

DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2018

Members Present: Jennifer Julsrud, Rob Prusak, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Joel Sipress, Councilor Em Westerlund; Councilor Arik Forsman arrived at 5:20 p.m.

Members Absent: Chris McIntosh

Staff Present: Bob Asleson, Jim Benning, Todd Carlson, Leanna Gilbert, Tom Johnson, Eric Shaffer, Glenn Strid

Call to Order: President Prusak called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Old business:

Stormwater system discussion

Tom Johnson gave the draft stormwater public education presentation. Commissioners requested revisions including emphasizing the shared public and private responsibility, shortening the presentation, and adding more information about the total bill. Commissioner Sipress suggested focusing on five points: What is the stormwater utility? Why is it important? What is the challenge? What are the consequences of inaction? What are we asking for? Staff will prepare a revised draft presentation as requested, and the Commission will hold a special meeting in December to review it.

Middle and Woodland water booster stations

Eric Shaffer suggested postponing the tour of pump stations to April or May when the weather is better.

New business:

2019 meeting schedule

A draft 2019 meeting schedule was provided in the meeting packets. Since neither Council Chambers nor Conference Room 303 were available for the May 21 meeting, commissioners agreed to meet at the Lakewood Treatment Plant. The December 17 meeting will remain on the schedule for now.

Updates from staff

Jim Benning reported that Howard Jacobson will retire at the end of November. Greg Guerrero, currently the Street Maintenance Manager, will be the new Utility Operations Manager. He also mentioned that our proposed lateral and sump pump plan was approved by WLSSD. Eric Shaffer reported that construction season is finally done. The last gas service was installed today.

Upcoming Council actions

Jim Benning stated that the capital projects presentation is on December 5th.

Commissioner questions and comments

Commissioner Ryan mentioned that natural gas prices are skyrocketing and asked if there would be an impact on customers' bills. Eric Shaffer replied that the costs should be spread out because of storage gas. Jim Benning stated that we have contracts in place, so prices should remain fairly steady.

Preview of upcoming business

The Commission will hold a special meeting on Tuesday, December 18, 2018 at 5:15 p.m. in City Hall Conference Room 106A. The Commission will review the revised stormwater presentation and then discuss public meetings. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers.

Known absences for future meetings

No absences were mentioned.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.