



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Draft

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, August 20, 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.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Erin Abramson, Andrea Crouse (arrived at 5:18 p.m.), Councilor Wendy Durrwachter (arrived around 5:30 p.m.), Councilor Mike Mayou (left around 5:50 p.m.), Derek Medved, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Members Absent: none

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

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC128](#) July 16, 2024 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [07162024 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

The July 16, 2024 meeting minutes were approved by all present (Commissioners Crouse and Durrwachter absent).

NEW BUSINESS

[DPUC129](#) 2025 Proposed Utilities Budget

Indexes:

Attachments: [2025-PUC Budget Presentation 02AUG24](#)

Kerry Venier noted that proposed revenues have not changed since last month, but some water expenses changed due to additional projects and operating costs. Stormwater capital expenses also increased. There was some discussion about the 1970 Compliance divisions and cash balances. Commissioner Medved requested the five-year capital plan.

[DPUC130](#) 24PUC-002 - RESOLUTION APPROVING AND RECOMMENDING 2025 UTILITIES BUDGET.

Indexes:

Attachments: [24PUC-002 approving 2025 budget](#)

President Ryan motioned to approve resolution 24PUC-002 approving and recommending the 2025 utilities budget to City Council, and the resolution was approved unanimously.

[DPUC131](#) Proposed 2025 Utility Fees

Indexes:

Attachments: [2025 Fees](#)

Vice President Abramson asked about the Implicit Price Deflator.

[DPUC132](#) 24PUC-003 - RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING FEES FOR VARIOUS UTILITY-RELATED SERVICES.

Indexes:

Attachments: [24PUC-003 2025 utility fees](#)

President Ryan motioned to approve resolution 24PUC-003 establishing utility-related fees for 2025, and the resolution was approved unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Water System Funding Strategy

Jim Benning mentioned the draft ordinance creating the water infrastructure fee and requested that any comments from commissioners be submitted to him by next Friday. The Commission would be responsible for establishing and setting the fee. There was some discussion about the cash balance in the clean water fund and lead service line replacement.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Jim Benning reported that WLSSD will be with us for the November meeting. There is an attorney only meeting tomorrow regarding the EPA administrative order of consent. Howard Smith reported on the Northland Country Club water main, lead service replacement projects design, Woodland Booster Station progress, and stormwater fund match grants. Jim Benning introduced Nick Anderson, the new Assistant City Attorney assigned to the Commission.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Commissioner Crouse thanked Cyndi for attending a community event in Hillside to talk about lead lines. She sees many other opportunities for City staff to provide public education on various utility systems and how they interact.

Commissioner Medved asked about a lead line that was replaced unnecessarily. Staff is only aware of one instance where that happened, and it was at the beginning of our lead replacement efforts. The identification process has improved since then.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

No upcoming actions were mentioned at this time.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 17, 2024 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will start discussing options for the water infrastructure fee. There was some discussion about how the fee would affect the municipalities that Duluth supplies water to.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No absences were mentioned for the September meeting, but there may not be a quorum for the October meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.