

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

Thursday  
March 4, 2021  
6:30 p.m.

Zoom

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**ROLL CALL**

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Vanja Knezevic (Chair), Diann Strom (Vice Chair), Anne Howe, Negin Khanloo, Ken Wan, Ling Zhuang

**COUNCIL LIAISON:** Conrad Lee

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Neal Hines

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Brian Bartle, Utilities Deputy Director; Lucy Liu, Utilities Resource Management and Customer Service Assistant Director; Linda De Boldt, Utilities Engineering Assistant Director; Kipp Fockler, Utilities Water Section Superintendent, OM; Tony Marcum, Utilities Operations Manager, OM; Cherish Jackson, Senior Administrative Assistant, Utilities Director's Office; Joe Harbour, Utilities Operations and Maintenance Assistant Director; Mike Krueger, Utilities Storm and Surface Water Superintendent; Abe Santos, Utilities Senior Engineer; Don McQuilliams, Utilities Operations Manager, OM; and Laurie Hugdahl, Minutes Taker

**2. TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF BYLAWS**

Chair Knezevic and Deputy Director Brian Bartle read an introductory statement regarding online meetings and procedures.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

**Motion made by Commissioner Khanloo, seconded by Vice Chair Strom, to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously (6-0).**

**4. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION**

None.

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

Councilmember Lee greeted everyone and expressed appreciation to staff and the ESC for working together through the pandemic.

**6. STAFF REPORTS**

Deputy Director Bartle commented on confusion between the names of the ESC (Environmental Services Commission) and the ESI (Environmental Stewardship Initiative). Utility staff is working on renaming this commission. They will not be making any changes or revisions to the bylaws, but will be revising the name to avoid confusion.

Commissioner Wan suggested getting a quarterly performance update on Republic Services' Action Plan.

**Motion made by Commissioner Wan, seconded by Commissioner Howe, to ask staff for quarterly performance updates on Republic Services' Action Plan.**

Commissioner Zhuang asked what the goal of such a report would be. Commissioner Wan replied that since the failure has gone on for a number of years, the goal would be to see if Republic Services' Action Plan was effective at rectifying the failure before the end of the year. He would like an update on the number of missed pickups in the quarter and if they returned within 24 hours to pick up the missed container. This would show if Republic Services was performing or not.

Chair Knezevic asked if this is something the City can even request from Republic Services. Deputy Director Bartle thought most of the data could be provided. He suggested talking to Republic Services to make this part of their Action Plan.

Commissioner Khanloo suggested tabling the vote until the next meeting until they get more information about what is possible.

**Motion passed unanimously (6-0) to ask staff for quarterly performance updates on Republic Services Action Plan.**

Staff will further research with Republic Services to see if it is possible to have quarterly updates and report back at the next meeting.

**7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a) **2/4/21 MINUTES**

Commissioner Zhuang had the following edit on page 2, in the second paragraph under Staff Reports as follows:

**“Commissioner Zhuang expressed appreciation for the report and asked why the transmitter is behind schedule if it is possible the transmitter will be further delayed.”**

**Motion made by Commissioner Wan, seconded by Commissioner Khanloo to approve the 2/4/21 minutes as amended. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).**

8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

a) **Water System Leak Response**

Tony Marcum, Operations Manager, O&M, introduced this item. Kipp Fockler, Water Section Superintendent, provided the presentation which covered preparedness, risk assessment, response, and recovery. He spoke to the importance of hiring qualified staff and training them well so they can be retained. Part of the preparedness and training included being proactive by doing leak detection, conducting tabletop exercises, Incident Command System certification, and providing a 24/7 response team. Appropriate equipment is also very important in preparedness in order to be able to respond quickly.

Commissioner Wan asked how much of the equipment is unique to the Utilities Department and how much is owned versus renting as needed. Mr. Fockler noted that the basic equipment is owned, and some – like 5-yard dump trucks, backhoes - is shared across departments, especially between Utilities, Transportation, Parks and Streets. Specialized equipment which is used infrequently is rented. Parts and materials are maintained and always available in the storeroom.

Mr. Fockler continued the presentation and explained that reasons for failure include structural failure (pipe material, pressure, corrosion, old installation practices, ground movement, tree roots) or third party causes such as underground boring or contractor neglect. Example of mitigation strategies including throttle valves to minimize flooding, maintaining

positive pressure in the system for public health, providing bottled water for temporary water use, isolating the leak, minimizing downstream impacts, and minimizing environmental impacts.

Response to leaks included gathering information via listening devices and observation and maps; controlling the leak, mobilizing a response, repairing the leak, restoring roads and surfaces, and recovering. Staff is available for 24/7 responses. Crews don't go home until the water is on. Field response crews have a network of support to minimize impacts and protect public health including property damage, traffic disruptions, boil water notices, system impacts and noise. Restoration work included backfill, asphalt, monitoring, documentation, filing claims, and debriefing the process.

Water mains break a lot less frequently than water services do. In 2020 there were 29 water main repairs and 190 water service repairs. The number of repairs is trending down overall due to the aggressive CIP program.

Commissioner Zhuang thanked staff for the presentation. She asked about historical data to show the trend in the number of water breaks per year. Mr. Fockler explained there is a lot of data tracked through the asset management program (Maximo). Failure reporting tracks everything related to breaks. He pointed to the past five years of data showing the downward trend and explained that they are seeing fewer blowouts and more circumferential cracks.

Commissioner Zhuang questioned if the speed of water main replacement with the R&R program is adequate. Tony Marcum referred to the annual number of water main breaks and noted that because of the AC main replacement program the number of 4" main breaks is significantly less than it would have been. Mr. Fockler commented that acoustic testing is fairly infantile in its development, and the cost is very high. As technology improves and more companies offer it the City will consider doing more. Commissioner Zhuang expressed hope that the number of water main breaks will go down. She expressed appreciation to the crews for their hard work.

Commissioner Khanloo thanked staff for the presentation and thanked the crews for their excellent service they provide to the City of Bellevue.

Commissioner Howe thanked staff for the presentation. She referred to the number of water main breaks and asked how Bellevue compares to other cities. Mr. Fockler stated that staff would follow up with that information. Mr. Marcum indicated that it is extremely hard to compare cities because

of the difference in materials used and the difference in lengths of time of installation.

**b) Case Study of an Emergency Response**

Don McQuilliams, Operations Manager, introduced this item. Mike Krueger, Utilities Storm and Surface Water Superintendent, and Abe Santos, Utilities Senior Engineer, made the presentation regarding a significant landslide adjacent to West Lake Sammamish Parkway.

Mr. Krueger reviewed the background and timeline of the event. A sinkhole and broken stormwater pipe were discovered prior to a historic rain event. The bypass pump suffered mechanical failure, and an overflow occurred. The stormwater overflow triggered a landslide from the site of the sinkhole down the hillside to Lake Sammamish.

Mr. Santos reviewed initial city design and contract specifications for dealing with the initial sinkhole and broken stormwater pipe. An emergency declaration was issued by the city manager. Design and contract specifications were quickly prepared. Staff coordinated permitting and notified adjacent neighbors about the sinkhole problem and proposed repair and impacts. They coordinated with Transportation and the community regarding traffic impacts. The historic rain event ended up changing the plan by causing a landslide event with significant slope and property damage.

Mr. Santos discussed details of the landslide response and recovery. The new plan included emergency contractor mobilization to stabilize the slope. Mr. Santos reviewed emergency design challenges including the steep slope and driveways on either side. This project also required a lot of community outreach and engagement, coordination with transportation department, design and construction complexities, and coordination with permitting agencies. The response included restoration of stormwater and water infrastructure from the damaged landslide. The project was finished within 95 calendar days and also included slope restoration and a new walking trail and stairs. Property owners have been pleased with the process and the results. Lake restoration is still underway due to soil deposition into Lake Sammamish.

The financial impact of the project was reviewed. Final costs for the project will be available once the last phase of the project (lake restoration) is completed.

Commissioner Wan thanked staff for the presentation. He asked if the landslide would have occurred without the mechanical failure of the

pump. Mr. Krueger explained that the pump failure was the key point of the event cascade. Commissioner Wan asked if anyone has gone out to inspect after the heavy rain over the last few months. Mr. Krueger replied that it is regularly monitored, and everything is working perfectly.

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

Deputy Director Brian Bartle reviewed the ESC and the Council calendar. In April the ESC will be looking at 2020 Financial Performance and the SCADA Master Plan & Implementation Update as well as items that were brought up by commissioners in tonight's meeting. Commissioner Strom requested an update on the Pikes Peak reservoir. Linda DeBoldt suggested this could be included in the May 6 asset presentation.

Commissioner Wan asked about Bellevue's preparedness in light of recent utility issues in Texas. Kipp Fockler commented that Washington's water reserves are quite a bit deeper in the ground so they are below the freeze line. In the south they have very shallow water lines and have dry barrel fire hydrants, where the water is always inside the hydrant, because they don't expect freezing weather. Bellevue has wet barrel fire hydrants so that the water is all down where the water main is. He did not think the same issues would occur in Bellevue for those reasons. Deputy Director Bartle concurred that the systems are vastly different in design, and Bellevue is well-prepared.

Commissioner Zhuang asked if the Kelsey Creek at Glendale Country Club Wier Passage Restoration item on the agenda for June is part of the Watershed Management Plan. Ms. DeBoldt explained it is a separate CIP project for design of restoration work in Kelsey Creek at Glendale Country Club that is planned to go to construction in June.

Commissioner Zhuang asked if the purpose of the project was to meet an NPDES requirement. Ms. DeBoldt explained it is a fish passage restoration project which will remove the wiers that are in the creek right now and put in a more natural system. The project was initiated due to some bank erosion that was occurring in that area. It is not driven by the Watershed Management Plan although it is a restoration project in alignment with the Plan.

Commissioner Zhuang asked if the project is intended to help salmon or other types of fish. Abe Santos added that the design will enhance all fish habitat which has been compromised because of the erosion. Juvenile salmon will benefit, but it is not the only species that will be helped. Commissioner Zhuang expressed concern about the lack of salmon in Kelsey Creek despite the large investment there. Ms. DeBoldt clarified that this is not a regulatory project driven by NPDES. It is an environmentally driven project in alignment with the City's goal to work on creeks and watersheds, like Kelsey Creek, that can support salmon returning.

Staff will be bringing more information about watershed planning efforts to staff later this year.

11. **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion made by Chair Knezevic, seconded by Vice Chair Strom, to adjourn the meeting. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.