



# City of Tacoma City Council Study Session Minutes

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

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

February 01, 2022

12:00 PM

*The meeting was not conducted as a joint study session.*

## Call to Order

Mayor Woodards called the study session to order at 12:01 p.m.

## Roll Call

**Present:** 6 - Bushnell, Hines, McCarthy, Rumbaugh, Ushka and Mayor Woodards

**Absent:** 3 - Blocker, Daniels and Walker

Council Members Blocker and Daniels arrived at 12:02 p.m.

All Council Members participated virtually.

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Council Members Blocker and Daniels arrived here, at 12:02 p.m.

## Joint City Council / Tacoma Public Utility Board Briefing Item

1. [22-0154](#) Utility Customer Account Recovery

At approximately 12:04 p.m., Mayor Woodards made opening remarks and introduced Jackie Flowers, Director, Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU); and Mark Patterson, Chair, and Chrissy Cooley, Vice Chair, Public Utility Board (PUB). Ms. Flowers introduced Steve Hatcher, Customer Services Manager, and John Hoffman, Customer Services Assistant Manager, TPU. Mr. Hoffman presented updates on TPU’s recovery of delinquent utility customer accounts, including background, noting the Mayor and Governor Jay Inslee’s separate utility disconnection moratoriums, assistance programs, and outreach; an overview of overdue customer balances and residential accounts distribution; the plan after the City’s moratorium ends; and next steps.

Discussion ensued regarding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; educating customers about assistance programs; tracking; unrecoverable balances and

inactive accounts; vacant properties; owners, renters, and landlords; collections; revising the end date for the City’s moratorium; installation of new meters; flexible payment options and budget billing; TPU’s goal to avoid disconnections; appreciation for staff and PUB members and their focus on helping customers; impacts of utility costs on housing stability; restrictions that do not allow public utilities to forgive debt; and next steps to communicate about the end of the moratorium and available assistance.

### City Council Briefing Item

- 2. [22-0159](#) Bid Protest Appeal Hearing - R.L. Alia Company

This item was considered later in the study session.

### Other Items of Interest

- 3. [22-0156](#) Business Support Initiatives

Mayor Woodards made opening remarks regarding business support initiatives, including the challenges faced by local businesses and entrepreneurs, impacts of crime and the COVID-19 pandemic, recent discussions with local business owners, and staff work to develop new strategies; and introduced Jeff Robinson, Director, Community and Economic Development. Mr. Robinson presented the proposed package of business support initiatives, including goals; the proposed initiatives related to security enhancements, window replacement support, and financial support for the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's Businesses Requiring A Vaccine Verification Onsite initiative; and a request for Council Member questions and feedback. Mayor Woodards and Mr. Robinson further outlined next steps to direct the City Manager to gather information on private security, developing criteria for window replacement support, and options to use remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Discussion ensued regarding the amount of ARPA funds available; the proposed scope, timeline, and amount of funds requested; the 2023-2024 biennial budget process; and related programs, noting graffiti removal, the Tidy-Up Tacoma initiative, and other cleanup requests from the community.

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Council Member Daniels provided information on a request for City support of a Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) project in Hilltop, including a

description of building's commercial space and affordable housing units; THA's request for \$1.9 million of City funds; urgency of the request, noting the short timeline; showing support for the Hilltop community and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color residents; and a request for Council Member support. Council Member Blocker further described his participation at THA meetings and his support for the proposal.

Discussion ensued regarding the value of the project; the affordable housing threshold of 60 percent of median income; the project timeline, noting a goal to break ground by the end of 2022; how the City's funds would be used and protected; total project cost and other financing sources; location in a designated United States Department of the Treasury "Opportunity Zone"; a staff request to set aside some of the remaining ARPA funds for sheltering options; and the plan to bring more information on ARPA funds, the Mayor's business support initiatives, and the THA project, to next week's study session.

### Committee Reports

There were no committee reports given.

### Agenda Review and City Manager's Weekly Report

- 4. [22-0157](#) Weekly Report to the Mayor and City Council, January 27, 2022

City Manager Elizabeth Pauli stated that there are two ceremonials on tonight's meeting agenda, proclaiming Friday, February 4, 2022, as Transit Equity Day, and proclaiming February 2022 as Career and Technical Education Month, and that no changes are expected to tonight's agenda.

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The study session recessed at 1:02 p.m.

The study session reconvened at 1:31 p.m.

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### City Council Briefing Item

- 2. [22-0159](#) Bid Protest Appeal Hearing - R.L. Alia Company

At approximately 1:32 p.m., Mayor Woodards made opening remarks on the quasi-judicial hearing of the appeal of the Contracts

and Awards Board determination that the R.L. Alia Company's bid for Specification No. ES20-0305F, Upper Buckley Water Quality Project, was properly rejected as untimely and non-responsive. Mayor Woodards requested that any Council Member who had ex parte communication with any party involved in the appeal to disclose that information before the appeal began. None of the Council Members presented ex parte communication.

Mayor Woodards called on Martha Lantz, Deputy City Attorney, City Attorney's Office, representing the Finance Department, to discuss the decision to reject the bid as untimely and non-responsive.

Mayor Woodards called on Erin Varriano, representing R.L. Alia Company.

Mayor Woodards called on Bill Parsons and Jon Vander Griend, representing Ceccanti Inc.

Mayor Woodards called on Ms. Varriano to provide a rebuttal.

Discussion ensued regarding the City's bid process and requirements.

## **Closed Session - To Discuss Appeal Hearing**

**MOTION: Deputy Mayor Ushka moved to convene to a Closed Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.140(2) to discuss the appeal of a bid protest, not to exceed 30 minutes.**

**SECONDED BY: Council Member Blocker.**

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

**Ayes:** 7 - Blocker, Bushnell, Daniels, Hines, Rumbaugh, Ushka and Mayor Woodards

**Absent:** 2 - McCarthy and Walker

Discussion ensued regarding the documentation provided by R.L. Alia Company regarding the time their bid was provided to the City.

The City Council convened to Closed Session at 2:01 p.m.  
City Attorney Bill Fosbre was present.

The Closed Session concluded, and the study session reconvened, at 2:22 p.m.

**MOTION: Deputy Mayor Ushka moved to concur in the determination of the Contracts and Awards Board that the bid submitted by the R.L. Alia Company for Specification No. ES20-0305F, Upper Buckley Water Quality Project, was properly rejected as untimely and non-responsive.**

**SECONDED BY: Council Member Blocker.**

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

**Ayes:** 7 - Blocker, Bushnell, Daniels, Hines, Rumbaugh, Ushka and Mayor Woodards

**Absent:** 2 - McCarthy and Walker

## **Adjournment**

On proper motion, the study session was adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

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Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor

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Doris Sorum, City Clerk