



**City of Davis**

**Utility Rate Advisory Commission Minutes**

**Community Chambers Conference Room, 23 Russell Boulevard, Davis CA 95616**

**Thursday, January 11, 2018**

**7:00 P.M.**

Commissioner Members Present: Gerry Braun (Chair), Olof Bystrom, Jacques Franco, Lorenzo Kristov, Richard McCann (arrived during Item 6B), Elaine Roberts Musser, Johannes Troost

Absent: Mariyam Azam

Staff Present: Stan Gryczko, Assistant Public Works Director, Richard Tsai, Environmental Resources Manager

Additional Attending: Adrienne Heinig, Administrative Analyst  
Zhigiang Xin

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**1. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Braun at 7:03pm.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

S Gryczko requested the chair move Item 6E to the top of the Regular Items, as he intended to leave the meeting early due to illness. G Braun moved, seconded by J Troost, to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Kristov, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Azam

**3. Brief Announcements from Staff, Commission Members, and City Council Members**

- S Gryczko outlined the Council discussion during the meeting on January 9, related to a potential revenue measure of a Utility User Tax (UUT) on the June ballot. He said the city's utility services of water, wastewater and solid waste would not be included in the tax, but other services were still under discussion. E Roberts-Musser noted that Mayor Davis and Councilmember Frerichs oppose the inclusion of electricity service in the UUT. J Franco asked if broadband services were to be included in the UUT as presented and noted there could be some legal issues with the inclusion of broadband.
- S Gryczko updated the commission on the request to have someone from the city's Community Development Department to speak on the planning process for student-focused housing. A representative of the department has agreed to speak on the issue and would be available for the February meeting.

- J Troost brought up an item related to the UUT, a utility tax survey conducted by an intern from Berkeley in 2003 for the Finance and Budget Commission. J Troost will provide the survey as an informational item for the commission.

#### **4. Public Comment**

None.

#### **5. Consent Calendar**

##### **A. URAC Draft Minutes - December 14, 2017**

J Troost asked that item 5A be pulled from the Consent Calendar. This item was pulled.

##### **B. Water Capacity Information as Requested by Commission on December 14, 2017**

##### **C. Timelines for Solid Waste Rates Study and the Organics Processing Facility Feasibility Analysis**

J Franco moved, seconded by E Roberts-Musser, to approve items 5B and 5C of the consent calendar. The motion passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Kristov, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Azam

#### **6. Regular Items**

##### **E. Meeting Date and Time Schedule Discussion.**

S Gryczko introduced the item, reiterating the issue which arose when the Valley Clean Energy Alliance (VCEA) regular board meetings were scheduled for the second Thursday of each month, overlapping with the meetings of the URAC. Two members of the URAC, G Braun and L Kristov, are committee members of the VCEA and attend the board meetings. By their request, a survey was conducted of the URAC members to determine if another regular meeting date and time was possible to avoid this conflict. The survey, conducted in between the December and January meetings, demonstrated that the first Thursday of the month would be the date the majority of the commissioners ranked highest for the possibility of rescheduling. After further outreach, however, it was determined that one of the commissioners was unable to meet on that day of the month. With the majority of the commission present, there was further discussion on a new day for the regular commission meeting. After this discussion, the commission agreed that the third Wednesday of the month would work for the new meeting date, and all agreed that the meeting could begin half an hour earlier, at 6:30. The new date and time will be effective in February, with the location pending further staff research.

##### **A. Update for Commissioners Absent from the December 14, 2017 Meeting.**

G Braun introduced the item, explaining that he had asked J Troost to provide a summary of the discussion topics covered during the meeting in December which included only four commission members. J Troost began his summary by outlining the topics, as listed in the memo provided to the commission in their packet and selecting items to be grouped together for the ease of discussion. He said many of the items related to the relationship between the chair and the staff liaison, as well as the role of communication between the two. The miscommunications or difficulties around meeting cancellations, and agenda preparation, as well as the development of the workplan pointed to concerns around communication, and it was discussed that a face-to-face meeting should occur between the Chair and the liaison two weeks prior to the commission meetings (once the date is set.) The regular meetings of the chair with staff could help avoid meeting cancellations at the last minute and provide the Chair and staff

with an opportunity to work together on the agenda. Secondly, the point of who has responsibility for the agenda was also discussed. This was highlighted by J Troost. He said it was stated in the meeting by staff that the commission could place items on the agenda, whether or not the item was within the commission workplan, with the stipulation that only items within the workplan (as determined by staff) would be supported by staff. The commission would take on an expanded role and prepare items that would not be supported by staff.

On the item relating to the development of the URAC rate recommendations, J Troost summarized the discussion around the newly suggested process for developing rate recommendations. S Gryczko had suggested orientations for new members to understand the larger picture surrounding rates. The timelines around the recommendations would be extended to include more information earlier in the process, to allow the commission to have more comprehensive information to make solid recommendations. The full process would be started much earlier to review each element step by step.

URAC recommendations as presented to Council were also discussed, and what voice the URAC has with City Council. During the discussion in December, E Roberts-Musser outlined how she, as a former chair of the commission, would attend Council meetings with URAC items under discussion and speak to the item during public comment. The process for reporting when staff and the commission have conflicting recommendations was outlined by S Gryczko, who explained that there are instances when the commission and staff disagree, so each side is presented in the staff report. It was suggested that should such an instance occur with the URAC, the commission could present text in support of their motion.

The last item discussed was related to the overlap between the workplans of the city's commissions. J Troost asked if the commission chairs could talk about their workplans and see what other commissions are working on, to determine how each can compliment each other's work. He envisioned the process as working proactively. S Gryczko said he would do some research on the item. When asked about next steps, J Troost suggested that an invitation could be extended to the commission chairs for a conversation about what each does. He stated if the city would be willing to host the meeting, and publicize it, there could be an increase in citizen engagement.

S Gryczko reflected back on the discussion of the agenda prep, emphasizing the importance of the involvement of the full commission in the development of the agenda. Items looking to be added to the agenda should be discussed during the Long Range Calendar.

**Discussion of Consent Calendar Item 5A. URAC Draft Minutes - December 14, 2017**

After the conclusion of the summary presented by J Troost, J Franco stated that the minutes from the prior meeting do not reflect two of the summary items presented by J Troost: that of the timeline for the face-to-face meeting between the Chair and the staff liaison, and the rights of the chair and the commission in the preparation of the agenda. J Troost agreed and stated the intention with pulling the minutes was to address these items and clarify what was stated in the meeting. He asked to bring the minutes back to the commission with corrections. E Roberts-Musser cautioned that the minutes are captured as the discussion occurs in the meeting and cannot capture conclusions which may be arrived at after the meeting, upon reflection of the discussion.

R McCann arrived during Item 6B.

**B. Review, Update URAC Workplan.**

G Braun introduced the item, stating that the workplan was added to the agenda for review and potential updates. Half-way through the prior year, the commission developed the workplan, organizing the work for the year around the current City Council goals. Over the intervening months, he suggested the Commission lost track of the plan. He wanted the commission to review the workplan, reflect on how they did, and plan for the rest of the year. He said the workplan was optimistic, and requested that once updated, the workplan be kept in regular review. A Heinig went over the items updated by staff prior to the meeting, detailing the updates to the dates of items included in the plan, based on progress made by staff and the commission. Protocols were provided by staff on a draft Utility Rate Study Recommendation Procedure, to outline how rate studies would be presented and reviewed by the Commission moving forward. During the discussion on the workplan, the commission discussed the following:

- The inclusion of the UUT discussion in the goals - however this was not suggested to be included, as the UUT as currently under discussion does not include any of the city utilities.
- The Integrated Waste Management Plan goals, and how soon the item should be coming to the Commission to meet with the current deadlines as listed.
- Clarification on the structure of the plan, and how items are listed.
- The addition of a goal to conduct an audit of Davis Waste Removal (DWR) pursuant to the current solid waste contract.

Based on discussion around other items that could be included, it was suggested that the commissioners submit ideas for additions to the workplan to G Braun and S Gryczko, and that the two review and revise the plan for review prior to the next meeting. At the conclusion of the discussion on the item, E Roberts-Musser reminded the commission of the number of elements around the tasks assigned in the workplan, and how many can depend on factors outside of the commission's control, including staff time. She stated that a missed deadline in the workplan did not reflect negatively on the commission.

**C. Solid Waste Rate Study Draft - Community Feedback and Survey Discussion.**

R Tsai began the discussion of the item by reiterating the new process of slowing down the discussion of the rate studies into each step for commission review and recommendations. At the prior commission meeting in December, the URAC reviewed a working draft of Solid Waste Collection Service Options, focused exclusively on the loose in the street (LITS) service. During the discussion of the item, the commission requested staff look into a community-wide survey on the LITS program, to provide another set of data in reviewing the actual use and need for the program by the community. A draft survey, put together by staff, was included for review, as well as a prior study conducted before the city's organics program began, and a summary of comments received from the public on the LITS program. During the discussion on the use of the LITS program, and the data highlighted in the draft Service Options report, commissioners expressed concerns around the validity of the data in representing actual use of the program. R Tsai explained that data thus far reflected limited use of the program, with reduced tonnage in the LITS program, and increased tonnages in organics carts. Although the correlation between the two is not direct, the increase in the organics bin tonnage is not directly correlated with an increase in food waste either. The city is conducting outreach to increase public awareness of the items that can be included in the organics cart outside of green waste.

Discussion of the item by the commission outlined the importance of receiving community feedback on the use of the program. R Tsai will work with J Troost to refine the questions for a future survey. G Braun suggested the survey presented an opportunity to better understand the LITS program and receive feedback on container use. He said the survey should cover both the organics cart program and LITS, rather than just the LITS program only. Other suggested items included:

- Asking for the can sizes of customers;
- The need to adjust the wording of Option A as presented, “No Change in Service”, stating “no cost impact” which seems to indicate rates will not increase if this option is chosen. The wording will need to change because the rates will have to be increased even if there is no change in service, since the program is currently running at a deficit;
- The need to provide a range of an actual dollar amount as an impact, rather than a percentage reduction or increase in bill amount as shown;
- The need to sort questions by cost impact, or by similarity based on recommended alteration to the current service;
- The issue with a low response rate for surveys in general, with especially low responses for long or complicated surveys;
- Wording changed to say “every two weeks” rather than “bi-weekly”;
- The need to mention the environmental implications of the recommendations.

At multiple times in the discussion, the commission reported that there were too many choices included for alteration of the LITS program, and there was a need to narrow down the choices prior to the community survey. J Franco suggested the URAC members review the options and present their top five recommendations for inclusion prior to the next meeting. G Braun asked staff to create a survey for ranking the A-L matrix of options. The top five options, as decided by the Commission, would then be reviewed by R3, the city’s consultant on the Solid Waste Rate Study, with each of the rate impacts per resident outlined. E Roberts-Musser clarified that each member of the commission would be expected to provide a ranking of the options and asked that a comment box be provided for each option, so commissioners can also provide a rationale. The survey will be released after the meeting and will be open for two weeks.

**D. Updates from the Enterprise Fund Reserve Policy Subcommittee, and Task Force on Solid Waste Rate Infrastructure Analysis related to Potential Davis Waste Removal (DWR) Sale.**

R McCann told the commission that he could no longer work on two subcommittees and wished to step off the Enterprise Fund Reserve Policy Subcommittee if someone else would agree to take over. J Franco told R McCann that he could move off the DWR Sale Task Force. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that R McCann would stay on the EFRP Subcommittee, first focusing his efforts on the DWR Sale Task Force for the time being and would return to the EFRP Subcommittee after the DWR Sale Task Force work was complete.

E Roberts-Musser provided a brief update on the work of the EFRP Subcommittee. She had no new information to report.

**F. Nomination of Chair and Vice Chair for 2018.**

G Braun began discussion on the item. J Franco moved to nominate J Troost as Chair of the commission, the motion failed for lack of a second. J Troost suggested the commission continue

with the current Chair and Vice-Chair. R McCann moved, seconded by J Franco, to nominate Gerry Braun for Chair and J Troost for Vice-Chair. The motion passed by the following votes:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Kristov, Franco, McCann, Roberts-Musser, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Azam

J Troost inquired of staff if the term limits for the Commissioners reset when the Commission became a Commission in 2016 (after having been a Committee), since some terms were about to expire. A Heinig noted the question and stated she would return with the answer.

## **7. Commission and Staff Communication**

### **A. Long Range Calendar.**

The following items were discussed by the Commission:

- G Braun stated that the load should be lightened for the February meeting. There was brief discussion of the Solid Waste Rate Study being pushed back, however the timing of the Solid Waste Rate Study is important due to the need for action by Council on Solid Waste rates. The commission agreed that the Solid Waste Rate discussion could take a full meeting by itself, and G Braun suggested the meeting for February focus on that item. By agreement of the commissioners assembled, the following modifications to the long range calendar were made:
  - The Wastewater Update was pushed to March
  - The Organics Processing Feasibility Study first draft will be presented as a consent calendar item in February
  - The discussion on student “mega-dorms” with a representative of the Community Development Department was tabled as well.
    - E Roberts-Musser noted during the discussion of this item that the Lincoln 40 development (housing focused on students) was approved by the Planning Commission, so the student-focused housing developments would be well on their way before the URAC could get to the discussion.
- J Troost stated he would review last month’s meeting minutes with staff prior to the next meeting.

## **8. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 9:22pm.

Respectively Submitted by,

Adrienne Heinig  
Administrative Analyst I