



City of Tacoma

City Council Study Session Minutes

747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 894 9617 1192

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/89496171192 Passcode: 896569

May 21, 2024

12:00 PM

JOINT MEETING WITH THE PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD

Call to Order

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

Roll Call

Present: 8 - Bushnell, Daniels, Diaz, Hines, Rumbaugh, Scott, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Public Utility Board Members:

Present: 5 - Bridges, Claus-McGahan, Gallagher, O'Loughlin, and Watson

Joint City Council / Tacoma Public Utility Board Briefing Items

1. [24-0555](#)

Tacoma Public Utilities Emerging Issues

[Jackie Flowers, Director, Tacoma Public Utilities]

At approximately 12:06 p.m., Jackie Flowers, Director, Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU), provided a brief overview of TPU emerging issues and introduced Chris Robinson, Power Superintendent. Robinson presented Tacoma Power's emerging issues, including climate change; the energy transition, noting from coal to natural gas to solar, hydro, or wind; operational challenges; transmission challenges; increase in electric demand but decrease in generating capacity; reliability risk, noting cold weather events; wildfire risks; large cost increases, including power supply, transmission, distribution, and labor costs; Washington's retail rates outlook; neighboring utility rate increases; trends unique to Tacoma Power; and solutions and strategies. Scott Dewhirst, Water Superintendent, presented a summary of the Tacoma Water emerging issues including infrastructure cost increases, noting construction and other inflation, ongoing impacts, supply and market demand, and wholesale opportunities. LaTasha Wortham, Deputy Director, TPU Public Affairs, presented the customer experience and external affairs, including customer focus and TPU's 'north star' for customer and community experience.

Discussion ensued regarding Tacoma Power infrastructure opportunities; seismic risks, noting lowering of water in Cowlitz Dam; increasing capacity of Bonneville Dam; cost sharing for projects; workforce challenges, noting apprenticeship programs; costs on the horizon, including priorities; and monetizing water and PFAS.

2. [24-0556](#) Charter Review Committee Recommendations Review
[Mayor Woodards]

At approximately 12:50 p.m., Mayor Woodards presented an overview of the Charter Review Committee and Council recommendations relating to TPU, including internet as a utility, Tacoma Public Utility Board (PUB) membership, shared services audit, purpose of inquiry, PUB member qualifications and compensation, and legal opinion for all recommendations. City Manager Elizabeth Pauli described the process and provided materials.

Discussion ensued throughout regarding the internet being a utility, including the differences between other utilities and their business models; equity issues, noting TPU's current Guiding Principals agreement; current and continual infrastructure maintenance; potential voucher programs; false timeline expectations from the community if an amendment gets passed; rate paying structure and cost adjustments; process to standing up a new utility; state laws and regulations; current PUB resident requirements, noting the amount of TPU customers that live outside the City limits; regional management discussion and past lessons; franchise agreements; amendment language, noting policy making authority on a utility a potential new member would have no stake in; advisory board option; outside jurisdictional representation process; PUB fiduciary responsibility to the City; performance and financial audit on shared services, including current process, requirements, and issues; purpose of inquiry statement, including definition, language limitations to budget and policy, processes, and responsibility; PUB membership restrictions, including holding additional public office; and PUB compensation, noting amendment language and impacts on rate assistance programs.

The joint Study Session concluded at 2:15 p.m.

The regular Study Session convened at 2:24 p.m.

City Council Items

Other Items of Interest

3. [24-0558](#) Council Consideration Request - Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center Funding Agreement Negotiation
[Council Member Daniels]

Council Member Daniels presented a Council Consideration Request (CCR) for a resolution acknowledging the need for additional early childhood care resources and directing the City Manager to negotiate an agreement for a proposed \$1.5 million loan with the Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center (MCFHC) to help develop the Cora Whitley Family Center; this 32,000 square foot facility will include a gym and 19 classrooms for 326 early learners and will also have 186 employees. She concluded by stating this facility would double the current capacity of MCFHC, a non-profit human services early learning center, which has operated in Tacoma for more than thirty years.

Discussion ensued regarding appreciation for this CCR, structure of the loan, other organizations that qualify for similar loans, differences in Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) loan program and Local Revitalization Financing, encouraging all to support the MCFHC, and UDAG account specifics.

The study session recessed at 2:39 p.m. and reconvened at 2:59 p.m.

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Mayor Woodards provided further information on the Charter Review process and options to ensure all topics get covered.

Discussion ensued regarding prioritization, including police accountability, form of government, and full-time council; soft timelines; and next steps.

Mayor Woodards concluded by discussing the vandalism of the 1400 block on Broadway this past weekend, noting the damage that was done and requesting \$20,000 in Council Contingency Funds be allocated to help the affected business and a resolution will be brought forward at a later date.

Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.


Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

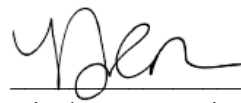
4. [24-0557](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, May 16, 2024
[Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager]

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli stated there are four ceremonials on tonight's meeting agenda, proclaiming Wednesday, May 22, 2024, as Franke Tobey Jones Day, proclaiming Monday, May 27, 2024, as Memorial Day, proclaiming May 18-24, 2024, as National Safe Boating Week, and proclaiming May 19-25, 2024, as National Public Works Week. She concluded by stating no changes are expected to tonight's agenda, and tonight's meeting includes a public hearing on the proposed Six-Year Comprehensive Transportation Improvement Program amended for the years 2024 and 2025-2030.

Adjournment

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.


Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor


Nicole Emery, City Clerk