



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Draft

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

5:15 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall, 411 West First Street

CALL TO ORDER

President Scott called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Andrea Crouse, Councilor Wendy Durrwachter, Councilor Janet Kennedy, Derek Medved, Brad Scott

Members Absent: Councilor Diane Desotelle

Staff Present: Cyndi Falconer, Leanna Gilbert, Amanda Mangan, Chris Ostern, Howie Smith, Kerry Venier

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC173](#) May 19, 2026 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [05192026 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

The May 19, 2026 meeting minutes were approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Stormwater utility discussion

Kerry Venier gave a brief overview of where the stormwater utility is at financially and what is projected for the upcoming years. Staff recommends keeping the stormwater rate the same for now and reviewing the rate again when we evaluate the ERUs next year. Commissioner Durrwachter asked about a stormwater grant that had been mentioned. Howie Smith said that the grant covers two projects for tributary improvement, an infiltration pond on Cody Street and tributary 7 near Hartley Nature Center. Commissioner Crouse asked about projected inflation. Kerry Venier mentioned an inflationary factor of 5% for other costs and 10% for salaries and benefits. Commissioner Crouse asked about seeing comments on the City's performance when the MS4 permit is reviewed. Howie Smith will talk to his staff about that. Commissioner Crouse asked about planning for increased storm intensity. Howie Smith said that infrastructure is designed

based on the 100-year storm. President Scott asked about capital equipment. Kerry Venier replied that street sweepers are not considered storm capital equipment, but the utility does contribute money towards sweeping. It does include vacuums, trucks, and other Utility Operations equipment.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Howie Smith reported on various projects including the Palm Street pond, West Superior Street water main, the water plant filter study, the water plant resiliency project design and timeline extension, high-priority stormwater repairs, fiber installation projects, and the Woodland Booster Station. Cyndi Falconer reported that all of the lead service replacement projects are underway. We are on track to replace about 1,250 services this year. Only \$15M was appropriated for 2027 lead replacement for Minnesota. We may need to look into other options. The new lead regulations go into effect November 1, 2027, which will require replacement of 10% of our lead services per year. There will still be about 6,500 services left to replace at that time. President Scott asked about corrosion control. Howie Smith talked about a planned corrosion control study that will begin after the tower reconditioning is done. There was some discussion about the Orphanage pressure zone and the fiber installation projects.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Commissioner Durrwachter asked about Public Works & Utilities Department staffing related to Cari Pedersen filling the Director position. Howie Smith replied that the department is not fully staffed yet, because some positions are interim or provisional.

Commissioner Kennedy asked about a stormwater legal matter that Kerry Venier had mentioned. Assistant City Attorney Mangan stated that the litigation is ongoing and there is no status update on it. It has been going on for a number of years.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

Howie Smith mentioned two resolutions for participation in municipal utility agreements for the Blatnik Bridge project. Any required water and gas work will be funded by MNDOT.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, July 21, 2026 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Staff will present the 2027 utilities budget for review and approval in August.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

President Scott will not be able to attend the July meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.