member Wood asked Mr. Peffley and Ms. Rzepecki to address the concerns stated thus far by the public. Ms. Rzepecki acknowledged the questions and began the presentation. Highlighted was that the current meters do not notify BWL where there is an outage, and the new meters will send a signal to BWL where this power outage at the residency and when it has been restored. The Smart Meters will also allow residents to monitor their usage. Council Member Wood asked if the decision to install the meters is a decision by the BWL and their Board of Commissioners or the Council can choose. Mr. Peffley confirmed it is a decision by BWL and their Board, and was approved for a 5 year project. Years 1-2 addressed the technology with the first installs in October. The project has been approved in the BWL capital project and is on track. Ms. Rzepecki then presented a video that is currently on their website; www.lbwl.com./bsmart and something they will use when presenting to any groups or neighborhoods that are interested.

Council Member Houghton stepped away at 5:43 p.m. during the presentation and returned at 5:44 p.m.

Ms. Rezpecki began the PowerPoint presentation which noted the BWL will replace 97,000 electric meters and 67,000 water meters with the new Smart Meters. These new meters they believe will allow them to partner with the residents on monitoring their usage and how it affects their bill. A goal of installing the meters is to eliminate estimated usage, and provide an accurate actual reading. Ms. Rezpecki noted that in relation to the RF emissions of the meter compared to a cell phone and baby monitor it is much lower, and is placed outside as compared to other two which are inside the homes. A PILOT program was performed in East Lansing, and with the rapid turnover there with students, it has been successful. Regarding the question on a rate increase, Ms. Rezpecki noted it might be seen, however that could be because the current analog meter was running slow and now the Smart Meters will be reading accurate. This could occur with a small number of meters the BWL representatives confirmed. Regarding the privacy and security, they also confirmed the meters are held to the same standards as the Department of Defense on privacy. Ms. Rezpecki also added that the meters do not transmit personal information, but only usage.

The Committee reviewed handouts that the BWL will be offering to communities, neighborhood groups and anyone who is seeking information before the installation at their residence. The brochure presented at this meeting, she noted, would also be in the first mailing to residents 1-2 months prior to install. She again referred everyone and the public to their website, www.lbwl.com/bsmart. A second communication will be sent 3-4 weeks before which is a post card format.

The Committee then were referenced to a map which outlined which areas in Lansing would be scheduled for the install in 2017/2018; 2018/2019 and 2019/2020, noting that is subject to change depending on how smooth the installs go. There will be three types of meters; water, water/electric and electric. A water meter install will require an appointment because the installers need to access the house.

Ms. Rezpecki again acknowledged the Council for allowing them to present and wanted to make them aware of all the materials available for them to forward information to the residents of Lansing before the project begins.

Mr. Peffley spoke on the change in staffing, with the 18 meter readers that will no longer have those jobs, but will have jobs with BWL in other areas. With the current meters there are an average of 100 turn-offs a day due to non-payment, and now with the smart meters the turn-off and turn-on when payments is made can all be done remotely. Mr. Peffley then answered an earlier question from the public, stating that in the first year if a resident notifies BWL that they are not ready or want the smart meter, they will skip them and come back at a later date.

Council Member Yorko asked if the Smart meters will address peak demand issues and future energy planning. Mr. Peffley stated that currently the Michigan laws stated it will be 1% efficiency a year, but by 2021 the State will no longer require it. BWL does plan to continue it. They are also encouraged with the time of day reduced rate to help the user monitor their usage portfolio.

Council Member Dunbar asked about the vendor and their security. Ms. Christenson informed the Council the vendor is LITOS, who is also used by the Defense Department. They are off site, highly encrypted and respond to data flow with a mesh network where the information is encrypted and authenticated multiple times. It is a 4G network where the meters speak to the collector not a cell tower, and then re-encrypted up to 4 times a day. The meters are being installed with chips so if the owner in the future wants to monitor and regulate it with the smart phone it is already set up, but currently they are offering time-of-use rate discounts. There has been a PILOT program in East Lansing for 3 years and they have eliminated all estimating.

Council Member Brown Clarke asked if there was a parallel program for the businesses. Mr. Peffley confirmed they will be part of the roll out, and Ms. Rezpecki added they have been working with the Chamber utilizing their publications and communication channels.

Council Member Hussain asked if BWL looked into the issues that the 23 cities that stated they banned Smart meters used for their concerns. Mr. Peffley acknowledged that BWL believes the Smart meters address the biggest concern with is outages and the resident's urgency to have power restored. Ms. Christenson added that 5 years ago BWL did engage with a consulting firm to help them evaluate and prepare. This study found that any fires with the meters were due to poor installation, and BWL has spent the funds to have all their meters tested with UL ratings.

Council Member Wood voiced a concern with hacking into the meters, asking if they had analyzed it. Ms. Christenson assured the Council that the reason they went with the vendor they did was because they have the connection to Department of Defense and the rate of hacking meters is low. Council Member Wood then asked about energizing the meters and any risk to the workers. Ms. Christenson assured them that with the Smart meters they provide data on their status, and the signal will tell them all the information. Council Member Wood asked if the owner is going to be required to trim the landscaping near the meter as the door hanger currently states. Mr. Peffley stated that BWL currently already requires that, so they will continue with their existing policy.

There was a brief discussion on the on-line bill payment plan, in which Council Member Wood stated she is charged a fee when paying from her checking. Council Member Dunbar stated she was able to eliminate that by signing up for e-statements eliminating the paper statement. Mr. Peffley stated he would look into the concerns.

Discussion/Action

RESOLUTION –Tri County Office on Aging (TCOA) FY2018 Annual Implementation Plan

Ms. Long and Ms. Aikman presented the FY2018 Implementation plan, which was a continuation of the multi-year plan for FY2016-2019. Ms. Aikman briefly noted for the Council that TCOA is one of 16 area agencies in the State, and they focus on Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties to promote and preserve the dignity of the aging population. Ms. Long highlighted the plan, noting the goals from the multi-year plan will continue in to 2018 with no changes or additions. In 2018 they will offer programs that explore and address elder abuse, address support for family and care givers, and transitions. Ms. Long noted that Sparrow Hospital did not renew their contract for the transitional program so they are currently holding discussions with McLaren. This program helps transition patients from the hospital stay to recovering back at their home. At the end of the contract with Sparrow they were servicing several 1,000 patients.

Council Member Wood asked what percentage of their budget dealt with Federal dollars and if they were making choices differently because of what is occurring in Washington. Ms. Long assured the Council that this plan is funded by the Older American Act.

The Council spoke briefly on TCOA need for volunteers, and they were referred to the website where there is a downloadable application. Council Member Washington informed Ms. Aikman she had reached out to volunteer for Meals on Wheels and had never heard back. Ms. Aikman apologized and stated she would look into that ASAP, and also offered 517-887-1440 for people to call directly to sign up for the program as a volunteer.

MOTION BY COUNCIL MEMBER BROWN CLARKE TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE TCOA FY2018 ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN. MOTION CARRIED 7-0.

Council Member Wood asked Ms. Aikman to keep the Council updated on their discussions and any action with McLaren.

Adjourn

Adjourned at 6:32 p.m.
Respectfully Submitted by,
Sherrie Boak, Recording Secretary
Lansing City Council
Approved by Committee on August 14, 2017