

DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

October 12, 2011

Members Present: Councilor Patrick Boyle, John Bruggeman, Councilor Jay Fosle, Councilor Daniel Hartman, Patrick Huston, Linda Sellner

Staff Present: Bob Asleson, Leanna Gilbert, Howard Jacobson, Eric Shaffer, Glenn Strid

Members Absent: Jennifer Julsrud

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:20 p.m. by Vice President Huston.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Commissioner Hartman abstained as he was not present at the last meeting.

Old business:

Third party damages ordinance

City staff provided a draft ordinance that included the changes that were discussed at the previous meeting as well as some other minor changes. Staff may make more changes, but they will provide a final version to commissioners via e-mail. Commissioners will review the ordinance and be prepared to vote on whether to recommend it to council at the next meeting.

Community education phase

Staff is working to schedule the community meetings. The City's Public Information Coordinator will put out a press release to advertize the meetings. Commissioner Boyle will contact the editorial board of the Duluth News Tribune. The meeting schedule will be e-mailed to commissioners so they can decide who will attend each meeting. Staff provided a pie chart showing all of the water fund expenses as requested at the last meeting. This will be available for the community meetings.

New business:

Updates from staff

The painting of the water tower is not done. If the good weather holds for another week or two, it will be finished this year.

There have been a lot of water main breaks lately. There were about five on Glenwood and some out west as well.

Staff is having a cost of service study done for natural gas. Studies are done every three to five years to make sure the rates are in line with where they should be. They factor in any significant changes in operating expenses and capital projects. The last study was done in 2006.

The permanent fence is currently being installed around the West Duluth Reservoir.

Commissioner Boyle inquired as to whether appeals for lateral lines should go to this commission instead of to the council. Staff explained that if the proper appeals process is followed, then they would go through the commission.

Commissioners had questions about the budget and finances that Public Works & Utilities staff could not answer, so they requested that the City's Chief Financial Officer, Adele Hartwick, be invited to the next meeting. Commissioner Fosle inquired as to how much power the commission has over the department budget. Staff explained that they are to develop and make recommendations to the council for the utility budgets and long-term capital development. They also

It is the mission of the Duluth Public Utilities Commission to ensure safe, reliable, efficient utilities services at reasonable rates.

have the power to change rates, which directly affects the budget. Commissioner Hartman suggested that the commission review the budget before it is submitted next year.

Commissioner Hartman requested that the commission meet in Council Chambers for every meeting. The commission may need to change the schedule in order to do this. Staff will look into available meeting times.

Upcoming Council actions

Staff is still working on the amendments to the I/I guidelines. This should go to council in October or November.

Agenda for next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 9, 2011, at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The commission will review and vote on the third party damages ordinance and then discuss finances, election of officers, the regular meeting schedule, and plans and goals for the upcoming months.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

A recording of this meeting is available upon request.