



# Environmental Services Commission

## Minutes

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Center for Urban Waters – 325 E D St  
Zoom Meeting

October 12, 2023

Chair Beaumier called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Bruce Martin, Erich Sachs, Grant Middleton, Chad Sutter, Matthew Benedict, Mindi Keller, Karen DiNicola, Jeff Paradise, and \*Esther Beaumier.

Commission Members Absent: Marty Campbell, \*Richard Doenges, Alex Harman, and Rachael Laitila.

### Public Comment

*The public comment period is reserved for items on the current agenda only. Comments will be limited to the amount of time announced by the chair, presiding officer, or staff liaison, no more than five minutes per person per meeting.*

No Public Comment was received.

Commissioner DiNicola noted she has gathered a variety of feedback from citizens over the summer and asked the best way to present those comments to the commission. Discussion followed regarding the most productive way to share the information; potentially a future agenda topic, transmit it to staff to share with the Commissioners, adding a separate agenda item to future meetings regarding other items of interest. Mr. Fremont noted they can explore options to ensure the information gets shared with the Commission.

### Budget Review

Christina Curran, ES Rates & Budget, provided background on the ES Budget 101 training initiative, noting it started in mid-2018 and is mandatory for all ES employees. She also stated that there is an ES Budget 201 training available to staff that drills deeper into our budget process. She began by providing an overview of ratepayer demographics, why it is important to consider this when looking at the budget, and how Tacoma's three utilities compare to Pierce County and the state. She stated our budget drives our rates, what we charge for our services, and the services we can provide, noting this directly impacts the members of our community. There was much discussion with commissioners regarding the graph depicting 2022 residential monthly bill and how Tacoma compares to other jurisdictions.

Ms. Curran reviewed how the utility is funded, which include charges for services, intergov revenues, miscellaneous revenues, and cash balances. She then reviewed expenses and the differed cost categories of those expenses which include capital, personnel services, indirect

costs, debt, external services, taxes, operating expenses, internal transfers, and employee-related costs.

Kurt Fremont, Business Operations Division Manager, reviewed work the commission has done thus far. Commissioner Sutter inquired about the Westrock closure and how that could impact the budget and rates.

There was commission discussion about a desire to understand better what goes into the budget and how it is planned, including which programs are funded and what services are provided. There was a request to go deeper in upcoming presentations than the incremental changes between biennium budgets, to understand the budget holistically at a deeper level.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.