Represents third hike in three years.

No nays in Gothenburg City Council chambers last week means a 6.5% rise in electrical rates.

Four councilmen, including Jim Aden before he resigned, approved the increase during the first meeting—Jan. 4—of the new year.

City officials have said the rate hike is necessary because of a 10.5% increase in Nebraska Public Power District rates.

NPPD supplies the city with electricity.

The rate increase will be in bills customers receive in February.

Council members raised electrical rates 6.5% in January of 2010 and 5% in 2009 because of rising wholesale power costs.

Costs associated with the reduction of greenhouse gases in NPPD's coal-fired plants translates into higher wholesale prices, officials have said.

Reducing greenhouse gases is required under the American Clean Energy and Security Act.

In other action, the city agreed to pay Myers Construction Inc. of Broken Bow $3,000 to de-water and repair a city lift station.

The station, that carries wastewater from businesses along Platte River Drive and I-80 Pit Stop and Randazzle Cafe, was damaged last spring by heavy rain.

Officials said the rain caused groundwater to rise and blow out a plastic sump pump barrel from one of two pits in the station.

Despite the earlier drilling of four wells to de-water the pits at a cost of about $17,000, the groundwater has dropped slowly.

At the Jan. 4 meeting, Clymer said Myers Construction had installed four new sandpoint wells that had dewatered the affected area substantially.

Dwane Duckor of Myers Construction said Thursday the sandpoint wells were 20-feet deep and pumped groundwater vertically instead of horizontally as was done in the past.

Sandpoint wells are used in areas where the ground is sandy and the water table is high.

The sandpoint wells are connected to a large pump where the concrete was broken in the damaged pit.

Officials said the construction firm encased and capped the wells in concrete before last weekend’s snowstorm in case they are needed again.

On another matter, the council accepted the resignation of east-ward council member Jim Aden who has moved into a home outside city limits.

Aden said he liked working with the mayor and council.

“I enjoyed the ability of everyone to come to the middle,” he said. “We focused on the job and what the people of the city wanted us to do.”

Mayor Joyce Hudson said Aden had done an excellent job on the council, noting that he always had the betterment of the city in mind when making decisions.

“He’s a prime example of a good politician,” she said.

The council then approved Hudson’s recommendation of retired Gothenburg school superintendent Gary Fritch to fill out Aden’s term which ends in 2012.

In other business, the council:

- approved a draw down and payment from $9,333 in Community Development Block Grant funds to contractors involved in

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