

APPROVED 5-25-16

MINUTES  
 City of Tacoma  
 Public Utility Board Study Session  
 April 27, 2016  
 4:00 p.m.

Mr. Flint called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 4:00 p.m. at the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: Bryan Flint, Woodrow Jones, Mark Patterson, Karen Larkin  
 Excused: Monique Trudnowski

**Tacoma Water: Budget Overview**

Linda McCrea, Water Superintendent, began by reviewing graphical representations of water demand, increasing costs, water capacity, and rate pressure and relief. Superintendent McCrea then detailed the strategies driving the budget process. These include system resiliency, managing assets, and leveraging technology. Primary budget/rate drivers and impacts, including financial modeling scenarios, were detailed. Next steps in the process include policymaker review of the budget and customer/stakeholder outreach.

**Tacoma Water: Water Quality Update**

Bill Gaines, Director of Utilities, made introductory comments. Board Members were notified of the water quality situation immediately and the Council was briefed at the study session on Tuesday, April 26. There has been tight collaboration with the county and state Departments of Health. Chris McMeen, Deputy Water Superintendent for Water Quality was introduced.

Mr. McMeen provided the history of Tacoma Water's lead testing. The federal requirement is that 90 percent of sampling shows less than 15 parts per billion of lead. Tacoma Water does not use long lead service lines. However, in the early 1900's short pieces of lead pipe called goosenecks were installed to connect the meter to the customer service lines. A vast majority, approximately 30,000, of the goosenecks have been removed however there are some old service connections from this time frame for which we do not have location information. The current estimate is there may be up to 1,700 goosenecks, about two percent of the customers.

To help identify lead goosenecks in the system and investigate impacts to water quality, four homes were tested with samples coming from the service connection, not inside the home. Elevated levels of lead were found from the service lines leading to four homes. Once the service lines to these homes were replaced, lead levels were below federal requirements.

Mr. McMeen stated that an incident command structure has been established with both the state and county health agencies and then reviewed sampling protocols and provided handouts

outlining those protocols to the Board. In response to a Board request, Mr. McMeen described how the remaining possible gooseneck locations were identified. In summary, this was done by filtering through electronic records using 1939 or older installations as criteria. Paper records and old installation cards were also reviewed. Mains newer than 1939 were then removed because gooseneck replacements were done at the time the service lines were renewed. The remaining 1,700 goosenecks is an estimate and likely overestimates the number of goosenecks while work is done to get a specific number.

In response to a Board inquiry, Mr. McMeen described the role stagnant water plays in testing. If there is no movement in water, it is possible for lead to leach into the water. Letting water run will flush any lead. So, testing will incorporate information from the screen devices and the customers as to whether or not stagnant or running water is being tested. Staff is working on the best sampling protocols.


Mr. McMeen then shared that aggressive community outreach and communication will continue to take place. Many communication methods, including calls, door hangars, different languages, will be employed. TPU has also reached out to the County Council and County Executive. Mr. McMeen also stated that flushing water pipes for a minimum of two minutes or until the water turns cold is the standard, recommended practice.

Board Members made positive remarks for letting public health drive actions and for being proactive.


#### **Adjournment**

The study session was adjourned at 5:31 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled study session on Wednesday, May 11, 2016 at 3:00 p.m.

Approved:

  
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Bryan Flint, Chair

Approved:

  
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Monique Trudnowski, Secretary