

North Powder Council Meeting
Special Session
Minutes
August 18, 2026
City Hall (340 E Street)
6PM

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: Mayor Alan Brown called meeting to order at 6:00 pm. Pledge of allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Don McClure, Becky Sturm, Midge Clause, Dave Hoene, Josh Guthrie, and Alan Brown. Lindsay Thompson came 20 minutes late.

Amend/Accept Agenda:

Motion to accept agenda: Midge, 2nd: Don Hoene Vote: unanimously (Lindsey absent)

Public Works Report:

Becky explained that the handheld device will not communicate the reads to the billing system. We did get the DMR and went to load the reads and nothing. Don McClure was on the phone with them trying to get this to work. Finally, he got a hold of someone that said they would download the software into the laptop for one month at no charge to get our billing done for the month. They sent us a bid for the software and stated that they could do the training online. That bid is \$1,547.00. I am asking the council to let us get this new software so we can get these bills out on time for these citizens. The inconsistency of the bills has been horrible the last 6 – 7 months. I would like them to go out by the 1st of every month. I think we owe everyone that. If it is not approved the wages that it will take to read the meters per month would be \$704. That is just straight wages. There are no benefits, no payroll taxes, none of the other stuff we pay on top of wages. So, in 2 months you will spend \$1,480 for the meters to be read.

Joyce Lawyer asked why we don't go to a flat rate instead.

Becky stated that if we go to a flat rate we will have to compensate for the overage charge that people use when they water their yard, otherwise the city will be losing money.

Joyce stated that she spoke with Jason, and he told her that the overage is 10% of the revenue.

Alan stated that the overage charges usually start in May.

Joyce stated that we are paying straight time anyway, so we just don't read anymore until we figure out if we can get a grant for the program.

Alan asked if she is asking us to do is kick the can down the road? I think that for the last 25 years this has put us in this situation we are in.

Joyce stated that we had a new water system, we had a new storm system. We did a lot of work on our streets so now we have assets. Plus, I've been on council, and if we hadn't saved money, we wouldn't be able to buy this building.

Alan asked, what do you guys think? You are talking about \$2871 a month if we flat rat. That is average \$2,871 a month. If we eliminate those overages, then we lose that per month for May, June, July and August. That's \$8,000 plus dollars a year.

Don McClure stated that in the last 6 years he doesn't recall fixing or repairing anything that has to do with the meters or reader equipment. The last time he spoke to the professional person, they told me that they had not received a phone call or an update or a problem or a request for 15 years.

Alan stated that things were never communicated to anyone, not to Don and not to any council members. We tried to call for support and was told the system was so outdated, there wasn't even an owner's manual for it. Digging up the past doesn't fix anything. Let's move forward. What do we want to do with this?

Don stated that we have taken our old laptop from Public Works, we got it open and downloaded the new system for one month. It worked. The company eliminated the person to come and train us for \$6,000 and they dropped the price of the new program. To upgrade the system and to make it work with her system is \$1,500. I cruised around and it ran like a charm. She was finally able to get these bills out.

Josh Guthrie stated speaking of which, I delivered these bills, a lot of them today, and not one of them was the same. I am really concerned about that, and I am concerned about the billing cycle. They're not getting their bill till tomorrow in the mail, and it's due on the 22nd. What's that three days from tomorrow?

Becky stated that the due date is 10 days after the billing is printed.

Alan asked if he was reading them all?

Don asked are those other people's bills? You are reading other people's bills?

Josh stated I have to look at the addresses, and the address is right there, right next to the billing.

Becky stated that if I had a system that would download the meters, it would save me three days of hand-keying everybody's read into the computer.

Josh stated that his concern is that it sets a precedent if you're charged a \$5 late fee and now it's \$10.

Becky stated that she has not approached that problem yet because we are not charging late fees at this time. There have not been any late fee charges since I started in November.

Alan stated to stay on track. Bottom line is we are either going to fix the system, or we are going to pay people to manually read the meters.

Becky stated that the license is for the software and will most likely be charged once a year to keep up with the updates.

Lindsey asked if there was an annual fee for the last system that we used for 15 years.

Becky stated that there was no annual fee that she is aware of. That is part of the problem. They didn't have an upgrade on those systems annually.

Linsey stated that the decision should be postponed seeing what the annual fee for this software will cost and decide then.

Becky stated that if we decide that we want to do that and we want to get the bills out before the 10th of the month, then we pay \$770 before the next council meeting for them to manually read the meters.

Mike Wisdom stated just a couple historical points that come to mind. In the past the only time we would have had a discussion like this, this time of year is to let people know that the odd addresses are going to water on the odd days and the even address on the even day. The other thing was I don't know how we managed to function as a city for decades, reading meters manually. I doubt very much that there's 10% more meters to read today than there were 40 years ago.

Motion to postpone till next council meeting: Lindsey, 2nd Josh Vote 2 yes, 3 noes

Motion to move forward with the system: Dave Hoene, 2nd Midge Clause Vote 3 yes, 2 noes

Council Comments:

Meeting adjourned: 6:27 pm