



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Final

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

5:15 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall, 411 West First Street

CALL TO ORDER

President Ryan called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Erin Abramson, Chris Adatte, Andrea Crouse, Councilor Wendy Durrwachter, Councilor Mike Mayou, Carrie Ryan

Members Absent: Councilor Terese Tomanek

Staff Present: Jim Benning, Jean Coleman, Cyndi Falconer, Leanna Gilbert, Chris Ostern, Howard Smith, Kerry Venier

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No comments were made at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC121](#) January 16, 2024 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [01162024 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

The January 16, 2024 meeting minutes were approved by all present.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Water public education

The Commission and staff discussed feedback from the public meetings that were held in January. There was some discussion about water rates for municipalities. The Commission decided to move forward with the 9.25% water rate increases as proposed by City staff. A public hearing will be held in March at the beginning of the regular meeting followed by a vote on a water rate resolution.

NEW BUSINESS

[DPUC122](#) WLSSD year-end adjustment

Indexes:

Attachments: [2023 Year end adjustment Duluth](#)

City staff received the year-end adjustment memo from WLSSD. The total adjustment for Duluth was about \$468,000 mainly due to daily flow levels. This adjustment resulted in a 8.75% increase to the sanitary sewer rates. There was some discussion about the cause of the increased flow rates. Commissioner Abramson asked about the City's annual inflow and infiltration (I/I) report to WLSSD. Commissioner Mayou asked about monthly flow comparisons between years. Howard Smith can provide those. There was some discussion about the City's efforts and public education to reduce I/I.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Jim Benning mentioned that Commissioner Crouse's term expires on March 31. She should let City staff know whether she wants to remain on the Commission soon. Jim reported on the EPA inspection results progress. He also reported that the City is waiting for clarification on the taxability of lead service replacements before moving forward with more projects. Cyndi Falconer reported on the pitcher program, the water meter replacement project, the lead service inventory, and the PFA application for upcoming projects.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

There were no further questions or comments at this time.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

No upcoming actions were mentioned.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting was originally scheduled for Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers; however, the Commission decided to move the meeting to March 26 in order to have a quorum. The Commission will hold a public hearing regarding proposed water rate increases and then vote on a water rate resolution. Since the March meeting date will be delayed a week, the proposed effective date of April 1 may need to be changed. The presentation from the Citizens Climate Lobby that was scheduled for March may be postponed until April.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No absences were mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.