



**City of Davis**

**Utility Rate Advisory Commission Minutes**

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

**Wednesday, June 20, 2018**

**6:30 P.M.**

Commissioner Members Present: Gerry Braun (Chair), Olof Bystrom, Jacques Franco, Lorenzo Kristov, Richard McCann, Johannes Troost

Absent: Elaine Roberts-Musser

Staff Present: Stan Gryczko, Assistant Public Works Director

Council Liaison Present: Lucas Frerichs

Additional Attending: Richard Tsai, Environmental Resources Manager  
Adrienne Heinig, Administrative Analyst  
Rose Radford, William Schoen, and Garth Schultz (R3 Consulting Group)  
Barbara Katz, Debbie Finley, Darell Dickey, Diane P

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

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Braun at 6:31pm.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

O Bystrom moved to approve the agenda, seconded by J Troost. The motion passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, Kristov, McCann, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Roberts-Musser

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

- S Gryczko outlined a discussion at the City Council meeting from the previous evening. The Council discussed the upcoming legislative calendar, and changes the incoming mayor (Brett Lee) would like to make next term, including more frequent joint meetings with commissions. Beginning in the fall of the current year, the proposed plan would be meeting once a month with each commission, with the commission preparing 4-5 slides for the discussion. The topics for discussion could include commission workplans, or items to discuss. The Commission also discussed the suggestion from J Troost that Commission Chairs and Vice-Chairs meet to discuss workplans, and workplan overlaps. While S Gryczko responded that staff had not received direction from the City Manager's

Office on how that type of meeting might work, he stated he would follow-up with the Assistant City Manager and request more information.

- S Gryczko also provided an update on the city's water meter replacement project currently underway, and the development of a potential opt-out program for the single-family residential properties wishing to opt-out of the advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) radio transmission unit. The cost of the program is proposed to be covered by a monthly fee paid by the residential customer in addition to monthly water use charges.
- Councilmember Frerichs updated the Commission on the election results (now final) from the election in June. He also spoke to the prior night's Council discussion on joint meetings with commissions, and indicated that he had put in a request that the first joint meeting of the new Council would be with the URAC. He also reminded the Commission that the new Council would be discussing commission liaison appointments as one of the first items of business.
- R Tsai informed the Commission that the Natural Resources Commission had requested an expanded scope for the Organics Processing Facility Feasibility Study, and staff will bring the expanded scope to Council for approval. The expansion of the scope is focused on an analysis of the environmental impact of the processing facility, specifically related to greenhouse gas emissions. J Franco referenced a recent State of California project along the same lines, and indicated that project had not been able to assess the greenhouse gas impact of handling organics. Staff indicated they would look into the state study.

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

None.

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

##### **A. URAC Draft Special Meeting Minutes - April 5, 2018**

##### **B. URAC Draft Meeting Minutes - May 16, 2018**

##### **C. Soil Moisture Irrigation Controllers**

Prior to the vote on the consent calendar, J Franco indicated that he believed it would be beneficial to the Commission for the item on Soil Moisture Irrigation Controllers to come back as a regular item on the agenda.

O Bystrom moved to approve the consent calendar. The motion was seconded by R McCann, and passed as follows:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Kristov, McCann, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Roberts-Musser

Abstain: Franco

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

##### **A. Solid Waste Rate Study Yard Material Pile Scenarios.**

At the start of the item, G Braun cautioned that the Commission had two items on the agenda for the evening that would each take a significant amount of time, and suggested a check in at the hour mark on the first item to ensure the meeting continued as scheduled. The Commission agreed by consensus.

Adrienne Heinig, Administrative Analyst, and Richard Tsai, Environmental Resources Manager provided an introduction to the item, with a brief PowerPoint presentation. The

introduction included the definition of loose in the street (LITS) material pile pickup, the suggested modifications to the existing service levels, the timeline working to narrow down the modification options, and summarized feedback from the community survey sent out in April 2018 on the use of the LITS material pickup and the organics carts. Responding to Commissioner inquiry, R Tsai discussed the intent behind the organics program (to comply with state diversion requirements, along with environmental protections for stormwater runoff, among other considerations). J Franco asked the consultants present at the meeting, R3, how many jurisdictions still offer LITS collection. William Schoen indicated that 10% of the 60 jurisdictions surveyed by R3 in Northern California still offer LITS collection. The commission discussed options that had not been ranked highly by the community survey or by the URAC in their initial review in March of 2018, including an opt-in option, an on-demand option, and the possibility of a neighborhood-based collection schedule. There was also discussion on the general volume of green waste generated by the city, and if there was a way to compare that volume to other agencies that had LITS service, and those that did not have LITS service.

The item was opened for public comment, and the commission received the following:

- Barbara Katz - Spoke to the Commission to request an amended Option #2, to include spring leaf-drop season in the weekly collection. She stated that the two city trees on her property drop significant leaves in the spring (she reported 10 organics bins of leaves in one week), and has received notices of violation for the leaves in the street. She also stated that enforcement on the LITS piles is inconsistent, and the lack of the pickup in spring is discrimination. She concluded by stating that residents do not have a choice in selecting their street trees.
- Debbie Finley - Stated that she would like the return to once-a-week pickup of street piles, and voiced her frustration with the organics cart. She also supported the option to extend the weekly pickup by one month.
- Darell Dickey - Stated that he volunteered to issue citations for yard material pile violations with the Police Department, and that the previous LITS service was a “disaster” with piles being left out without regard to pick up times, causing hazards for bicyclists. He stated that the piles interfere with parking, street safety, and still cause issues. He voiced support for full containerization, with an on-call service offered for residents.
- Diane P - Spoke to the mature landscaping on her street which is routinely lined with piles, and voiced her support for the extended leaf season. She offered the opinion that if the Commission and Council wished to eliminate the service, additional carts should be offered at no cost to residents, and stated the need for a storm contingency plan for the large debris caused by major storms. She also requested increased enforcement on vehicles not parking over piles, preventing pickup, and the need for more frequent street sweeping. She cautioned that homeowners might opt to cut down mature trees due to the complications of getting rid of debris.

At the close of public comment, J Franco asked for clarification on the resident’s responsibility for maintaining street trees on their property. R McCann noted that trees serve to increase the value of the homeowner’s property. The Commission returned to the discussion of LITS service options that had not been previously considered, and discussed ways to quantify the non-economic impacts of the service (infrastructure impacts), and W Schoen remarked on the difficulties the consultant team was having with collecting data

from Recology. However, he assured the Commission that the team was working on collecting data from Recology, and is using real data from Davis Waste Removal (DWR) on costs for use in the model financial plan.

When asked by G Braun, staff presented the tentative timeline for the Solid Waste Rate Study as included in Item 6B on the meeting packet. During the discussion on the item, J Franco moved, seconded by R McCann, the staff recommended four options for LITS service modification, and add a fifth option of an on-call program with all other LITS service eliminated. After discussion, this motion failed on a vote as follows:

Ayes: Franco

Noes: Braun, Bystrom, Kristov, McCann, Troost

Absent: Roberts-Musser

W Schoen advised the Commission that on-call services for material collection are difficult for a number of reasons. There was discussion of the possibility of adding an additional option after narrowing the option to four - the potential for an on-call service would be a natural consequence to the elimination of the service entirely (included as recommendation #4 by staff). In the discussion of other options for on-call or subscription service pickups, the Commission was also cautioned by the consultant that on-street pickup is within the franchised provision of the exclusive agreement with the city's waste hauler, and offering services from another provider would most likely not be allowed under the current contract.

Following this discussion, O Bystrom moved, seconded by J Troost, to approve the four staff recommended options to model the modification of the loose in the street (LITS) service. The motion passed by the following vote:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Kristov, McCann, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Roberts-Musser

Abstain: Franco

## **B. Overview of Solid Waste Rate Study Model for Current Service Levels.**

Richard Tsai introduced the item, including three scenarios modeled to show the potential impact of the estimated rate increases necessary to allow the solid waste utility to recover costs of operations. The baseline assumptions of the models include the current level of service, the payback on the loan provided by the Wastewater utility, and the setup of a reserve for the fund, for operating and rate stabilization needs. The staff proposal included work with the existing subcommittee on Enterprise Fund Reserve Policies to assist in establishing the reserve amount to include with the model. G Braun emphasized that the suggested collaboration was outside the scope of the subcommittee, and before the subcommittee could consider the task, it would need to be reviewed and approved by the full commission.

Garth Schultz of R3 introduced the models, discussing what went into the development of the model, including forecasts for future impacts, correcting for the current fund deficit, the inclusion of the loan repayment, and capital needs. The initial model presented to the Commission shows rate adjustments to keep the fund afloat, and the models presented demonstrated three different ways to introduce the adjustments. In response to Commission questions, G Schultz indicated that the model shows rates adjusted for mid-year implementations (January 1 for rate adjustments, July 1 for tipping fee increases). The

Commission discussed tipping fees, and the difficulty in projecting future fee increases. During the discussion, the consultant emphasized the importance of building resilience into the fund to buffer against the uncertainties. The discussion about the model also included the following:

- The breakdown of costs associated with the Public Works Department management of the utility, and other city department costs associated with the utility
- The drivers behind rates for Recology, including labor, fuel costs, and depreciation
- The structure for Recology to request rate increases from the city
- The description of the expenses and revenues captured in the model
- The importance of focusing on the initial 5-year rate proposal, rather than the latter 5 years of the 10 year model, as another study and Proposition 218 notice would need to be completed prior to rate setting for those years
- The \$160,000 payment from Recology to the City and where that money goes
- The need for data showing historical revenue and expenditures
- The development of principles to agree on to guide the review and analysis of the rate recommendations
- The potential to use other methods of assessing solid waste fees, including by weight of cart

At the close of the discussion, it was suggested that additional feedback be sent to the Commission staff liaison prior to the next meeting. Input received at the meeting will be incorporated into an updated model, which will return to the Commission for further review at the next regular meeting in July.

**C. Assignment of URAC Representative to the Broadband Advisory Task Force.**

G Braun introduced the item by thanking Jacques Franco for his admirable service on the Broadband Advisory Task Force. The Commission also expressed thanks, and discussed the possible candidates for a successor to the Task Force. J Troost voiced that he had considered the appointment; however, he was concerned because his term expires in December 2018. He suggested that he attend the next meeting with J Franco on an interim basis, and the Commission could revisit the appointment at the next meeting.

**D. Appointment of Subcommittee to Develop the Davis Utility Service Vision.**

G Braun introduced the item, outlining the recommendations from staff and the direction from Council to review the long-term strategy for the city's solid waste utility, which would have greatly benefitted the city if it had been in place prior to the recent sale of the Davis Waste Removal franchise. During the meeting in May, it was suggested that G Braun and J Troost work together to present a possible framework or vision for the effort. He outlined the importance of having a joint meeting with the Council to understand the Council's vision for the URAC, prior to taking up the question of the long-term vision. He cautioned that there is a need to determine if the additional work required for such an effort has the support of city staff and the Council, and that no further URAC effort should be undertaken until it is determined that city resources, which might be necessary, will be available. It was agreed by the Commission and staff to hold off on the development of the framework for the long-term strategy to review the city's utilities until after the current review of the solid waste

rates was complete. Staff will reach out to Recology to request the two-year window to assess whether or not the current materials recovery facility (MRF) should move from Second Street can be reset to when the Commission returns to the item.

**7. Commission and Staff Communication**

**A. Long Range Calendar.**

No specific changes to the Long Range calendar were discussed during this item.

**8. Adjourn**

J Troost made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by R McCann. The motion passed by the following votes and adjourned at 9:18pm:

Ayes: Braun, Bystrom, Franco, Kristov, McCann, Troost

Noes:

Absent: Roberts-Musser