



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Draft

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, January 21, 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: Councilor Wendy Durrwachter, Councilor Mike Mayou, Derek Medved, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Members Absent: Andrea Crouse

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

No comments were made at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC139](#) Nov. 19, 2024 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [11192024 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

The Nov. 19, 2024 meeting minutes were approved by all present.

[DPUC141](#) Dec. 17, 2024 DPUC meeting notes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [12172024 DPUC meeting notes draft](#)

The Dec. 17, 2024 meeting notes were approved by all present.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Water Infrastructure Surcharge discussion

Chris Ostern reviewed the proposed water infrastructure surcharge options. After some discussion, President Ryan motioned to use method 3 for the public

education materials, and the motion was approved by all present. The Commission decided to hold educational public meetings on February 18, one in conjunction with the regular meeting and a virtual meeting at noon. A public hearing could be held in March in conjunction with the regular meeting, and then comments could be reviewed. A rate resolution could also be voted on at that meeting. There were some suggestions from commissioners about how best to notify residents of the public meetings. Jim Benning will check on putting a notice in customers' bills. Commissioner Durrwachter suggested an announcement about the public hearing on the Comfort Systems website. Jim Benning will contact the Chamber of Commerce. The municipalities were already notified.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Vice President

Commissioner Durrwachter nominated Commissioner Medved to be Vice President. All present voted to elect Commissioner Medved as Vice President. Commissioner Durrwachter asked if there were any applicants for the vacant position. Staff has not received any new applications, but they will ask about previous applicants.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Jim Benning reported that the EPA administrative order on consent was signed on January 15, so that is the effective date. The City is pursuing state bonding. Jim Benning will be participating in Duluth Days at the Minnesota State Capitol in February. The water plant should be top priority now that the aerial lift bridge is fully funded.

Howie Smith reported that the first 2025 lead service project was bid, and two others are advertised. Another large project will be advertised in two or three weeks. There was some discussion about contractors and doing work in-house. Howie also reported that the Upper Lakeside water main construction should begin soon and be substantially complete in April.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

There were no questions or comments at this time.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

Jim Benning mentioned resolutions for a lead service project, the Woodland Booster Station, and purchase of some gravel, a vactor, and an excavator.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 18, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will hold a public meeting regarding the water infrastructure surcharge in conjunction with the regular meeting. There will also be a virtual public meeting held the same day at noon. City staff will contact the Chamber of Commerce and check on various methods of notification. The Commission could review comments and hold a public hearing at the next meeting and potentially vote on a rate resolution at that

meeting. The Commission could consider a resolution removing the clean water surcharge at the same meeting.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No upcoming absences were mentioned.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:01 p.m.