



Meeting Minutes

Utility Advisory Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501

Contact: Eric Christensen
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Thursday, November 4, 2021

5:15 PM

Online via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Stephenson called the meeting to order.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Chair Cullen Stephenson, Vice Chair Dennis Bloom, Committee member Kristin Lamson, Committee member Arland Schneider, Committee member Eleanor (Pat) Vernon, Committee member Roger Wilson, Committee member Dani Clark and Committee member Jason Selwitz

Absent: 1 - Committee member Donald Krug

1.B. STAFF PRESENT

City Manager Jay Burney
Water Resources Director/UAC Staff Liaison Eric Christensen
Waste ReSources Senior Planner Ron Jones
Water Resources Planning & Engineering Manager Susan Clark
Water Resources Senior Program Specialist Erin Conine

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A discussion on the proposed 1% increase to the municipal utility tax for 2022 was added.

The agenda was approved as amended.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM UAC AND STAFF

Mr. Burney provided information about City Council's proposal to raise the municipal utility tax by 1% in 2022, which would increase it to 12.5%. State law allows for a municipal utility tax to fund the general fund. Mr. Burney apologized for the late proposal and acknowledged the October 14 UAC letter that supported staff's initial rate proposal. In late September/early October, the City realized the budget would not balance without new revenue. The increase is needed for the City to implement police reform legislation. The 1% will create \$580,000 in new revenue.

The tax would affect residential and commercial utility rates. Mr. Christensen showed how the 1% increase would change each utility's rate for 2022.

Staff answered questions about the proposed tax increase and the Committee discussed at length. The UAC asked if the 1% would go down in 2023. Mr. Burney stated the tax would stay in affect.

The UAC unanimously decided to oppose the proposed municipal utility tax increase of 1% and will write a letter to the City Council expressing this. The UAC opposed the tax due to the concern that it would benefit the general fund and it would burden low-income households. Chair Stephenson will attend the November 16 Council meeting where they will discuss with City advisory committee chairs the 2022 Preliminary Budget and municipal utility tax proposal.

Mr. Christensen provided the following updates:

Provided information on staffing/recruitments and City operations.

The City signed an agreement with the Community Action Council (CAC) to administer the federal Low-Income Home Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). CAC is a non-profit that provides various assistance programs to low-income residents.

Follow up to the October 2021 UAC meeting where the Committee discussed the Squaxin tribal acknowledgement language. The City manager's office stated the UAC and other City committee/commissions can only use the language that was provided by the Squaxin Tribe. The UAC may propose new language for a land acknowledgment through a letter to the City Council. Further discussion will take place at the December UAC meeting.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[21-1055](#) Approval of October 7, 2021 UAC Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

[21-1056](#) 2022 Waste ReSources Management Plan Update

Mr. Jones provided the briefing. Committee members asked questions and had a discussion with staff.

The information was provided.

[21-1057](#) Water System Plan Update Project Briefing and Water Use Efficiency Goal Public Forum

Ms. Clark and Ms. Conine provided the briefing on the Water System Plan update. The business item also included a public forum for the Water Use Efficiency goal. UAC members asked clarifying questions.

The information was provided.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Stephenson adjourned the meeting at 8:12 pm.