



Meeting Minutes

Utility Advisory Committee

City Hall
601 4th Avenue E
Olympia, WA 98501
Contact: Eric Christensen
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Thursday, June 4, 2020

5:30 PM

Online via Zoom

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Buffo called the meeting to order.

1.A ROLL CALL

Present: 8 - Chair Mike Buffo, Committee member Dennis Bloom, Committee member Michael Bradley, Committee member Donald Krug, Committee member Kristin Lamson, Committee member Arland Schneider, Committee member Eleanor (Pat) Vernon and Committee member Roger Wilson

Absent: 1 - Vice Chair Cullen Stephenson

STAFF PRESENT

Water Resources Director/UAC Staff Liaison Eric Christensen
Waste ReSources Director Gary Franks
Water Resources Program Assistant Lindsay Marquez

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[20-0424](#) Approval of May, 21, 2020 UAC Meeting Minutes

The minutes were approved.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT - None

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM UAC AND STAFF (5:50 - 6:00 pm)

Mr. Christensen provided the following updates:

- Public Works is at 100% operations and seasonal workers have returned.
- The General Government Committee will hold a meeting on June 10 with advisory committee chairs and staff liaisons to discuss the 2020-2021 work plans.
- Over Memorial Day weekend, another spill occurred from the sewer line that

crosses the Percival Creek bridge. Fortunately, the permanent repair to the sewer line was completed on Friday, May 29.

Mr. Franks reported on the status of the recruitments for the Waste ReSources Operations Supervisor and the Lead Worker positions.

6. BUSINESS ITEMS

[20-0429](#) Utilities Quarterly Financial Updates

Mr. Christensen and Mr. Franks provided a briefing on current finances for the City's utilities of Waste ReSources, Drinking Water, Storm and Surface Water and Wastewater. After a few questions, the UAC thanked staff for the briefing.

The report was received.

[20-0425](#) Waste ReSources Facility Update

Mr. Franks provided background, next steps and estimated project costs. UAC members asked some clarifying questions and then thanked Mr. Franks for the briefing.

The report was received.

[20-0428](#) Utility Customer Assistance Program Briefing

Mr. Christensen provided a briefing on the City's current Lifeline Rate program and discussed staff's proposal to create a utility customer assistance fund for low income customers that do not qualify for Lifeline Rate. The fund would be in partnership with and administered with the Community Action Council (CAC).

The UAC requested the following:

Information on the City's late fee policy and whether there is compounding interest. Mr. Christensen will provide that information to the UAC.

Poverty data for Thurston County, especially the number of people estimated to be below the 50% median income level, on which the Lifeline program is based. Mr. Christensen will provide that information to the UAC.

Include a clause in the agreement with CAC that allows for the adjustment of the assistance amount periodically. Staff agreed to include this in the agreement.

Request for the City to continue outreach efforts of customer assistance programs in the Five Things utility bill insert. Staff affirmed they will do this.

The "Utility Customer Assistance Program Briefing" to be an ongoing business item on their annual work plan and to receive periodic updates during Announcements. Staff affirmed they will do this.

Committee member Wilson moved, seconded by Committee member Vernon, to support the establishment of a customer utility assistance program, using \$5,000 from utility funds to begin the program, and to set up an agreement with the Community Action Council to administer the program. The motion further states the assistance amount of \$75 per customer, twice per calendar year. The UAC will revisit the assistance amount in the future based on data provided by staff regarding Thurston County poverty level data. The motion carried unanimously.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Buffo adjourned the meeting.