

**DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 17, 2015**

**Members Present:** Councilor Zack Filipovich, Councilor Jennifer Julsrud, Rob Prusak, Jim Ramnes, Linda Sellner, Councilor Joel Sipress, Jason Thorsell

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

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:15 p.m. by President Prusak.

**Approval of previous meeting minutes**

**New business:**

**15PUC-001 - RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING THE CUSTOMER CHARGE AND USER CHARGES FOR THE CITY'S WASTEWATER FACILITIES EFFECTIVE WITH METER READINGS AFTER MAY 1, 2015; SUPERSEDING ALL PRIOR INCONSISTENT OR CONFLICTING RATES. - for discussion only**

Jim Benning explained that the purpose of this resolution is to delete rate class VI which is no longer in use and to adjust rate class IX to 60% of the current residential rate. Class IX affects two customers, DSD1 and the Hibbard steam plant, and they are aware of the proposed change. Commissioners and staff discussed various aspects of this rate change.

**15PUC-002 - RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING FEES FOR VARIOUS UTILITY-RELATED SERVICES. - for discussion only**

Jim Benning stated that the current fees listed in this resolution were set by City Council. He recommends affirming these fees as recorded. Commissioner Julsrud suggested the Commission analyze the fees. Commissioner Sipress gave some additional background on why these fees were not set by the Commission in previous years and mentioned that some had increased significantly over the last few years. Liz Bieter explained that the fees are set where they are mainly for cost recovery, as the goal is to be as close to breakeven as possible. Liz Bieter and Jim Benning answered questions and received comments from commissioners. Jim Benning will provide fee comparison information prior to the March meeting as requested by Commissioner Sipress.

**Establish public hearing dates for rate changes**

A public hearing regarding the above-mentioned resolutions will be held at the next regular meeting, which is scheduled for March 17, 2015 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Jim Benning will contact the two sanitary sewer customers and notify them of the hearing.

**5-year natural gas capital plan**

Eric Shaffer gave a brief overview of the 5-year natural gas capital plan and answered questions from commissioners. Staff will prepare a resolution to adopt this capital plan for the next regular meeting.

**Updates from staff**

Jim Benning stated that the City has requested final termination of the consent decree. Total costs for the City were approximately \$101M. The Mayor's Office is preparing a narrative which will be available to the DPUC in the next few months. President Prusak suggested including WLSSD costs in the narrative as well.

**Upcoming Council actions**

Jim Benning stated that the Storage King stormwater appeal will be on the agenda again. Commissioner Julsrud mentioned that City Council is working to update Chapter 43 to include the current definition of impervious surface, which is stated in Chapter 50 of the code.

**Commissioner questions or comments**

Commissioner Sipress requested information on energy efficiency programs available through Comfort Systems. Commissioner Julsrud mentioned that she has been working with Liz Bieter on reviewing the energy efficiency programs.

President Prusak stated that he is looking forward to hearing updates on the natural gas capital projects.

Commissioner Julsrud invited commissioners to attend a sustainable energy meeting scheduled for Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m. at The Inn on Lake Superior.

**Preview of upcoming business**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2015, at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. There will be a public hearing regarding two rate resolutions. There will also be a resolution to adopt the 5-year natural gas capital plan. Jim Benning will send out the fee comparison spreadsheet and also energy efficiency program information. Commissioner Julsrud mentioned that commissioners are welcome to attend the weekly discussions on how to incentivize energy efficiency for the community.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.