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City Hall

## **Stadtwerke Rhede and Bocholt examine more intensive cooperation**

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Energy security, climate protection and digitalisation are essential topics of the present. The challenges and complexities in all these areas are constantly increasing. In the area of energy security, this has recently become very clear once again through Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The topic of the energy turnaround for real climate protection can only succeed if it is implemented in the municipalities by the municipal utilities.

In order to effectively meet the challenges of our time, strong structures and good partnerships are essential. This also applies to local public utilities within the municipal services of general interest. For this reason, Stadtwerke Bocholt GmbH and Stadtwerke Rhede GmbH intend to explore more intensive cooperation in the coming months.

The competitive environment for municipal utilities has become much tougher in recent years due to the issues mentioned above and it is becoming apparent that this development will continue in the coming years. "For this reason, Stadtwerke Bocholt contacted Stadtwerke Rhede a few weeks ago to discuss more intensive and lasting cooperation between the neighbouring companies," emphasises Thomas Kerkhoff, Mayor of the City of Bocholt and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Stadtwerke Bocholt.

Stadtwerke Rhede was open to this request. "For Stadtwerke Rhede, the retirement of our managing director in the coming year means that the company will have to make significant changes to its course. We want to actively address these in the interests of the company," said Simon Böing, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Stadtwerke Rhede.

First of all, a feasibility study is to be carried out between the two companies to work out in which areas and which structures cooperation is possible and makes sense. "It helps us that both companies have been accompanied by the same auditor for years and that he has deep insights into both companies," says Jürgen Bernsmann, Mayor of Rhede.

This week, the employees of both companies, the two supervisory boards of the companies and the city councils of both cities were informed in order to involve them in the process as well.

The process is deliberately open-ended. Whether a pure strategic cooperation or a joint company makes sense at the end of the examination is not fixed. In addition, the partners emphasise that the idea did not arise from an economic necessity of one of the two companies, but from the idea of generating new power and strength for the upcoming challenges in the market environment of the municipal utility landscape through a more strategic and closer cooperation.

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Thomas Kerkhoff - Mayor of the City of Bocholt / Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Stadtwerke Bocholt GmbH

Jürgen Bernsmann - Mayor of Rhede

Simon Böing - Chairman of the Supervisory Board Stadtwerke Rhede GmbH