

**CITY OF BELLEVUE
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday
July 6, 2017
6:30 p.m.

Conference Room 1E-113
Bellevue City Hall
Bellevue, Washington

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Dianne Strom (Chair), Sanjay Kumar (Vice Chair), Gregg Takamura, Vanja Knezevic, Anne Howe

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Aaron Morin, Lisa Schreiner

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Lee, Deputy Director; Michael May, Public Information Officer

MINUTES TAKER: Laurie Hugdahl

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Strom at 6:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Howe, seconded by Commissioner Knezevic, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

3. WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONERS

New Commissioners Vanja Knezevic and Gregg Takamura were introduced and made brief self-introductions.

4. SELECT NEW CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Motion made by Commissioner Kumar, seconded by Commissioner Knezevic, to nominate Diann Strom as Chair. There were no other nominations. Diann Strom was elected Chair unanimously (5-0).

Motion made by Commissioner Knezevic, seconded by Commissioner Takamura, to nominate Sanjay Kumar as Vice Chair. There were no other nominations. Sanjay Kumar was elected Vice Chair unanimously (5-0).

5. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

None

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 6, 2017 Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion made by Commissioner Howe, seconded by Commissioner Kumar, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7. REPORTS AND SUMMARIES

- ESC Calendar/Council Calendar

Deputy Director Lee reviewed the tentative ESC calendar. He pointed out that there would be a recess in August. The agenda following that looks a little light, but will likely be filled up over the next month. He also reviewed the Council calendar.

- Conservation & Outreach Events & Volunteer Opportunities

8. NEW BUSINESS

- AMI Communication Plan

Presenter: Michael May, Public Information Officer

PIO Michael May made a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Smart Water Meter/AMI Communication Plan. He explained that the City hired PRR as the partner marketing and research firm to do outreach. He reviewed the results of the outreach which included:

- Interviewing six other utility districts that have implemented AMI and making information gathering trips to local cities that have implemented AMI programs
- Conducting an online survey involving 276 customers
- Conducting two focus groups with a total of 16 participants, and
- Conducting research regarding diverse stakeholder via an internal workshop.

PIO May then made a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Strategic Communications Plan. He explained that goals are:

1. Customers are aware and have a positive perception prior to installation
2. Customers are well-informed during and after installation

The objectives of the Communications Plan are to have a 30% increase from baseline awareness about Smart Water Meters; customer satisfaction with the Smart Water Meters program and technology will be greater than 70% within six months after installation; the number of call center complaints will be less than 1% of customers prior to and during the installation process, and Bellevue Utilities will secure at least four positive media articles by the end of the first month of installation in local press.

Strategies and tactics of the Communications Plan will inform customers about what is coming through earned media (radio, TV, or print), Utilities and City communications methods (billing newsletter, e-newsletter, neighborhood newsletter, BTV, It's Your City, Water Quality Report, and social media). There is also an Outreach Toolkit and a Smart Water Meters web page which include an instructional video and fact sheets. Sample Smart Water Meters will be provided to Mini-City Hall and other existing events. Scripts for employees and call center staff will be created and provided. Communications materials for the vendor will be developed including door tags and infographics for limited English proficiency population.

During installation the City wants customers to continue to be well informed of the launch date and installation schedule via direct mail, social media, and existing city communications channels. "Early adopters" (pilot program customers) will be used as ambassadors. There are plans to launch a paid digital campaign including online ads and social media sites. There will be a Public Relations announcement about the launch including a press release, installation video, and invitations to attend open house and community events. Door-to-door communications will occur post installation. If no one is home, the installer will leave a door hanger. There will be an ongoing presence at Mini-City Hall and other community meetings.

The City plans to be present and ready to respond to any concerns raised by customers. A crisis communication strategy, messaging around key concerns, and messaging specifically to address incidents where more accurate meters lead to higher bills will be developed. PIO May stressed that Smart Water Meters will lead to more accurate readings and more equity because people will be paying for what is actually used. Commissioner Howe recommended including information to customers prior to installation letting them know that their bills might go up as the meters are more accurate. PIO May noted that it will be in the FAQs. Deputy Director Lee explained that Baltimore was one jurisdiction that was very proactive about letting every single customer know ahead of time about possible increases to their bills.

Commissioner Kumar asked what would be done with the old water meters. PIO May replied it is not addressed in the communications, but the old meters will be salvaged for scrap metal. Commissioner Kumar recommended adding that information to the communications material.

Chair Strom asked if people will receive notifications about when the work will be done in their yard. PIO May explained customers would be given a general timeframe letting them know that the work would be done in the next month. On the day of installation the worker would knock on the door to let the resident know they will be working in their yard that day. PIO May noted that the actual installation only takes about 15 minutes; however some meter boxes may require replacement which will take longer. There was a recommendation to use sandwich boards in neighborhoods to keep neighbors informed.

Commissioner Kumar recommended contacting the Community Based Organizations at the beginning of the process, not just at the end for more feedback on the entire process.

PIO May then reviewed the timeline for the various activities. Chair Strom asked where the City is on the timeline. Deputy Director Lee explained they are in the pre-vendor selection process. The City put out an RFP for the Smart Water Meter program in May and got a very strong response with a lot of proposals in June. Staff is in the middle of reviewing those proposals right now. Staff hopes to select a vendor (or possibly two) in September or October and take it to Council for approval in November or December in order to begin initial work in January of 2018.

Chair Strom asked when the customer portal will be active. Deputy Director Lee explained that the hope is that it is active when the meters are installed. Chair Strom concurred with Commissioner Kumar about getting the introductory feedback.

Commissioner Howe asked if any staff members would be accompanying the vendor during installation. Deputy Director Lee replied that they would not, but staff would be verifying somehow to make sure the installation is completed. PIO May commented that a lot of the contractors take before and after photographs of each installation site. Deputy Director Lee added that the City would continue to use meter readers until there is confidence that the data is reliable. Commissioner Howe asked how staff decided on the language of “Smart Water Meter” instead of AMI. Deputy Director Lee explained that the City wanted to create a brand that would be easily recognizable to the customers. This also ties into the Bellevue Smart Cities Initiative.

- Strategic Communication Plan
Presenter: Michael May, Public Information Officer

PIO May explained that the Plan will address: understanding customers by conducting research to know how to engage customers; informed outreach development by testing current and new messaging, materials, and means;

public engagement and partnership through public education with results and possibilities to improve our customers' lives; and success metrics. He reviewed details about how the City plans to address each area. Research will begin in September and finish in December. The first outreach and engagement task is the Smart Water Meter program. Other lines of business outreach and engagement tasks will be implemented in 2020 after the Smart Water Meter program is implemented.

Chair Strom noted that the comments she generally hears relate to rates, so she likes the idea of helping people connect resiliency, responsibility and reliability.

9. COMMISSION REPORT

None

10. CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

None

11. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE REPORT

Deputy Director Lee had the following comments:

- He reported that during the month of June the City had a great workshop that was put on by the Cascade Water Alliance regarding earthquake resiliency. It was a good meeting, and there was agreement that the public is pretty unprepared for a major earthquake. Bellevue is working on an earthquake resiliency project in the next year.
- The sewer line at Meydenbauer Park is complete, and the project went very smoothly.
- He attended the American Water Works Conference and learned more about new technologies coming out. One new piece of technology from Israel was developed by a former NASA scientist and uses technology to look for potable water to help identify water leaks in a public water system.

12. CONTINUED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

David Plummer, 14414 NE 14th Place, Bellevue, WA 98007, had the following questions:

- What's the relationship between what is described in the Jacobs PRR work statement and what was heard tonight from Mr. May?
- When will the deliverables defined in the Jacobs PRR Scope of Work be completed?
- He stated he has written an AMI white paper which he is getting ready to share on social media.

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Howe, seconded by Commissioner Takamura, to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.