

DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2016

Members Present: Councilor Zack Filipovich, Jen Julsrud, Jim Lewis, Rob Prusak, Councilor Joel Sipress

Members Absent: Jason Thorsell, Councilor Em Westerlund

Staff Present: Jodi Amundson, Bob Asleson, Liz Bieter, Leanna Gilbert, Howard Jacobson, Eric Shaffer

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

Approval of previous meeting minutes

New business:

16PUC-009 - RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING FEES FOR VARIOUS UTILITY-RELATED SERVICES.

Liz Bieter explained that all of the service related fees were increased by 6%. After some questions and discussion, Commissioner Julsrud motioned to table resolution 16PUC-009 until the calculations for the increases were available, and the motion carried.

Updates from staff

Eric Shaffer reported that Michigan Street is done. We are building a new natural gas regulator by the MN Power building. The 66 psi gas line was extended under the interstate, and this will feed the pipe that is being installed on 4th Street. The new regulator will cut the pressure to 22 psi to feed downtown. On 4th Street, all of the 24" water main is now in. There is still 50 feet of 8" water main left that will hopefully be done next week. The gas line on 4th Street should be done and tested by Monday or Tuesday. They still plan to have curb, gutter, and pavement from 6th to 10th done this year. The Cirrus gas expansion is mostly done. City crews still need to put in a short pipe and a riser. The blanket project should be done next week. Eric also mentioned that the City negotiated a new contract with ME Global. They are our only gas transport customer. Eric will be doing a study on the transport rate and will probably recommend an updated rate.

Upcoming Council actions

The final budget will be voted on in December. There is a resolution for a small assessment agreement for a water main project on the agenda.

Commissioner questions or comments

Commissioner Julsrud asked about the WLSSD 0% change to the total wastewater budget. President Prusak said that even with a 0% change, if the strength changes, the amount the City pays may change. Eric Shaffer stated that charges are also based on the number of gallons.

Commissioner Filipovich commented that a German delegation was here last week to discuss clean energy and energy efficiency. They talked about how much more expensive energy is in Germany, so every individual is more thoughtful about how they use those resources. They mentioned that we have very cheap energy in Minnesota, and we sometimes take it for granted.

President Prusak asked about the water model. Eric Shaffer said that the fire flow tests are all done, and we should have something in the next few weeks.

Commissioner Sipress commented that he made a service call to Comfort Systems last week. Everybody was very helpful and accommodating, and it was a very good experience.

Preview of upcoming business

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2016, at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will continue to consider the proposed 2017 fees resolution and discuss the gas transport rate.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.