

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

Thursday
September 7, 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), Andy Dupertuis, Gabby Lacson, Kurt Lutterman, Michael Margolis

COMMISSIONER ATTENDING REMOTELY: None

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Ken Wan (excused)

COUNCIL LIAISON: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Lucy Liu, Director; Linda De Boldt, Utility Engineering Assistant Director; Joe Harbour, Deputy Director, Cheri Brignon, Senior Administrative Assistant; Nate Dickey, Utilities Wastewater Superintendent; Eric LaFrance, Engineering Planning Manager; and Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion made by Commissioner Lutterman, seconded by Commissioner Lacson, to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously (5-0).

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Alex Tsimerman, 14150 NE 20th Street, Bellevue, expressed frustration regarding procedures and his inability to make comments at city meetings.

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

None

5. STAFF REPORTS

Deputy Director Joe Harbour discussed new remote participation rules passed by Council. The Commission no longer needs to approve a request for a member to participate remotely at the prior ESC Meeting. If a member wishes to participate remotely, they must notify the Chair and the staff liaison of their intent no later than noon of the day prior to the meeting. No more than three members can participate remotely. Legal will be coming to an upcoming meeting to propose changes to the Commission's bylaws in light of the new rules. Chair Knezevic reviewed public participation requirements as contained in the bylaws and how she intends to handle this.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) JULY 6, 2023 MINUTES

Motion made by Commissioner Lutterman, seconded by Commissioner Lacson to approve the 7/6/23 minutes as presented. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (5-0).

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

8. NEW BUSINESS

a) Wastewater SmartCovers

Wastewater Supt. Nate Dickey made an informational presentation regarding SmartCovers. SmartCovers provide real-time remote wastewater system monitoring through a reliable satellite communications system. Bellevue Utilities purchased this technology as a pilot program using the Innovation Funds Program to optimize the cleaning of wastewater assets, gain operational efficiency, and reduce backups and overflows while being good stewards of our ratepayers' dollars. Mr. Dickey reviewed how SmartCovers work and how they make operations more efficient. These provide the ability to monitor water levels in real time, collect data, and reduce maintenance costs. Ten units have been strategically placed in places where the City has had issues in the past. Since installing the units, the City has had zero overflows on these monitored sites and avoided one overflow that was going to happen. This has resulted in a 100% reduction in monthly cleaning. They are currently monitoring 25 sites on the quarterly cleaning frequency list. The plan is to monitor for a cycle then move these out of current frequency if the data supports this with the goal being to find the most efficient cleaning frequency. They purchased 10 units for \$60,000 using innovation funds. 46 scheduled cleanings did not need to happen which resulted in a savings of \$29,900 and 138 labor hours over the first 7 months.

Commissioner Margolis asked about any known issues with the sensors. Mr. Dickey explained there can be some issues, but they are easy to replace. The biggest downfall is the built-in battery which is supposed to last five years. Some in San Antonio failed early but they are easily replaceable.

Commissioner Margolis asked what other data they get from these. Mr. Dickey explained they are only using the subsonic sensors that measure level and pressure. There are many other sensors available. Plans are to continue to cycle through the increased maintenance sites and to continue using these for problem areas or newfound issues. He would like to expand this project from 10 to 30 units. Other jurisdictions have expanded the use into other areas including hydrogen sulfide monitoring, wastewater monitoring, surface water monitoring, pressure monitoring, and rain/temperature.

Commissioner Dupertuis praised this project as an example of modernization. He asked if this is part of the Microsoft/telemetry tracking pilot program? If not, can we look at ways to integrate the data? Also, which budget is this coming out of? Mr. Harbour said that innovation fund is part of the Director's budget. This isn't currently part of the SCADA program right now. They are in the middle of a SCADA upgrade right now. This is extremely useful technology, and there may be opportunities to integrate in the future. Commissioner Dupertuis noted that Microsoft funded an initiative to look at data across the City of Bellevue. It might be useful to ask Microsoft how this data can be integrated. He thought it might be possible to do it without any budget implications.

Commissioner Margolis asked if there is value to Bellevue's partners where the wastewater is being conveyed to. Mr. Dickey did not think so at this level but possibly in the future if they are collecting more types of data. At this point the value is mainly to the customers and our operations.

Chair Knezevic asked how many manholes Bellevue currently has? Mr. Dickey replied that there are 13,000+ MH's. What is the optimal number of sensors? He is only asking for 30 at this point. His target is to cut down the increased maintenance sites, not to have sensors on every manhole.

b) Watershed Management Plan Update

Engineering Assistant Director Linda De Boldt and Engineering Planning Manager Eric LaFrance, introduced the topic of watershed management. Mr. LaFrance discussed two strategic initiatives: Open Stream Condition Assessment and the Watershed Management Plan. Bellevue has four major watersheds. The goal of the Watershed Management Plan is to improve the health of Bellevue's streams. Since they last came to the ESC, the team has completed watershed analysis and prioritization and developed a Watershed Improvement Strategies

Report. A large public engagement effort occurred throughout Phase 1 and will continue through Phase 2.

Commissioner Dupertuis applauded the community outreach efforts. He referred to several parallel condition assessments going on and asked where this program resides. Asst. Director De Boldt explained that it is a combination of operational dollars that go into the development of the plan. The projects that come out of the plan will be in the capital program. There are projects in all three funds – Stormwater and Surface Water is one of those. The development of the plan itself is a project in the capital program. Commissioner Dupertuis also encouraged staff to fully investigate the grants that are available.

Watershed improvement strategies projects were placed into three “buckets” – protect, improve, or sustain. Basin specific watershed investments strategies include projects, programs, maintenance, policies, codes, and regulations; Recommended investments for City and stakeholders include description, benefits, scale, planning level costs, funding opportunities and partnerships, permitting requirements, and needed code and/or policy changes. Project investment categories include in-stream habitat, water quality, flow control, wetlands, and regional facilities. Programmatic investment categories include restoration, water quality, flow control (and WQ), Operations and Maintenance, and code and policy.

There are a lot of stakeholders who will be considered in this process. These include customers, development community, tribes, adjacent cities, regional partners, city departments, utility management, ESC, and the City Council. Lenses/perspectives that will be used for development of the projects include affordability, environment, equity and social justice, climate change city priorities, and population growth.

The draft Watershed Management Plan will be developed and come back to the ESC for review. Mr. LaFrance reviewed the proposed timeline in conjunction with other projects that are happening. The Watershed Improvement Strategies Report is almost ready for release. The Watershed Management Plan Public Outreach Plan is currently entering Phase 2.

Chair Knezevic asked how they enhance wetlands. Mr. LaFrance explained there are a number of ways it can be done such as purchasing additional land.

9. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

None

10. REVIEW OF COMMISSION & COUNCIL CALENDARS

Deputy Director Harbour reviewed the calendars.

11. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.