

City contracts to purchase wind farm's generation

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ease the burden on the system and be more cost effective than having to generate power with the city's diesel engines. The average cost to generate power last year was \$68 per megawatt, and with the raise in fuel prices he expects that to be as high as \$85 per megawatt this summer.

"I think we are in for some high fuel adjustments this summer," Blake said. "Buying the wind power is a good way to diversify, and is not the total answer. The best thing for us is to keep the diesel engines as quiet as possible."

"I agree it is a great opportunity," Billinger said.

Commissioner Dave Daniels said he was a bit confused about how the

city was going to purchase the wind power if they did not need it at off-peak times when the load drops down to below the four megawatts.

Justus said the city power plant will have a control panel which will allow them to turn off the towers of the wind farm individually to cut the output to what is needed or have them all turned off.

He said the wind generators they are planning to use are rated to produce 600 kilowatts per hour and the maximum output of the five would be three megawatts per hour. However, Justus said the research they have done based on 20 years of wind records for the area leads him to believe the average will be about one-third of that. He said the towers will be 167 feet high and the

blades will be 127 feet in diameter with three blades to each tower.

"This is a good wind area," Justus said, "It is not a great wind area, but there is a good constant wind of about 15 mph that will produce the power level we expect."

"I don't think it matters how the power is produced we are going to need it," Mull said. "The cost is not going to go down, and we are going to use everything they can produce."

Commissioner John Garcia said he thought it was a good opportunity, and asked Perry Warren, city attorney if he had reviewed the sales contract.

Warren said he had reviewed the contract, and felt it had all the necessary wording to protect the city.

"I am not an expert on power con-

tracts," Warren said, "I think it is a good contract, but when it comes to the power details I am a bit out of my depth."

Commissioner Dean Blume, who seconded the motion to approve the sales agreement, said he did not see any risk for the city. "There is no risk to the city," Blume said, "We are going to resell the power to our customers. In the long run the cost could be lower for us and a little cheaper for our customers."

Daniels said he agreed it was a good deal for the city because the cost of buying the wind power would be about \$200,000 less per year than having to generate the power with the city's diesel engines. He said the wind power would cost \$360,000 a year for five years while

the cost of generating that same amount would cost the city \$586,000 to use the diesel engines.

Once the sales contract was approved Justus said he would be able to proceed with the plans for the plant and to get the generators on order from Europe where they are built.

The second proposal is an option to allow the city to purchase the wind farm for \$1.25 million after it is in operation for 10 years. Saying there were many questions and details to be worked out on the purchase option the commission decided to table that until a later date.

Justus said he did not have a problem with the city waiting on the purchase option and said the city could exercise the option at any time.

"I will guarantee you that even if it is not signed you will have the first option to purchase the wind farm," Justus said.

He said the plan is to begin building the foundations in May, and to be in operation by September. He said this wind farm is one of several they are doing in the area including a 25 megawatt farm down by Cheyenne Wells, Colo. and another about 10 miles southwest of Goodland.

Billinger asked if Justus would consider placing the wind farm on a different site if the city could purchase the land.

Justus said he would consider anything the city might suggest, but said that if the new location make it more costly to connect to the city power line that might be a problem.

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Janet R. Rumpel
Sherman County Election Officer

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