

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

Thursday  
March 7, 2019  
6:30 p.m.

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

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Diann Strom (Chair), Vanja Knezevic (Vice Chair), Anne Howe, Negin Khanloo, Aaron Morin, Lisa Schreiner, Ling Zhuang

**COUNCIL LIAISON:** Jared Nieuwenhuis (absent)

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Lucy Liu, Assistant Director – Resource Management & Customer Service; Asst. Director – Operations, Joe Harbour; Nav Otal, Director – Utilities; Doug Lane, PE; Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

**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 Knezevic, seconded by Commissioner Schreiner, to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

**3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

Oral and written communications were solicited. There were none.

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

None

**5. STAFF REPORTS**

None

**6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

## 2/7/19 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ling Zhuang proposed the following amendments:

- Page 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, 3rd sentence: “This has been embedded in the code as a first priority to try to implement low impact development **for new development** ~~before doing anything else.~~”
- Replace the 4<sup>th</sup> sentence in that same paragraph with: ~~Commissioner Zhuang expressed concern that there is not more incentive for private rain gardens at a residential level.~~ **Commissioner Zhuang asked if there is any incentive program for *existing* residents.**
- Replace the last sentence in that paragraph with: Commissioner Zhuang suggested a program similar to how PSE does preferred vendor recommendations that would provide an interested homeowner with a qualified vendor.

**Motion made by Khanloo, seconded by Commissioner Morin, approve the minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

### 7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

### 8. NEW BUSINESS

- Storm Response Report  
*Asst. Director, Operations, Joe Harbour*  
*Republic Personnel: Robin Murbach, Yasser Brenes, Russell Joe*

Republic addressed the Commission regarding impacts to collection as a result of inclement weather. Concerns from customers revolved around missed collections, communications issues, and customer service.

Ms. Murbach reviewed Republic’s Inclement Weather Plan. There was a No-Go on Monday and Tuesday both weeks, keeping in mind that safety was the highest priority. February 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> were the worst operation days during the snow event due to very icy conditions. Supervisors went out on each route daily to determine the condition of the streets. The weather was monitored real time and adjusted each half hour as weather conditions changed. Communication emails were sent late in the evening or early morning. If communications were delayed it was because of uncertainty of the road conditions or because of incorrect contact information.

The operations team had an emphasis on keeping the community safe. Out of over 90 drivers on route there was only one accident. The drivers completed the routes they could under extreme conditions. The team rallied to get the work done safely while working extended hours.

Communication was an area where Republic recognizes they could have done better. They miscommunicated information and weren't able to handle the call volume. They did not meet the inclement weather timeline on information to the city. Not all robocalls went out as planned. She stated they struggled to get updated information on the website and out to the media in a timely fashion. Ms. Murbach acknowledged that this was an area where they disappointed customers and the city.

She reviewed a day-by-day summary of commercial and residential route garbage, recycling, and organic pickups during the snow event. She noted that decisions were made that affected a number of customers negatively, but also affected a number of customers positively because their stuff got picked up.

Lessons learned by Republic were that the internal coordination of information needed to be made by one point of contact instead of multiple individuals. They needed to review the inclement weather plan with all departments prior to inclement weather incidents. They need a Plan B when drivers and customer service employees are unable to get out of their neighborhoods. Customer information needs to follow protocol. They should have placed drop boxes earlier than they did. Overall, lack of communication was a significant problem.

Yasser Brenes reviewed the plan going forward. Republic plans to imbed the contract language and internal inclement weather plan into one document. They will designate one single point of contact to be the liaison between Republic customer service and operations. They plan to develop a communication plan to follow the contract with one point of contact with the city. Additionally, they plan to coordinate communication between the Bellevue transportation department and Republic operations team. Also, early execution of the drop boxes could lessen the effect on customers.

#### Discussion:

Commissioner Zhuang suggested that Republic explore a new communication option online where customers can type in their addresses and information will be customized for them. This would streamline communication and save time. She also recommended putting the drop boxes on the map for customers.

Commissioner Khanloo asked if letters were sent out to customers who didn't get answers from customer service. Ms. Murbach replied that this had not been done, but indicated that Republic would send out robocalls to all customers thanking them for their patience and understanding during this time and acknowledging that they let customers down.

Commissioner Khanloo asked if there was any way customer service personnel could work remotely in the event that they can't make it to work. Mr. Brenes replied that is not an option now, but Republic is looking into some other options.

Commissioner Knezevic suggested letting people work from home whenever possible in this type of situation. She noted she was following a lot of complaints on Next Door. She spoke in favor of sending out a letter and letting customers know a credit was available. Ms. Murbach commented that they actually did pick up all the trash, even though it was late, because they picked up double and triple the amount once they were able to pick up. She commented that the apology right now was the most important piece. Commissioner Knezevic asked how critical customers were determined. Asst. Director Liu reviewed this, noting that they were predetermined.

Commissioner Morin commented that he was disappointed personally about the misinformation he received. When he called the recording gave him incorrect information. When his garbage wasn't picked up he called to request a refund and was not able to get through to customer service. He noted that there are other issues with Republic and this is just the icing on the cake. He was disappointed that they are talking about refunding fees to a small number of customers instead of to all customers whose trash did not get picked up.

Commissioner Khanloo recommended studying best practices for places that routinely have heavy snow, but are still somehow able to pick up the trash. She also asked how data collection was done by drivers. Ms. Murbach replied that there is a sheet they take out and mark what they do each day. Commissioner Khanloo recommended that a GPS method be implemented. Ms. Murbach commented that this is coming, but they do not have it yet.

Commissioner Zhuang commented that GPS technology has been on the market for a long time, and Republic should already have it. She suggested that this should be made a priority.

Commissioner Howe agreed with Commissioner Morins that even though this was a big storm, the lack of communication was not excusable. She

appreciated that Republic picked up extra garbage on the day they finally picked it up. Even though she was disappointed overall, she commended her driver who went above and beyond in helping bring some trash out to the curb.

Commissioner Morin commented that his concern was not that the garbage didn't get picked up, it was that he was given incorrect information or no information. Ms. Murbach agreed that this had been a letdown.

Commissioner Khanloo commented that Bellevue is supposed to be a Smart city. She commented that Republic needs to invest in technology to be able to be competitive.

Commissioner Schreiner strongly agreed with Commissioner Morin's comments that this was the last straw. She has had many customer service issues. She and her neighbors strongly feel the City should look at another service provider. She thinks that the customers of Bellevue deserve more than just an apology.

Chair Strom also stated she was disappointed with the communication, but expressed appreciation to Republic employees for working so hard. Chair Strom asked about the opportunity for Republic to participate with the City's EOC. Ms. Murbach commented that they would be interested in that. Director Otal commented that the City would welcome Republic's participation. She also commented that this was a glimpse into what issues could be like in the event of a more serious event.

Asst. Director Joe Harbour followed up by discussing the City's response to the snow storm.<sup>1</sup> He reviewed the types of things that came up in Operations and Maintenance in Water, Sewer and Storm. In Water Operations, there were communication impacts and mitigation strategies implemented at four water stations. He reviewed communication impacts, power outages, and mitigation strategies implemented for wastewater locations. Storm and Surface Water crews were on 12-hour shifts for snow and ice response and then transitioned to prepare for a potential flooding event. Water Maintenance crews responded to approximately 15 frozen meters over the course of the storm event. Approximately 20 customers requested assistance due to broken service lines. There were no watermain breaks that could be tied directly to the weather conditions. Utilities' stores personnel placed orders for 46 loads of ice-slicer and three loads of liquid de-icer during the event.

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<sup>1</sup> Commissioner Knezevic left at 7:40 p.m.

Utilities administrative personnel handled the following:

- 1,110 work orders were created
- 1,274 service requests were created, 38 from MyBellevue/Public Stuff
- 1,822 phone calls were received between 2/3-2/15
- On Tuesday, February 12 we received 337 calls, on Wednesday February 13 we received 387. The average normal volume is 47 calls a day.

He commented that even though this is an unusual event it was important to learn from it and continue to improve.

Commissioner Zhuang expressed appreciation for the City of Bellevue employees who sacrificed a lot to keep the roads plowed and safe. She suggested coordinating with the Bellevue School District in the future to help plow the schools' driveways and parking lots. Assistant Director Harbour commented that Bellevue works with the schools to make sure they understand the City's plow routes and problem spots.

Commissioner Zhuang also asked about the environmental impact or consequence of the Swayolocken waste water pump station overflow into Lake Washington. Assistant Director Harbour explained that it was a King County pump station down by Mercer Slough. Commissioner Zhuang expressed concern about the impact on the stream environment of Mercer Slough and wondered if there is something that Bellevue can ask King County to do to fix the situation. Assistant Director Harbour replied that King County did some sampling to verify the quality of the water. He commented that for most spills of this type, dilution is often the best solution to improve the environment. The City doesn't regulate King County's pump stations, but the Department of Ecology does. Commissioner Zhuang thought that Bellevue would have some authority because of its agreement with King County. She thinks there can be an action taken.

Commissioner Howe commented that waters of the state are regulated by the Department of Ecology, and King County will be held accountable. They will need to report and take action as directed by the Department of Ecology. Her understanding is that the agreement King County has with the City is related to handling its sewage and doesn't necessarily address what would happen if a spill were to occur in waters of the state. Chair Strom commented that in the interest of time and staying on task this topic might be better addressed offline or at another time. Commissioner Howe asked questions about duties of various departments as it relates to snow plowing. Asst. Director Harbour reviewed this.

Commissioner Morin expressed appreciation to the whole O&M team. He asked if the de-icer negatively affects water quality. Asst. Director Harbour stated he had been told it was environmentally friendly de-icer with minimal impacts, but stated he would follow up on that.

Commissioner Khanloo expressed concern about residents' use of salt and its impact on salmon. Asst. Director Harbour explained that the city also has a clean-up plan to get the streets swept up.

- Water System Plan Implementation  
*Doug Lane, PE*

Mr. Lane explained the Plan's purpose was to document policies to evaluate the system and provide a basis for capital improvements. The Plan is required by state, county, and city codes, in compliance with the Growth Management Act.

Non-CIP recommendations for evaluation included:

- Engineering Evaluations:
  - Chlorine residuals – Resolved by changing some settings
  - Backup Power – Resolved: Parks had a generator they weren't using so Water is leasing it at a very low cost.
  - Seismic Vulnerability Assessment
  - Emergency Wells/Water Rights
- Implement AMI
- Expand Asset Management Program

Mr. Lane reviewed CIP recommendations related to the Seismic Vulnerability Assessment and Emergency Wells/Water Rights. He also presented an update on the AMI implementation schedule which is in full swing. Other CIP project recommendations were reviewed. These included Inlet Capacity, Storage Deficit, Newport Hills Fire Flow, and West Lake Sammamish Fire Flow and Pressure. Mr. Lane summarized that general 2018 CIP progress included replacement of 4.1 miles of main, completion of Horizon View 1 Pump Station/Reservoir, conceptual design of Pikes Peak and Cherry Crest Pump Station, design progression of Pikes Peak Reservoir, and 30% design of Enatai Inlet. Northeast 40<sup>th</sup> Inlet was resolved using new technology (No CIP).

## **9. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS**

None

## **10. REVIEW OF ESC CALENDAR/COUNCIL CALENDAR;**

- ESC Calendar/Council Calendar

Asst. Director Liu reviewed the ESC calendar and the Council calendar.

Commissioner Zhuang asked for information about a Storm Initiative item. Director Liu indicated she would follow up on that.

Commissioner Schreiner asked if Andrew's position has been filled. Ms. Liu replied that the City is looking at candidates now.

## **11. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Commissioner Zhuang, seconded by Commissioner Schreiner, to adjourn the meeting at 8:46 p.m. Motion passed unanimously (7-0).**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 p.m.