

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

Thursday  
March 2, 2023

City Hall & Remote  
6:30 p.m.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLL CALL**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Vanja Knezevic (Chair), Neal Hines (Vice Chair), Negin Khanloo, Diann Strom, Andy Dupertuis<sup>1</sup>

**COMMISSIONER ATTENDING REMOTELY:** None

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Anne Howe (excused), Ken Wan (excused)

**COUNCIL LIAISON:** Councilmember Lee

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Lucy Liu, Deputy Director; Joe Harbour, Utilities O&M Assistant Director, Tony Marcum, Utilities O&M Manager; Doug Lane, Utilities Planning Manager; Erin Hislop, Conservation and Outreach Administrator (remote); Leslie Kodish, Senior Administrative Assistant; Cheri Brignon, Senior Administrative Assistant; and Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion made by Vice Chair Hines, seconded by Commissioner Khanloo, to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously (4-0).<sup>2</sup>**

**3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

Alex Tsimerman, 14150 NE 20<sup>th</sup> Street, Bellevue, WA, expressed various concerns about the fascist environment in the Bellevue School District, school board, and teachers. He said he was very upset that he was thrown out of one of those meetings after speaking only five seconds. Now he continues to regularly go to City Council meetings to make his frustrations known.

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Dupertuis arrived at 6:32 p.m.

<sup>2</sup> Commissioner Dupertuis arrived after this vote was taken.

**4. COMMUNICATION FROM CITY COUNCIL, COMMUNITY COUNCIL, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

Councilmember Lee thanked the Environmental Services Commission for their work and gave a general update on Council topics.

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

None

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**a) February 2, 2023 Minutes**

**Motion made by Vice Chair Hines, seconded by Commissioner Khanloo, to approve the 2/2/2023 minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

**7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

**8. NEW BUSINESS**

**a) Emergency Response Preparedness Strategies**

*Joe Harbour, Utilities O&M Assistant Director  
Tony Marcum, Utilities O&M Manager*

Asst. Director Joe Harbour introduced the presentation regarding the Emergency Preparedness Program.

Utilities Management Program: Utilities Manager Tony Marcum reviewed how daily maintenance activities help to minimize and reduce any potential damages prior to an emergency. They respond to a wide variety of emergencies on a regular basis. Utilities has a culture of emergency management which includes the Emergency Management & Response Plan, regular ‘tabletop’ exercise scenarios with all O&M sections, integration of the Incident Command System into daily work, increased participation in regional discussions, and oversight via the Emergency Management Team.

Utilities’ role in a citywide event is to maintain operation of water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure (drinking water and fire flow; sanitation needs and environmental impacts; flooding and environmental

emergencies); and establish emergency water distribution stations (construction of two distribution trailers is underway; pre-determined staging areas).

Operational Preparedness: Preventative vs. Corrective Maintenance - Preventative is routine maintenance that is scheduled in part to prevent reactive maintenance.

For Water, this includes hydrant and valve inspection and maintenance; leak detection; reservoir cleaning and inspection; and pump station inspection and maintenance. Corrective maintenance includes main line and service line repairs; hydrant and valve repairs; customer response activities; and pump station component repairs.

For Wastewater, preventative measures include access hole inspection, mainline and side sewer inspection; mainline cleaning and pump station inspection and maintenance. Corrective measures include mainline and stub repair; wastewater structure repairs; mainline and side sewer blockage response; and pump station component repairs.

Commissioner Khanloo asked how much money is being spent on preventative versus corrective measures. Mr. Marcum didn't have dollar amounts but explained it would probably correlate to the labor hours shown on the charts.

Stormwater preventive measures include drainage structure inspections and cleaning; routine surveillance, mainline inspection, and routine cleaning. Corrective measures include drainage structure repairs, mainline repairs, rain response, and clearing blockages.

Commissioner Dupertuis commended staff for the condition assessment work. He suggested applying the assessment to inform how they think about allocating capital. Mr. Harbour agreed that this is a very important point about asset management. More on how this is all connected will be coming back in May with Asst. Director Linda De Boldt. Mr. Marcum explained how the condition assessment is used to prioritize repairs.

Anticipating problems and needs: There are several on-call contractors for asphalt patching, landscaping, traffic control, and educator services. There are mutual aid agreements and ongoing inspection programs that are always evolving. Mr. Marcum shared the Incident Command organizational chart and reviewed how incidents are routed through the chart. He highlighted examples of past emergencies and how they were handled. General clarification questions and answers followed. Assistant

Director Harbour commented on the importance of coordination between departments to get things done.

Investing in future technologies and processes: Utilities is currently doing an exciting pilot program to monitor potential Wastewater overflows; conducting annual awareness and response training; continuing cross training between departments; upgrading SCADA; and implementing Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). Mr. Marcum summarized there is a robust emergency management program in Utilities with a culture of emergency preparedness. They are always looking for ways to be more effective and efficient.

Commissioner Strom asked how the PIO is working on multilingual notifications in the event of an emergency. Mr. Marcum explained there are eight languages that any of the major communications are translated into. Utilities makes sure that those are prioritized and translated.

Vice Chair Hines asked if the balance of preventative and corrective work has stayed the same over the years. Mr. Marcum explained that Water and Wastewater have shifted a bit to corrective because of an aging system. Most of what they do in Stormwater is driven by the NPDES program.

Commissioner Dupertuis asked how they are quantifying the risk of deferred maintenance on infrastructure on which they rely but don't control. Is there confidence that that is being managed in a good way? Assistant Director Harbour noted that Doug Lane would be speaking about Water in a bit. He has looked at that as part of the Emergency Water Plan. King County Metro does a lot of work on upgrading their system.

**b) Emergency Water Supply Master Plan Update**

*Doug Lane, Utilities Planning Manager and Linda De Boldt, Assistant Director, Engineering*

Asst. Director De Boldt introduced Mr. Lane and noted it would be his last Commission meeting. She commended him, expressed appreciation for his work, and highlighted his achievements. Mr. Lane presented the Emergency Water Supply Master Plan which is in the final draft form. This is about mitigation and how the City can lessen the impact of an emergency by making the infrastructure more resilient. Staff is requesting ESC's recommendation to Council to adopt the Plan. He reviewed the background of the Plan and the ESC's involvement. The purpose of the Master Plan is to chart a path forward to improved resilience through technical evaluation of risks and mitigation options, increased public awareness and buy-in, Council adoption would provide direction to guide

future CIP investments and formalize policies, and make the City more competitive for grants by demonstrating public buy-in. Council adoption would also fulfill the requirements of WAC 246-290-420 to have each water utility's governing body vote to establish expectations for emergency level of service.

Mr. Lane discussed hazards and risks to which Bellevue is particularly susceptible. Primarily this includes the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and the Seattle Fault East (under Bellevue). Draft policies to mitigate the risks were presented to the ESC in November 2020. Proposed recommendations related to Level of Service recovery period goals were then established. The goal is to take the recovery period from 2-3 months down to 1-3 weeks. The recommendations the Plan makes to meet these goals relate to Resilient Supply (emergency wells, lobbying Cascade/SPU to prioritize transmission); Backbone Piping (resilient pipe to key points, reduce valve closure delays); and Distribution System Renewal & Replacement (continue existing main replacement program, prioritize pump stations and reservoirs along backbones).

Benefit: There would be less risk with proposed improvements. The estimated benefits are based on reduced economic damage due to water disruption. The combined benefit is a \$9.3 million/year reduction in risk.

Costs: Most of the recommended investment is programmed as R&R already. This newer, replaced infrastructure would reduce the number of failures and shortens the later phase recovery. New spending will be for wells and backbones. This will shorten critical first phase of recovery by 2-4 weeks. The first phase is very critical because the second phase (repairing breaks) can begin until there is water available.

Benefit/Cost Ratio – Analysis demonstrates a positive return of investment.

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review process is an avenue to get more public input as well as evaluating environmental impacts of actions or inaction. It is also required by the WAC. There was an extended comment period, but they only received responses from three people. A "Determination of Non-Significance" is expected 3/9/23. This means the environmental permit reviewer agrees there is not a major environmental impact. Mr. Lane reviewed comment themes which revolved about increasing public awareness; a question about if there is a plan to do this for the sewer system; a question about how resilient wells are; a question about why we can't use surface water; encouragement to consider interdependencies (fuel, transportation, etc.); and other out-of-scope

concerns (security, health care planning, Fire Department planning, refugees, etc.)

Mr. Lane highlighted a proposed policy edit to encourage residents to prepare 14 days of emergency water supply. The overall goal is preparedness through various means. Residents might not have space or resources to store water (equity concern).

Commissioner Strom asked how SPU's plan compares to Bellevue's Plan. Mr. Lane replied that SPU is a leader in this area which has been very helpful. This paved the way for Bellevue's work. Commissioner Strom asked how they can keep that momentum going. Asst. Director De Boldt suggested the best way is through active participation in local forums, workshops, and meetings. Bellevue does not have any control over SPU but they can lobby to make sure that Bellevue's needs are considered strongly.

Commissioner Strom asked how many other cities that rely on Seattle are doing this work now. Mr. Lane replied that it has been a hot topic in the Pacific Northwest, but it doesn't look the same for other cities. Bellevue's planning is more comprehensive than most. Commissioner Strom asked if other cities are working with the same timeframe. 50 years seems like a long time. Mr. Lane replied that they are. He explained that a shorter timeframe of 20 years was considered, but resource constraints such as limited staffing, contractors, and supplies make this likely unattainable, and it would also have much higher rate impacts and community impacts. Asst. Director De Boldt noted that this Plan will be shared nationally at the American Water Works meeting.

Councilmember Lee commented that Bellevue is a major player with Cascade Water Alliance (CWA). He asked what would be a good way to have more influence over CWA to increase Bellevue's representation. He also wondered how they can increase awareness with Bellevue's residents. Asst. Director De Boldt replied that the action they are requesting today will give the Commission's endorsement and recommendation to the City Council to formally adopt it. This will serve as a formally adopted Plan by the governing body which will drive decisions and actions in the future for mitigation projects and other activities. Over time they will be doing outreach to the communities that these projects would impact.

Vice Chair Hines asked about the well network placement. Is there any treatment for that network to feed our system. Mr. Lane replied that was part of the initial emergency evaluation that was done early on. The groundwater would need some filtration.

Commissioner Khanloo asked how they are going to encourage the public to get involved with preparation. Mr. Lane stated that the Plan directs the City to do the work, but it doesn't prescribe the work. He commented on the need to have a common message between agencies.

Vice Chair Hines suggested providing a manual for residents. Commissioner Strom referred to the CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) training which helps residents to be prepared. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) also has resources.

Councilmember Lee wondered if the community will be able to provide feedback before the Plan is made. Mr. Lane replied that there was a public outreach at the end of 2021 with over 1,000 responses. This touched on a lot of issues regarding prioritization of critical customers, affordability, and policies. 9% of the surveys were in non-English languages. It was just the SEPA process that didn't get much of a response. Asst. Director De Boldt noted that as they move forward with implementation there will be many opportunities for community engagement.

Commissioner Dupertuis thanked staff for their work. He asked how they can assess the program. He referred to the hazards, impacts, and risks; improvements they want to make over time; and costs. He suggested tying these ideas together to show the level of budget they will need to accomplish the outcomes they need. This will facilitate decision making. He also wondered how Bellevue can take a leadership role in the things over which they are critically dependent.

Commissioner Strom asked how often the Plan will get updated. Mr. Lane replied that there is not a periodic update requirement. This has a 50-year vision but could be incorporated into the Water System Plan which is due to be updated in 2026. Then it could stay updated every 10 years.

Commissioner Dupertuis thanked Asst. Director De Boldt for her leadership in the department.

**Motion made by Vice Chair Hines, seconded by Commissioner Khanloo, to recommend approval of the Emergency Water Supply Master Plan to Council. Motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

**c) Solid Waste Outreach Update**

*Erin Hislop, Conservation and Outreach Administrator*

Ms. Hislop gave an informational briefing on the current overall approach, funding strategies, where Bellevue is now with its solid waste goals, and

where we are going as the solid waste industry continues to adapt and change. Bellevue has a long legacy of voluntary compliance with a focus on changing customer behaviors. She reviewed how Utilities provides outreach to customers including commercial businesses, multifamily properties, residents, and public schools.

Funding Strategies: The vast majority of outreach is grant-funded (~\$320,000 year). Rate payer funding is ~\$100,000 a year and is used in large part for grant matching. Ms. Hislop reviewed expenditure by customer sector.

Commissioner Khanloo asked if they coordinate with Republic Services. Ms. Hislop explained they collaborate with Republic on a case by case basis, mainly where they see contamination and where more education is needed.

Where Bellevue is now with Solid Waste goals: The City recycling goal is 50%. Right now, Bellevue's recycling rate is around 40%, and it takes a lot of effort to keep it at this level. Kirkland and Redmond report similar recycling rates. This is similar regionally. She noted that the current recycling data only contains data they get from Republic Services. She thinks they might be closer to the 50% goal than it appears if other data is included.

Challenges to achieving goals:

- Acquiring comprehensive collection data from non-contracted haulers
- Pandemic impacts, especially in commercial multifamily sectors: labor shortages, illegal dumping, bulky waste, building design, staff turnover, and resident turnover.

Where are we going?

- King County RE+ Plan (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- Emerging State Laws – plastic bag ban, single use plastics law, organics management law

Commissioner Khanloo asked how they prevent contamination of multifamily recycling by outsiders putting garbage in the bins. Ms. Hislop replied that illegal dumping is a big problem. The City has designed some outdoor signs regarding this in different languages. They have also recommended enclosures for the containers.

Commissioner Strom asked about an update on where recycling is going. Ms. Hislop reviewed some background on the National Sword policy and recycling industry and the need to find new markets for the materials. She



stated that everything on the Bellevue accepted recycling list gets recycled. Almost all the new plastics recycling vendors are in the United States. Recycling revenues are higher than they were previously.

Commissioner Hines asked about drop-off days for large scale recycling collection events. Ms. Hislop replied they don't do those anymore because now they have five-day-a-week collection for most of those items.

Commissioner Khanloo suggested that they work with the permitting department to implement some changes. Ms. Hislop explained they are looking into changing the code to require providing space for all three streams.

Chair Knezevic complimented the work being done in the schools.

**d) Remote Participation Approval April 6, 2023**

Commissioner Khanloo and Commissioner Wan requested remote participation for the April 6 meeting.

**Motion made by Vice Chair Hines, seconded by Commissioner Strom, to approve remote participation by Commissioner Wan for April 6. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

**Motion made by Vice Chair Hines, seconded by Commissioner Strom, to approve remote participation by Commissioner Khanloo for April 6. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

Chair Knezevic asked about prioritization of remote attendance approval. She requested a discussion of this in the future.

**9. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None

**10. REVIEW OF COMMISSION & COUNCIL CALENDARS**

Deputy Director Liu reviewed the Commission and Council calendars.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Chair Knezevic, seconded by Vice Chair Hines, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.