City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Draft

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, February 17, 2026 **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: Andrea Crouse, Councilor Diane Desotelle, Councilor Wendy Durrwachter, Carrie Ryan, Derek Medved, Brad Scott
Members Absent: Councilor Janet Kennedy
Staff Present: Jim Benning, Cyndi Falconer, Leanna Gilbert, Amanda Mangan, Chris Ostern, Lydia Schroeder, Howie Smith, Kerry Venier

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

DPUC166 Dec. 16, 2025 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: 12162025 DPUC meeting minutes draft

The December 16, 2025 meeting minutes were approved (Crouse and Desotelle abstained).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Paperless billing

Lydia Schroeder gave an updated presentation on paperless billing and the cost of printing bills. Since printing costs have increased per bill, City staff proposes a $0.73 statement charge to offset those costs. Lydia mentioned various initiatives to promote paperless billing. City staff will draft a resolution adding a statement charge to the fee schedule.

NEW BUSINESS

DPUC167 Water Infrastructure Surcharge review & recommendation for 2026

Indexes:

Attachments: 2026 WIS Rate review memo

Kerry Venier stated that City staff recommends keeping the Water Infrastructure Surcharge the same for 2026. The current rate will satisfy the planned capital improvement projects and associated debt.

Election of officers

Commissioner Ryan nominated Commissioner Scott as President and Commissioner Medved as Vice President, and the nominations were approved by all present.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Howie Smith reported on various projects including lead service projects, Woodland Booster Station, Palm Street pond, natural gas inspections, and plans for water projects. Chris Ostern mentioned that we have not received the true-up letter from WLSSD yet, but we should have a credit of $652,000 that we will be applying to our calculation for rates beginning in March. There should be a 0.46% reduction in sanitary sewer rates, or about $0.04 per CCF. Kerry Venier stated that the 5-year stormwater rate increase will end in July. City staff will be meeting to discuss the needs of the stormwater utility moving forward. Jim Benning stated that there will be a utility billing appeal hearing at the March meeting.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

Jim Benning mentioned resolutions amending a contract with SEH for West Superior Street, revising the list of high priority bridges, various lead service line replacement projects, awarding the Palm Street stormwater pond, awarding the gas blanket project, purchasing gas meters, and two resolutions regarding the Tischer Creek fish kill.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. The Commission will hear a utility billing appeal, consider a resolution establishing a paper statement charge, and discuss the stormwater utility. Jim Benning's last day with the City will be March 31.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.