

Minutes for December 28, 2016 Emergency City Council Meeting

The Emergency Meeting of the Eureka City Council was called to order on December 28, 2016, at 9:35 a.m. by Mayor Miller at the Fire Hall with the following present: Mayor Miller, Duquette, Eberhart, Flemmer, Heilman, Weisbeck, and Finance Officer Frerk. Absent Schwingler. Ten other citizens present when meeting was called to order.

Motion by Duquette, seconded by Flemmer to declare the power outage since Sunday evening, December 25, in the City of Eureka an emergency. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Sheriff Dave Ackerman was present to discuss present concerns, challenges, and additional resources needed if power outage continues. Sheriff Ackerman informed the Council that the McPherson County Commissioners will be meeting this afternoon to also declare an emergency. With this, hoping to receive assistance from FEMA and the federal government. Public Works Director, Kyle Hemeyer, put another dumpster at the Nursing Home. Sheriff Ackerman recommended that the County run the sand truck by the hospital, nursing home, and other main streets. Kyle Hemeyer reported that water is working and the generator is working to monitor the level. He has been working on filling generators at the wells and lift stations. They had filled gas back in November so should have plenty. Kyle reported that the water levels haven't dropped below 20. The generator for the City building is not working. Weisbeck reported working on locating parts for it. Sheriff Ackerman gave an update on the shelters. The Nursing Home is currently full with 36 additional people. The Hospital currently has an additional 26 people, but could accept more. He discussed that another shelter could be opened this afternoon if needed at Northwest GF Mutual. Their generator is working, but would need cots and supplies, etc. Ackerman has had no direct contact with FEM or MDU, but has talked with people who work for them and it sounds like the infrastructure is set, but they need to get switches going. He is still preparing for the next day or two without power. There are options for getting shelters or having them delivered. Costs would include transportation, etc. Arlo Bertsch was present and noted that in 2010 when an emergency was declared the Red Cross was contacted and brought a shelter. It may be worth contacting them again.

Motion by Flemmer, seconded by Weisbeck to authorize McPherson County Sheriff, Dave Ackerman, to make decisions on setting up another shelter and other emergency needs. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Sheriff Ackerman stated there will also be a lot of aftermath even once the power comes back on.

Don Fischer was present and stated the number one concern are the citizens of Eureka. As the owner of a plumbing business in town, they are seeing homes about 35-38 degrees already. These people have left their homes and now what to do. He is concerned since they did not shut off their water before they left that houses could be ruined. He recommends in these homes that the water meters be shut off, faucets run, and toilets flushed. It was discussed how we communicate this to the citizens of Eureka, especially those who have already left their homes for the shelters.

Concerns about the apartment buildings in town were also discussed. Arlo Bertsch informed the Council that the HRC Apartments were winterized.

It was recommended that the shelters be contacted to get the names of those who are there and ask them if they shut off their water and if not, find out where they live or if they are in an apartment building.

It has been reported that some of the local citizens are leaving town to go to Bowdle or Aberdeen.

Eberhart plans to go talk with the people who are at the Hospital and Mayor Miller plans to go to the Nursing Home. They will find out if the homeowners shut off their water and if not, get their permission to go into their home to turn it off. Once they know the names Don Fischer can be contacted and he will give advice on what to do to turn the water off.

Sheriff Ackerman stated he will talk to the Commissioners, but the City's infrastructure takes precedence. Other options could be to contact the Leola Fire Department or the Eureka Ambulance crew if additional help is needed.

Via phone, Sean with MDU was present. Weisbeck informed him that the City Council has declared an emergency. Sean expects that as long as all the primaries are up in the City that we should have power by this afternoon. Terry Vinger was present and stated that he has drove all around town and believes all primaries are up. Sean stated they are working in our area today and they are trying to do the best they can.

After discussion with Sean with MDU, the Council decided to still stick with the plan to visit with the individuals at the shelters since strong winds are forecasted, as well as, another storm possibly this weekend with cold temperatures. Mayor Miller and Mark Opp will go to the Nursing Home and talk with the people who have taken shelter there. Assistance will be offered, but a waiver will be signed by them that they have given permission to go into their home and that the City is not responsible for damage to the homes.

The Council thanked the Fire Department for all that they have done.

It was recommended that the City contact the Governor's Office and let them know the Council declared an emergency.

The City Council Special Meeting will be postponed until tomorrow evening, Thursday, December 29, pending if power is back on.

Motion by Eberhart, seconded by Heilman to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 a.m. All voted aye. Motion carried.

Mayor Lloyd Miller

Nicole Frerk, Finance Officer