



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Final

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

5:15 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall, 411 West First Street

NOTICE: The Duluth Public Utilities Commission will hold the January 18, 2022 meeting by other electronic means pursuant to Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some members of the Commission will be participating through video conference. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public comment will not be taken in person. However, members of the public can monitor the meeting and provide public comment on agenda items through WebEx Events. Visit <https://duluthmn.gov/live-meeting> to access the meeting. The public is also encouraged to submit written comment to gguerrero@duluthmn.gov prior to the meeting. Please include "January 2022 DPUC Agenda" in the subject line, and include your name and address and the agenda item you are speaking to. The agenda can be found online at <https://duluthmn.gov/boards-commissions/duluth-public-utilities-commission/>. Please note that all public comment is considered Public Data.

CALL TO ORDER

President Ryan called the meeting to order at 5:22 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Chris Adatte, Andrea Crouse, Steve Lipinski, Councilor Derek Medved, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Bob Asleson, Kim Ellsworth, Leanna Gilbert, Greg Guerrero, Chris Ostern, Eric Shaffer, Kerry Venier

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC070](#) November 16, 2021 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [11162021 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

Commissioner Crouse motioned to approve the minutes, and the motion was approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

[DPUC071](#) Draft WLSSD adjustment revision resolution

Indexes:Attachments: [22PUC-001 WLSSD adjustment revision](#)

Chris Ostern reported that we seem to be losing a little bit of the WLSSD pass-through money. We would like to adjust the WLSSD adjustment calculation to include the budget to budget changes. A public hearing will be scheduled for the next meeting, and then the Commission can vote on the proposed resolution.

Lead service program update

Kim Ellsworth reported that we will soon be rolling out a program to provide pitcher-style water filters to residents with lead services. We are working on updating the lead service inventory and working out details for financial assistance programs for residents. Residents can contact City Engineering by calling 730-5200 if they want to know if they have a lead service. There was some discussion about distribution, replacement, and other aspects of the water filters. Eric Shaffer mentioned the \$200 million in aid coming to Minnesota. They have not announced how to apply for that money, but funds usually go through the Public Facilities Authority. We have already submitted a request for funding for lead services.

Election of officers

Commissioner Tomanek nominated Carrie Ryan for President, and the nomination was seconded by Commissioner Lipinski. Commissioner Tomanek nominated Chris Adatte for Vice President, and the nomination was seconded by Commissioner Medved.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Eric Shaffer reported that staff is busy working on plans sets. Hidden Valley will be advertised for bids in February. We have already ordered the pipe and plastic fittings for that project and for two other projects. We are trying to get more mapping done for lead services. There have been a handful of water main breaks in the last few weeks. The new commissioner replacing Joel Sipress will be Mike Mayou.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Vice President Adatte asked about material prices for RFPs. Eric Shaffer replied that prices are locked in once we get them; however, our specification is based on the MNDOT specification which has built-in multipliers if something is drastically out of sync.

Commissioner Lipinski wanted to discuss the pass-through for MN Power rate increases further. After some discussion, the Commission was not in favor of a pass-through for this. The Commission would like City staff to draft a statement to submit to the MN PUC regarding the impact of the rate increase on the utilities operations budgets. Staff will calculate the impact of the increases when the January bills are available. Staff will also work on the impact to the average household for water and wastewater if there was a pass-through for MN Power rate increases.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

Eric Shaffer mentioned a resolution to purchase pipe and materials.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 15, 2022 at 5:15 p.m. The Commission will hold a public hearing and then consider a WLSSD adjustment resolution. Eric Shaffer mentioned that the ordinance clarifying driveway culvert ownership and maintenance has not gone anywhere yet. Staff will try to get back to that topic.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No absences were mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 p.m.