



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Final

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, January 16, 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.

WATER RATE INCREASE PUBLIC MEETING

The Commission held a public meeting for proposed water rate increases. There were no comments from the public at this time. The public meeting closed at 6:03 p.m., and the Commission moved on to the regular meeting.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Erin Abramson, Chris Adatte, Andrea Crouse, Councilor Mike Mayou, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Members Absent: none

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

[DPUC120](#) November 28, 2023 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [11282023 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

The November 28, 2023 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Water public education

The Commission held two public meetings today regarding proposed water rate increases. President Ryan and Director Benning will meet with the Chamber of Commerce on January 30. The Commission will discuss feedback from residents and determine what percentage rate increase, if any, they want to move forward

with. There will also be a public hearing prior to any rate increase vote, potentially in March. Residents can also submit comments regarding the proposed water rate increases through the Contact PUC link on the DPUC webpage or leave a voicemail on the DPUC phone line that is listed on the DPUC webpage up until the public hearing date.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of officers

Commissioner Mayou nominated Commissioner Ryan for President. Commissioner Ryan nominated Commissioner Adatte for Vice President. The Commission approved the aforementioned nominations unanimously.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Kerry Venier reported that the 2024 sanitary rate increase actually resulted in a reduction in the rates because of the previous WLSSD adjustment. When the next WLSSD year-end adjustment goes into effect in March, the rates will automatically increase again. Staff answered various questions from commissioners. Cyndi Falconer reported that the new Lead Copper Rule Improvements is out for public comment until February 5. The compliance date is October 16, 2024. There was some discussion about using additives to address lead in water.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Commissioner Abramson asked about refresher trainings on meeting rules. Refresher trainings are not common practice, but Attorney Coleman gave an overview of the open meeting law. There was some discussion about serial meetings. All members of Duluth boards and commissions are given a Board & Commission Handbook when they become members. DPUC members can find this handbook at the beginning of their PUC binders.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

No upcoming actions were mentioned.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will discuss feedback from residents and decide what, if any, water rate increase they want to move forward with. There will probably be a public hearing on water rates and a presentation by the Citizens Climate Lobby in March.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Commissioner Tomanek may not be available for the February meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.