



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Final

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

5:15 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall, 411 West First Street

CALL TO ORDER

President Ryan called the meeting to order at 5:17 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Andrea Crouse, Councilor Wendy Durrwachter, Councilor Mike Mayou, Derek Medved, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: Nick Anderson, Jim Benning, Leanna Gilbert, Chris Ostern, Howie Smith, Kerry Venier

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE SURCHARGE PUBLIC HEARING

Jim Benning gave a presentation about the proposed Water Infrastructure Surcharge.

Kevin Korzenowski, 810 N 8th Ave. E, asked why repairs to the water system were not made consistently and asked about some unrelated stormwater issues.

The following two written comments were also read. Roy Trousdell suggested that it would be better to increase property taxes instead of imposing a surcharge. Simone Giacomelli of Sofidel America Corp. stated that they understand the approach the City is taking and are proud to support this capital improvement project.

The public hearing was closed at 5:38 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Jenna Yeakle, 623 N 39th Ave. W, commented on the MN Power/Allete acquisition and mentioned opportunities to submit comments to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC144](#)

Feb. 18, 2025 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [02182025 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

The Feb 18, 2025 meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Review public comment for Water Infrastructure Surcharge

Commissioner Durrwachter asked about property taxes versus surcharges. Jim Benning replied that the water utility is an enterprise fund, so the money comes only from customer charges not taxes.

Commissioner Mayou stated that he appreciates that City staff had public engagement sessions, that he thinks a consumption-based approach is more equitable than a flat fee, that he hopes to get federal and state support in the future, and that he is very supportive of the proposed surcharge.

[DPUC145](#) 25PUC-001 - RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING WATER
INFRASTRUCTURE SURCHARGE EFFECTIVE AS OF MAY 1, 2025.

Indexes:

Attachments: [25PUC-001 establishing water infrastructure surcharge](#)

Commissioner Mayou motioned to approve resolution 25PUC-001 establishing the water infrastructure surcharge, and the resolution was approved unanimously.

[DPUC146](#) 25PUC-002 - RESOLUTION REDUCING CLEAN WATER SURCHARGE
EFFECTIVE AS OF MAY 1, 2025; SUPERSEDING ALL PRIOR
INCONSISTENT OR CONFLICTING RATES.

Indexes:

Attachments: [25PUC-002 clean water rate to zero](#)

Commissioner Mayou motioned to approve resolution 25PUC-002 reducing the clean water surcharge to \$0.00, and the resolution was approved unanimously.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Howie Smith reported that staff has been busy writing plans for the EPA administrative order. Staff is also busy bidding construction projects. Three of the five large lead service replacement projects have been bid. The 2026 lead service replacement list is in progress. Commissioner Mayou asked about lead line funding. Howie Smith stated that the PFA has money to fund the 2026 programs, but after that it is uncertain. Jim Benning stated that there is money available, but probably not as much after this year. We don't know what the future holds.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

President Ryan asked about the progress on getting a new commissioner. Jim Benning replied that there is a resolution appointing Brad Scott on the Council agenda for Monday.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

Jim Benning mentioned resolutions for lead line replacement projects and for water pitchers and water sampling after lead service replacement. There was some discussion about lead service replacement projects and the pitcher filter program.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. City staff is already working on the 2026 budget. The Commission may meet at a remote location or tour utility facilities for the May meeting.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

President Ryan will not be able to attend the April meeting. No other absences were mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.