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Authority OKs switch in utility providers

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MILLVILLE — The Millville Housing Authority took a calculated risk in an attempt to save on electricity costs.

The authority's Board of Commissioners voted Tuesday to switch its utility provider from Atlantic City Electric to Viridian. The move posed an interesting decision among the commissioners regarding if they wanted to be locked in on their costs over a long period of time.

The authority received five bids for its electrical supplier that offered contracts between one and four years, according to MHA Executive Director Paul Dice. But Viridian offered its services on a monthly contract, he said.

The commissioners decided to give Viridian a six-month tryout and determine if they could get a lower price down the road, Dice said.

"Do we lock in and have a guaranteed cost or do we move towards a bit of a risk and see if we can get a lower price in the future?" he said. "It's a bit of a risk. But we're willing to take that risk."

Viridian's price is about 9 cents per kilowatt hour and Atlantic City Electric's is between 10.7 cents and 11.2 cents per kilowatt hour, Dice said. The authority uses about 2,278,000 kilowatt hours a year. So if the authority saves just one cent per kilowatt hour, the annual savings would be about \$23,000.

■ Also at the meeting, the board mourned the passing of one of its own.

Commissioner Pam Kipers died Feb. 16 from pancreatic cancer, according to her obituary.

The board opened Tuesday's meeting with remarks and a moment of silence in her honor.

"Saying she will be missed is an understatement," said chairman Larry Miller. "I think we can all appreciate what she meant to us, to public housing, the public in general, and her friends and neighbors."

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The 69-year-old taught English as a Second Language at Landis Middle School in Vineland for 30 years. She was a member of the authority's board for 14 years and a former chairwoman.

The commissioners re-

membered Kipers for her commitment to the MHA and the community.

"She always reached out to people," said Commissioner Paula Ring. "That's what we will remember. Her dedication to helping people."

Donations in Kipper's memory may be sent to the March of Dimes Foundation, P.O. Box 9500, Trenton, NJ 08650-1500.