

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

Thursday
May 21, 2026

City Hall & Remote
6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Wan at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ken Wan (Chair), Andy Dupertuis, Gabby Lacson, Kurt Lutterman (Vice Chair)

COUNCIL LIAISON: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Ann Hajnosz (excused), Michael Margolis (excused), Mary Theisen (excused)

OTHERS PRESENT: Lucy Liu, Director; Joe Harbour, Deputy Director; Scott Edwards, Deputy Director; Dave Baisch, Assistant Director; Matt Hobson, Fiscal Manager; Hana Abdulrahman, Utility Bill Assistance Program Administrator; Lorissa Warren, Senior Administrative Assistant; Andrew Williams, Senior Administrative Assistant

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Lutterman, seconded by Commissioner Lacson, to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously (4-0).

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

None

4. NEW BUSINESS

a) Revised Policy Options to Expand Utility Bill Assistance Program

Deputy Director Scott Edwards re-introduced this item and noted that the cost estimates have been refined. Staff is requesting the ESC consider

revisiting its recommendation based on the refined cost estimates for expanding the long-term bill assistance program.

Fiscal Manager Matt Hobson presented updated Utility Bill Assistance (UBA) Program expansion options. These options will potentially expand assistance to more households than were originally presented while keeping the rate impact on par with the Commission's original recommendation. He reviewed the original options presented in March; summarized the need for, and the impact of, the revised cost estimates for the policy options; and showed the revised cost and rate impacts for the main options as well as the two new options for consideration. The change in the cost estimate was attributable to updated assumptions for the long-term utility bill rebate program's qualified customers that live in apartments or other multifamily complexes and do not directly pay a utility bill. The refined cost estimates better reflect actual conditions, which decreased the estimate for the Commission's recommendation by about \$400,000 per year. Mr. Hobson reviewed the guiding principles considered when developing new options: maintain existing assistance; assistance with meaningful impacts; align eligibility with other city programs; and balance rate impact with program funding.

- Option A: Expand the program to **senior/disabled households** with annual income **at or below 80% of area median income** and **maintain assistance** at 70% of the utility bill.
- Option B: Recommended by the ESC on March 6, 2026, expand the program to **all households** with annual income **at or below 50% of area median income** and **reduce assistance** to 50% of the utility bill.
- Option B1: New since prior ESC consideration, would **maintain assistance at 70% of the utility bill for senior/disabled households with incomes at or below 50 percent of area median income**; and expand the program to **all households** with annual income **at or below 80% of area median income**, with assistance for all other eligible households to be **35% of the utility bill**.
- Option B2: New since prior ESC consideration, would **maintain assistance at 70% of the utility bill for senior/disabled households with incomes at or below 50 percent of area median income**; and expand the program to **all households** with annual income **at or below 80% of area median income**, with assistance for all other eligible households to be **40% of the utility bill**.

Clarification questions and answers followed about details of the options.

Chair Wan read a statement saying that, consistent with the Commission's last recommendation, any change to the income eligibility criteria for the

City's long-term Utility Billing Assistance Program would be applied to the City's short-term assistance programs (e.g., Neighbors Helping Neighbors and Emergency Assistance Program) to provide consistent qualification requirements for both short- and long-term assistance. It would also include expanding the Solid Waste Bill Assistance Program in 2027 by providing rebates to qualifying multi-family residential solid waste accounts. Following the Commission's recommendation, the proposed changes to the Utility Bill Assistance Program will be presented to City Council for consideration in June ahead of the 2027-2028 proposed budget process. If approved, the proposed changes would take effect in 2027.

Motion made by Commissioner Lutterman, seconded by Commissioner Lacson, to approve Option B1 to replace the Commission's earlier recommendation.

Questions and answers followed regarding the impacts of the different options and of the reasons staff had for revisiting this. Chair Wan noted that these recommendations are on top of overall utility system rate increases which Council is already very concerned about. Commissioners debated the merits of the options in terms of how many people could be helped and at what level.

**Upon a roll call vote, the motion to approve Option B1 passed (3-1).
Aye: Lutterman, Dupertuis, Lacson
Nay: Wan**

b) Utilities Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Tour

Commissioners visited three sites highlighting the Utilities Department's capital project delivery for selected projects. These included:

- Stormwater Park Planning Study at Commissioner's Waterway
- Crossroads North and South Reservoir Recoating Project
- Somerset 2 Water Pump Station Improvement Project

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Commissioner Lutterman, seconded by Commissioner Dupertuis, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.