

DULUTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
August 21, 2018

Members Present: Councilor Arik Forsman, Chris McIntosh, Rob Prusak, Councilor Joel Sipress, Councilor Em Westerlund

Members Absent: Jennifer Julsrud, Carrie Ryan

Staff Present: Bob Asleson, Jim Benning, Leanna Gilbert, Howard Jacobson, Chris Kleist, Tom Pfeffer, Eric Shaffer, Glenn Strid, Kerry Venier

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

Old business:

Stormwater system discussion

Tom Pfeffer provided a couple of cost estimate scenarios for stormwater system needs based on realistic life expectancy and “best case” life expectancy. He also provided a spreadsheet comparing 2014-2018 capital expenditures to those scenarios. Commissioners and staff discussed the history of stormwater expenses, the consequences of not doing preventive maintenance, and various other aspects of the stormwater system. Staff will prepare some stormwater rate scenarios and a clean water fund update for the next meeting as requested.

New business:

Middle and Woodland water booster stations

Eric Shaffer explained the condition of the booster stations, stated that the upgrades have been delayed for years, and recommended bonding for these projects. He will prepare a report of water usage and cost estimates for the next meeting. Commissioners and staff discussed PFA loan rates compared to conventional bond rates and various details about the booster stations.

2019 utilities budget discussion

Jim Benning stated that the Commission recommends the utility budgets to City Council. A final proposed budget and a resolution recommending the budget will be prepared for the September meeting. Glenn Strid gave an overview of the cash projections for the water, gas, sanitary sewer, clean water, and stormwater funds and answered questions from commissioners.

Updates from staff

Jim Benning stated that the Public Works & Utilities budget presentation to City Council is scheduled for September 24th. Eric Shaffer reported that the water portion of Superior Street is complete.

Upcoming Council actions

Jim Benning mentioned a resolution expanding the home energy loan program to include loans for private water and lateral line repair or replacement.

Commissioner questions and comments

President Prusak welcomed Arik Forsman to the Commission.

Preview of upcoming business

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 18, 2018, at 5:15 p.m. in City Council Chambers. Staff will prepare rate scenarios for stormwater, a clean water fund update, a pump station study, final budget documents, and a resolution recommending the 2019 utility budgets to City Council.

Known absences for future meetings

No absences were mentioned.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.