



# City of Duluth

411 West First Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

## Unofficial Actions - Draft

### Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

---

Tuesday, March 17, 2026

5:15 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall, 411 West First Street

---

**NOTE: This was not an official meeting and no actions were made as there was no quorum.**

#### CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Medved noted the absence of a quorum and opened the floor for discussion at 5:19 p.m.

#### ROLL CALL

**Members Present:** Andrea Crouse, Councilor Diane Desotelle, Derek Medved, Carrie Ryan

**Members Absent:** Councilor Wendy Durrwachter, Councilor Janet Kennedy, Brad Scott

**Staff Present:** Nick Bax, Jim Benning, Cyndi Falconer, Leanna Gilbert, Amanda Mangan, Chris Ostern, Cari Pedersen, Howie Smith, Kerry Venier

#### PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Linda Herron, 2617 E 5th Street, thanked Jim Benning for his years of service and asked who would be taking his place. Cari Pedersen, currently Chief Engineer of Transportation, will be Interim Director starting April 1. Department directors are appointed by the mayor.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Since there was no quorum, approval of minutes will be postponed until the next meeting.

[DPUC168](#)

**Indexes:**

**Attachments:** [02172026 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

#### NEW BUSINESS

[DPUC170](#)Indexes:

Attachments: [26PUC-001 adding statement charge to utility fees](#)

Since there was no quorum, this resolution will be considered at the next meeting.

[DPUC169](#)Indexes:

Attachments: [2025 WLSSD Wastewater Treatment Year-End Adjustment](#)

Kerry Venier stated that the official year-end adjustment letter from WLSSD had arrived. There was a credit of \$652,451 for treatment charges which resulted in a decrease of \$0.04 per ccf (hundred cubic feet) to customers. Commissioner Ryan suggested meeting with WLSSD staff again this fall so they can explain their budget process to the new commissioners.

### UPDATES FROM STAFF

Howie Smith reported that plans submissions for PFA fundable projects are due at the end of the week. These projects include the water treatment plant filter project which also includes replacement of the elevator and the pump house roof, the elevated towers painting, and Woodland Reservoir rehabilitation. Also due at the end of the month is a plan for optimizing our cathodic protection in the water system. We had a consultant do a study about the introduction of certain chemicals to decrease the solubility of lead in the water. They found that it would help but would likely not meet the threshold requirements. They recommend we replace pipes as fast as possible. We are preparing a pilot study of orthophosphate injection in the Orphanage pressure zone. Three of five lead service replacement projects have been bid out. The two other projects are currently out for bid. We are also working on a handful of other small projects that should be out for bid in the next month. Commissioner Desotelle asked about shoreline stability by the water plant. Howie responded that rip rap was installed and we are planning to install armoring stone to protect the intake pipe next year. Jim Benning stated that this is his last meeting, and this is also Carrie Ryan's last meeting. Cari Pedersen will be the official commission secretary starting in April. Jim gave a brief history of the Commission. He reported that it is Duluth Days and certain City staff are at the capitol lobbying for money from the state. Amanda Mangan introduced the new attorney who will be assigned to the Commission, Nick Bax.

### COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Vice President Medved thanked Commissioner Ryan and Jim Benning for their service. It is an honor to be running their last meeting. He also mentioned stories he had heard from Dan Berg.

### **UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS**

Jim Benning mentioned resolutions for five new utility vans for Customer Service, three trucks for Street Maintenance, three brine salt storage sheds, a contract extension with TruePani for water filter pitchers and test kits, a blanket contract for high priority lead service replacements, and a contract with Korterra for utility locates.

### **PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS**

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will consider a resolution establishing a paper statement charge.

### **KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Commissioner Crouse will not be able to attend the May meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The discussion ended at 5:48 p.m.