

Minutes of the

REGULAR MEETING OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

Committee Members Present:

Peter Lindstrom, Chair; Kris Fredson; Phillip Sterner; Susan Vento, Wendy Wulff, Vice Chair; Raymond Zeran

Committee Members Absent:

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Committee Chair Lindstrom called the regular meeting of the Council's Environment Committee to order at 4:01 p.m. on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 with the following roll call:

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Absent: 0

Chair's statement was read at the beginning of the meeting as follows:

NOTICE: The Metropolitan Council Chair has determined it is not practical or prudent to conduct in-person meetings in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, committee members will participate in this meeting via telephone or other electronic means and the meeting will be conducted under Minnesota Statutes section 13D.021 at the date and time stated above. We encourage you to monitor the meeting remotely. If you have comments, we encourage members of the public to email us at public.info@metc.state.mn.us. We will respond to your comments in a timely manner.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

Without objection the agenda was approved.

It was moved by Sterner, seconded by Wulff to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2021 regular meeting of the Environment Committee.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

CONSENT BUSINESS

None at this time

NON-CONSENT BUSINESS

2022-12: Mechanical Pipefitting Services for All MCES Facilities, Contract 21P247

It was moved by Wulff, seconded by Fredson, that the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Administrator to award and execute contract 21P247 with Corval Constructors Inc. to provide Mechanical Pipefitting Services for Metropolitan Council Environmental Services facilities in an amount not to exceed \$8,000,000.

Aye: 6 Lindstrom, Fredson, Sterner, Vento, Wulff, Zeran
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Motion carried.

INFORMATION

1. Local and National Competitiveness

Staff provided a review of two 2020 residential retail sewer rate surveys; the triennial National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) survey and the biennial Environmental Services survey of regional wastewater rates.

Comments and Questions:

Chair Lindstrom commented that our average retail sewer charge has been 40% lower than the peer agency average. Staff confirmed this dropped to 35% in the recent survey, so updates will be needed to our website.

2. Water Efficiency Grant Program Update 2022-2024

The Metropolitan Council will implement an extension of the existing Water Efficiency Grant Program effective July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2024. This program is funded by one million dollars of Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment funds from the Minnesota Legislature. The program will provide grants to communities to replace old and inefficient toilets, clothes washers, irrigation controllers, dishwashers, and irrigation sprinkler bodies with more efficient WaterSense and Energy Star-labeled devices. Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to communities that are served by municipal water systems. The Council will provide 90% of the program cost; the community must provide the remaining 10%. We have improved the design of this grant program based on input from the communities that are current Water Efficiency Grant Program participants.

Comments and Questions:

Committee Member Wulff stated it may be a little excessive for the program to fund the cost of a new washer without having to contribute. Staff concurred that the funds could be spent quite quickly. Committee Member Wulff stated for equity purposes, she recommended setting a maximum grant for each item rather than leaving it open ended.

Committee Member Wulff inquired about how we are going about encouraging more cities to participate. Staff stated Water Supply Planning has been holding subregional water supply planning meetings in the Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast metro areas in which the topic is discussed. We are also working with Communications team to develop newsletter articles.

Committee Member Wulff stated she is willing to talk to the communities in her portion of the region. It would be helpful to have a list of communities who are participating available on our website.

Staff member Ali Elhassan clarified we have also reached out to Council Members to help spread the word. We can also reach out to elected officials to help encourage communities. We coordinate a workshop with Metro Cities before advertising. Any help committee members could provide to help convey the message is appreciated.

Committee Member Wulff stated Metro Cities does a great job communicating; however, not every city in the region is a member, so communities may be missed.

Committee Member Sterner stated he hoped consumers would become involved. He is also willing to help spread the word.

Chair Lindstrom requested a list of communities who are involved to be shared with the Committee.

Committee Member Vento stated talking points for all Council Members as they reach out to communities.

3. General Manager Report

No report at this time.

Committee Member Wulff stated the public hearing went well.

If Committee members have items they would like brought before this committee, please let leisa.thompson@metc.state.mn.us know.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed the meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing narrative and exhibits constitute a true and accurate record of the Environment Committee Meeting of January 11, 2022.

Susan Taylor
Recording Secretary