



City of Tacoma City Council Study Session Minutes

733 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402

Conference Room 16

June 26, 2018

12:00 PM

JOINT MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD

Call to Order

Deputy Mayor Ibsen called the joint study session to order at 12:05 p.m.

Present: 7 - Beale, Blocker, Camarata, Hunter, Ibsen, Mello and Ushka

Absent: 2 - McCarthy and Mayor Woodards

Public Utility Board Members:

Present: 4 - Flint, Larkin, Patterson, and Trudnowski

Absent: 1 - Jones

Joint City Council/Public Utility Board Briefing Items

1. [18-0699](#) Tacoma Public Utilities Low Income Program Update

At approximately 12:06 p.m., Linda McCrea, Interim Director, Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU), made opening remarks and introduced Steve Hatcher, Customer Services Manager, TPU. Mr. Hatcher provided an overview of the Utility Assistance Program strategies, background information, and introduced Francine Artis, Customer Services Assistant Manager, TPU. Ms. Artis provided an overview and information related to the program, including history; purpose and issues; goals; a holistic approach to assistance; alleviating to seek customer solutions; and educating the public on two assistance programs. She further explained the two assistance programs, including a comparison between the two programs, the criteria, benefits, and how they work. She stated the City is in partnership with Tacoma Goodwill to offer “Key to Change”, a Financial Education Credit Course, and noted all of the programs available to the community are aligned with the City’s Tacoma 2025 strategic plan. Ms. Artis then continued reviewing resources and partnerships, demographics of both programs, 2018 short-term outreach strategy, and the proposed budget for the Bill Credit Assistance Plan. She concluded on multilingual marketing and communication strategies, and next steps.

Discussion ensued regarding federal poverty level guidelines for the Utility Assistance Programs, age requirement for the Discount Rate Program, eligibility and best option examples for both programs, bill reduction and reimbursement when issues or mistakes arise, marketing and outreach strategies, and providing brochures through local transportation agencies. Discussion continued on where the funding is originating from, what happens to unutilized funds, updating the software of TPU kiosks located in Safeway stores to accommodate the two programs, kiosk locations, ways to notify the public when they are eligible for either program, status on the success rate, and budget impact.

2. [18-0700](#) Tacoma Public Utilities Proposed Rates and Budget Communication Plan

At approximately 1:00 p.m., Ms. McCrea, introduced the next topic, proposed rates and budget communication plan, and introduced Rebekah Anderson, Market Communications Manager, and Clark Mather, Government Relations Officer, TPU. Ms. Anderson provided background information on the collaborative process. Mr. Mather then reviewed the overview; rates outreach in 2017; and the proposed 2018 budget and rates outreach strategy, noting the collaborative work with General Government departments and external partnerships. Ms. Anderson provided information on customer communications approach and strategies, including year-round conversation; and early, multi-channel notifications for rate adjustments, noting resources can be available at public meetings and community groups. She then reviewed customer communications tactics, messages, and proposed channels; and the timeline.

Discussion ensued regarding public outreach.

The joint study session held a short recess at 1:24 p.m. and reconvened at 1:35 p.m.

Other Items of Interest

Council Member Ushka stated her interest in discussing the substitution of Amended Ordinance No. 28518 after the joint Closed and Executive Sessions.

Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

3. [18-0701](#) Weekly Report to the City Council, June 21, 2018

City Manager Pauli stated there are no ceremonials and one potential change

to tonight's agenda, including a substitution of Amended Ordinance No. 28518 regarding the 2018 amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Regulatory Code.

Closed Session - Labor Negotiations

MOTION: Council Member Mello moved to convene to Joint Closed Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(4)(a and b) to discuss labor negotiation, not to exceed 15 minutes.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Camarata.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 7 - Beale, Blocker, Camarata, Hunter, Ibsen, Mello and Ushka

Absent: 2 - McCarthy and Mayor Woodards

Public Utility Board Members:

Ayes: 4 - Flint, Larkin, Patterson, and Trudnowski

Absent: 1 - Jones

Executive Session - Pending Litigation

MOTION: Council Member Ushka moved to convene to Joint Executive Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(i) to discuss pending litigation, not to exceed 30 minutes.

SECONDED BY: Council Member Camarata.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted.

Ayes: 7 - Beale, Blocker, Camarata, Hunter, Ibsen, Mello and Ushka

Absent: 2 - McCarthy and Mayor Woodards

Public Utility Board Members:

Ayes: 4 - Flint, Larkin, Patterson, and Trudnowski

Absent: 1 - Jones

The City Council and Public Utility Board convened to Joint Closed Session at 1:40 p.m.

The Joint Closed Session concluded at 1:55 p.m.

The City Council and Public Utility Board convened to Joint Executive Session at 1:55 p.m.

City Attorney Bill Fosbre; Chief Deputy City Attorneys Chris Bacha and Tom Morrill; and Tim Lay, Spiegel & McDiarmid LLP, were present.

The Joint Executive Session was extended by 10 minutes at 2:25 p.m. and 5 minutes at 2:35 p.m.

The Joint Closed and Executive Sessions concluded and the regular City Council study session convened at 2:40 p.m.

Other Items of Interest

4. [18-0718](#) Proposed Substitute Ordinance No. 28518.

Council Member Ushka shared her concerns with Ordinance No. 28518 relating to changes of the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the section addressing small businesses, and will be proposing a substitute ordinance.

Discussion ensued regarding the impact on the Comprehensive Plan and the amount of small businesses that may be impacted.

Council Member Mello discussed an item on tonight's agenda, Resolution No. 40045 relating to traffic enforcement, including the camera locations, the number of cameras, and the reasoning behind the change in vendor.

City Manager Pauli stated TPU customers are currently being targeted by scammers, consequently the Media and Communications and TPU staff are working diligently to notify the public and combat the scam.

Adjournment

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 2:54 p.m.

Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

Doris Sorum, City Clerk