

DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2014

Members Present: Councilor Zack Filipovich, Councilor Sharla Gardner, Rob Prusak, Jim Ramnes, Linda Sellner, Jason Thorsell; Councilor Jennifer Julsrud arrived at 5:19 p.m.

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Jodi Amundson, Bob Asleson, Jim Benning, Leanna Gilbert, Howard Jacobson, Eric Shaffer, Glenn Strid

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:18 p.m. by President Prusak.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Old business:

Review of public notification procedure

Jim Benning provided a revised public notification procedure for review. Vice President Ramnes motioned to adopt the procedure as a policy. After some discussion, the majority voted in favor of the motion.

New business:

Sprinkling credit analysis

Jim Benning gave an overview of the sprinkling credit. Commissioners and staff reviewed the presentation provided by Jodi Amundson and discussed various options and concerns. Jodi Amundson will get more detailed numbers for the next meeting.

Updates from staff

There will be a sanitary sewer rate decrease for 2014 effective March 1st. The decrease is due to WLSSD treatment cost adjustments. Glenn Strid provided a handout detailing the change by rate class. Commissioners were in favor of putting out a press release regarding this decrease.

There were over 100 frozen water services in the last two weeks. There is a “bleeder list” of those properties with services that have frozen in the past that are instructed to run water constantly throughout the winter. These 100 services were not already on the bleeder list. They are mostly services that run underneath streets and are not insulated by snow. If everyone in the City ran water constantly, it would result in over 10 million gallons per day in volume and over \$100,000 per day in costs.

Commissioner Julsrud asked for an update on combined private lines. Eric Shaffer reported on common water and sewer lines at various locations. Commissioners and staff discussed options for resolving this issue.

Jim Benning reported that Chris Kleist secured a \$3.7 million grant for stream restoration after the flood. He also secured another grant of about \$1.8 million.

Upcoming Council actions

Jim Benning mentioned the purchase of a hydro-excavator that will be on the upcoming agenda.

Commissioner questions or comments

Commissioner Julsrud is going to Washington, D.C. to request Great Lakes funding.

Commissioner Filipovich will not be able to attend the March meeting.

Jim Benning mentioned the need to find a replacement for Commissioner Gardner in April.

Commissioner Gardner said she would try to recruit someone.

Preview of upcoming business

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2014, at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. A public hearing regarding a two-tier rate for natural gas will be held. The Commission will then vote on the two-tier rate resolution. They will also continue to discuss the sprinkling credit. Glenn Strid will give an update on the current state of the utilities as soon as 2013 year end data is available. Capital improvement plans for three of the utilities should be ready in the fall.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.