



City of Duluth

411 West First Street
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

Minutes - Final

Duluth Public Utilities Commission.

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

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: Chris Adatte, Andrea Crouse, Councilor Noah Hobbs, Steve Lipinski, Carrie Ryan, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Members Absent: Councilor Mike Mayou

Staff Present: Bob Asleson, Cyndi Falconer, Leanna Gilbert, Greg Guerrero, Chris Ostern, Kerry Venier

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

There were no comments from the public at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[DPUC082](#) June 21, 2022 DPUC meeting minutes draft

Indexes:

Attachments: [06212022 DPUC meeting minutes draft](#)

Commissioner Lipinski motioned to approve the June 21, 2022 meeting minutes, and the motion was approved by all present.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[DPUC083](#) Sanitary sewer rate review

Indexes:

Attachments: [Sanitary Rate Increase Sample \(Actual2021Exp\) 4.5%](#)
[Sanitary Volume Rate Inc Amended to 3.5%](#)

Kerry Venier mentioned that staff recommends moving forward with a 3.5% increase instead of the original 4.5%, since the Commission passed a revision to the WLSSD adjustment calculation in February. The original 4.5% projections factored in a 2.5% increase for WLSSD expenses, and now that is no longer a

factor. Commissioner Crouse motioned to present a two-year 3.5% sanitary sewer rate increase at the public hearing in August, and the motion was approved by all present.

NEW BUSINESS

Lead services replacement update

Cyndi Falconer reported that the project on 8th Street that had been suspended is moving forward and is open for bids right now. This project should begin in September with about 70-75 services being replaced. Directional drilling is the intended method, but some will need to be open cut. The project will most likely carry over into the spring. Paperwork was submitted for 2023 replacements, and we are looking for a consultant to design those projects. We are working on developing the lead service inventory. 400 letters were sent out last week, and another 400 letters should be ready tomorrow. We are gathering information through the water meter replacement project as well.

Cyndi talked about steps that have been taken for public education, including the annual lead notification letter that was provided to commissioners for review. We will continue to target areas for mailings as projects develop. We had one town hall meeting, a press release, and a Duluth News Tribune article. We also had a booth at the Priley Circle Farmers' Market. Cyndi would like to develop a public service announcement campaign and share information with more organizations. There was some discussion about ways to engage effectively with residents.

UPDATES FROM STAFF

Greg Guerrero reported on current projects, including Middle Booster Station and Michigan Street. Staff is working on the 2023 budget. Kerry Venier mentioned that there would be a budget presentation at the next meeting. The water meter replacement project is going well. Jim Benning should be back next Tuesday.

COMMISSIONER QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Commissioner Crouse asked about an update on the stormwater ERU calculation. Bob Asleson reported that the litigation would probably not go to trial until next year. Kerry Venier stated that Eric Shaffer could report on the ERU recalculation at the next meeting.

UPCOMING COUNCIL ACTIONS

No upcoming actions were mentioned.

PREVIEW OF UPCOMING BUSINESS

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 5:15 p.m. A public hearing will be held for a two-year 3.5% sanitary sewer rate increase. The Commission will continue with discussions about lead services replacement. Staff should have a 2023 budget presentation and an update on the ERU recalculation.

KNOWN ABSENCES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Commissioner Tomanek will not be able to attend the September meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.