

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

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

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

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Vanja Knezevic (Chair), Ling Zhuang (Vice Chair), Diann Strom, Negin Khanloo, Neal Hines, Anne Howe

COUNCIL LIAISON: Jared Nieuwenhuis¹

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Lisa Schreiner

OTHERS PRESENT: Lucy Liu, Assistant Director, Resource Management & Customer Service; Gwen Rousseau, Senior Planner – Community Development Department; Brian Bartle, Deputy Director; Stephanie Schwenger, Solid Waste Contract Administrator; Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Knezevic at 6:31 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved unanimously (6-0).

3. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Leslie Kester identified herself as a low income resident and spoke in opposition to the water program for low income citizens. She claimed that this was funded on the backs of low-income residents. She felt this was taken out of the hands of low-income people.

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

None

5. STAFF REPORTS

¹ Councilmember Nieuwenhuis arrived at 7:12 p.m.

None

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

10/3/19 Regular Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Zhuang had amendments to the October 3 minutes on page 2 (referring back to her earlier amendments to the September minutes):

- 3rd point bullet point: Page 5 of 7, last paragraph: “Commissioner Zhuang expressed concern about the cost-estimation based on 75 years’ projection. She indicated that according to ~~the R&R from the fund~~ chart, a large amount of money we reserve now would be spent ~~45~~ **40 plus** years later.”
- 5th bullet: Page 6 of 7, 5th paragraph, last sentence. “. . . Chair Strom suggested that Commissioner Zhuang get together with staff outside of the meeting time ~~to clarify any misunderstandings~~ **if she has additional questions.**”

Motion made by Commissioner Khanloo, seconded by Commissioner Howe, to approve the amendments to the October 3 minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion made by Vice Chair Zhuang, seconded by Commissioner Strom, to approve the October 3 minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

8. NEW BUSINESS

- **2020 Census Awareness Campaign**

Gwen Rousseau, Senior Planner – Community Development Department, gave an overview of what the 2020 Census is, the importance of the census results in allocating funding, and how the census will be conducted. She stated that the ESC has a unique opportunity to be ambassadors in the community to raise awareness of the importance of the Census.

Commissioner Negin asked if Mini City Hall would be available to help citizens. Senior Planner Rousseau replied that they hope to have that available to help.

Commissioner Strom and Chair Knezevic commended Ms. Rousseau for her work.

- **Smart Water Meters Project**

Brian Bartle, Deputy Director, provided the Commission with an update on the Smart Water Meters Update. Deputy Director Bartle summarized that staff will be submitting an amendment to Council to change the contract with Itron to cellular technology from RF technology. He reviewed the reasons for this change. It will increase the cost of the project, but will be less than the proposed increases to the RF technology. He discussed benefits of the cellular technology and the anticipated timeline for this project.

Vice Chair Zhuang asked clarification questions about the revised contract costs. Staff responded.

Commissioner Strom expressed frustration about the delay in the contract. She asked how this would show up in the budget for next year. Assistant Director Liu explained that any unused capital dollars already appropriated would be rolled over to the next budget.

Chair Knezevic asked if neighboring cities are using cellular. Deputy Director Bartle indicated he would have to check. Chair Knezevic asked for more information on the other cities' use of this technology.

Vice Chair Zhuang asked for a cost estimation on the portal. She spoke to the importance of making sure the IT is ready. She expressed concern about how the change to this one part would impact the whole project. Deputy Director Bartle indicated that the change from RF to cellular technology would not change anything in the systems that have already been set up with the City. The only difference is in how that meter talks to the Itron system. How the meter talks to Itron won't impact how our system talks to Itron. Vice Chair Zhuang expressed concern about increasing the cost without increasing the budget. With this and the extra costs associated with delays, she suggested it would be good to take another look at the budget.

- **Annual Solid Waste Collection Contract Performance Review**

Stephanie Schwenger, Solid Waste Contract Administrator, reviewed the Annual Solid Waste Collection Contract Review.

- Results of annual customer surveys

Satisfaction is generally high in five of six performance areas measured, but the one area where there is some opportunity for improvement with both single and multifamily customers is *Satisfaction for response time following a missed collection (57%)*.

Republic Services will be submitting a plan demonstrating how they will improve their response time. They will also have a performance fee to pay for failing to meet that performance expectation.

She reviewed customers' responses related to recycling practices. Single family customers are still not clear about special pickup requirements and what to do with unusual items. Almost half of the customers now know about the drop-off center, which is an improvement. She also reviewed responses related to latex paint recycling. Multifamily customers' participation in organics recycling has increased. Many customers who are not currently recycling (42%) have also indicated they are interested in implementing organics recycling in the next year. Both single family and multifamily customers have indicated they appreciate the posters and signage. Staff is encouraged by the increased interest in the recycling program.

Commissioner Khanloo commented that the questions were complicated even for those whose first language is English, and the language barrier might be an issue for some residents in responding to the survey. Ms. Schwenger expressed appreciation for the feedback and acknowledged that it is only offered in English right now. She noted that they were very pleased with the response rate for this survey. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested looking into the possibility of having different language options once people get to the website.

Councilmember Nieuwenhuis referred to Republic's low performance score for missed pickups and asked if any extenuating circumstances related to this (such as a significant snow event) had been noted. Ms. Schwenger commented that the question had not been asked. Councilmember Nieuwenhuis suggested that this follow-up question be added next time. Ms. Schwenger commented that Republic does a bi-monthly customer survey where they ask this same set of questions, and the results are pretty consistent even if you take away the responses related to the snow event.

Commissioner Strom recalled that this had been an issue in years past. Republic has already done the action plan, but the situation doesn't seem to have improved. Ms. Schwenger replied that staff is aware of this and plans to look at the training in the call center.

Household Hazardous Waste – One area that the City focuses on is used motor oil recycling. Survey responses showed that most people are taking their cars into the shop to get the oil changed which is the preferred behavior. The survey also asked about single family customers’ handling of compact fluorescent bulbs which have a small amount of mercury in them. Results showed that there is work to be done about the proper handling of these. 40% are taking these bulbs back to a light collection site for proper recycling, but about 30% of people are putting them in the garbage or putting them in curbside material. Customers were also asked about their handling of leftover medications. 60% of respondents are using the recycling program or bringing the medication back to a pharmacy or clinic; however 20% are flushing their medications which results in the medication in the water supply or keeping them in their cabinets.

- Results of vehicle audit

The vehicle audit looked at vehicle fleet requirements. Results showed that Republic Services was fully compliant with 8 of 20 requirements, but not compliant in the following areas: fleet too old, excessive use of backup/reserve vehicles, missing placards with material collected, missing nameplates with driver’s name and phone number, missing spill kits, missing backup cameras, missing onboard scale, no reported changes to inventory, and annual inventory missing data. In response to this, the City is working with Republic Services on a Vehicle Compliance Action Plan and paying the applicable performance fees.

Key takeaways from the survey showed that overall customers’ satisfaction continues to be very high. The City and Republic Services will collaborate to address service issues identified in the survey and the audit. The City will continue to incorporate customer preferences in future outreach efforts.

Commissioner Strom asked where the performance fees paid by Republic go. Assistant Director Liu explained that the fees would go into funding outreach efforts.

9. ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

David Plummer, 14414 NE 14th Place, Bellevue, WA 98007, referred to the AMI presentation. He stated that staff’s report should have been in writing in detail in advance to the meeting. He expressed frustration that he has been requesting information about the status of this project for several months and received

nothing. He feels the whole contract ought to be subjected to a state auditor's report. He encouraged the ESC to request that staff make a detailed report on the status of this project to the Council. He also expressed concerns that these increases will affect citizen utility rates in the future.

10. REVIEW OF ESC CALENDAR/COUNCIL CALENDAR

Assistant Director Liu reviewed the ESC and Council calendars.

11. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.