



APPROVED 11-14-18

MINUTES
 City of Tacoma
 Public Utility Board Study Session
 October 24, 2018
 4:00 p.m.

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

Present: Woodrow E. Jones, Jr., Bryan Flint, Christine Cooley, Mark Patterson
 Excused: Karen Larkin

Customer Service: Customer Identity Verification Contract

John Hoffman, Assistant Customer Services Manager, shared that Customer Services (CS) offers new customers two options for verifying their identity: 1) provide current government-issued picture identification; 2) provide name and social security number. CS also conducts a risk evaluation as it collects deposits on non-owner occupied renters to reduce the risk of unpaid charges. Customers are provided deposit waiver options such as previous satisfactory payment history at TPU, risk verification through a utility risk model, or letter of credit from a previous utility company. The utility risk model is a soft hit on credit reports and does not impact the customer's credit score. It is also free to the customer. Services are accessed by two groups; City staff or property managers via a property manager web portal. An RFP was issued on September 7, 2018. Three responses were received; TransUnion, Equifax, and Online Utility Exchange. The selection advisory committee selected Online Utility Exchange. Online Utility Exchange provides similar services to over 1,000 utilities, including 300 plus municipalities. It provides one price for customer verification, risk evaluation, or both. The three-year contract will likely be under \$200,000; however, this is being brought to the Board as an informational item. Discussion on what forms of allowable identification and verification, including government visas and refugee documentation, ensued; staff will provide additional information on the matter of allowable identification.

Renewal of Utility Connection and Inspection Fee Waivers for Declared State of Emergency for Homelessness

Tom Morrill, Chief Deputy City Attorney, provided background. In May of 2017, the City Council declared a health emergency for homeless encampments. In July of that year, the Board authorized a waiver of power and water utility connection and inspection fees for cities in Tacoma Power and Water's service territories during the declared state of

emergency. The City Council extended the declared emergency through 2017 and again through 2018. The Board's extensions followed to align with Council action. The Council will take action in the next few months and may extend the declared emergency. If that occurs, staff will bring back another waiver extension request to the Board.

Director Flowers informed the Council that the Council is working on infill zoning language and waivers may be requested as their language is formalized. The Planning Commission may act in the near future.

Miscellaneous

Scott Dewhirst, Water Superintendent, reported that due to a leaking pipe, Tacoma Water will need to shift the path of water to the Hilltop, Stadium, and Downtown on October 24, 2018 at 9:00 p.m. No customers will be out of service, but the possibility of discolored water exists. Mr. Dewhirst then outlined the many communication channels used to inform the public.

Executive Session

Board Member Flint moved to convene a closed session to discuss labor negotiations per RCW 40.30.140(4)(b) at 4:30 for 30 minutes; seconded by Board Member Patterson. At 5:00, the closed session was extended for 15 minutes. At 5:15 the closed session was extended for 15 minutes. The closed session was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The study session was adjourned at 5:30 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled study session on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Approved:


Woodrow E. Jones, Jr., Chair

Approved:


Bryan Flint, Secretary