



# Environmental Services Commission

## Minutes

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Central Treatment Plant located at 2201 Portland Ave, Tacoma, WA  
and via Zoom Meeting

February 8, 2024

Chair Beaumier called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

Commission Members Present: Chad Sutter, Matthew Benedict, Bruce Martin, David Dailey, Karen DiNicola, Marty Campbell, \*Esther Beaumier, and Mindi Keller (arrived at 4:42 p.m.).

Commission Members Absent: Erich Sachs, Grant Middleton, Alex Harman, Jeff Paradise, and \*Richard Doenges.

Chair Beaumier noted the lack of a quorum. While waiting for additional commissioners to arrive, informal discussion ensued.

### 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.

### Overview of the Budget and Rates Calendar

Christina Curran, ES Rates & Budget, provided a calendar of key meeting dates for the upcoming 2025-2026 biennial budget and gave a brief overview of the budget process. She noted the Rates & Budget Team is currently working to establish our baseline budget and the final 2025-2026 budget is scheduled to be adopted by the City Council in November. She also stated that additional budget presentations to the Commission are scheduled for June 13, July 11, and September 12.

Discussion ensued regarding the following:

1. Rate Classes
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola asked exactly how many different customer classes the City has for each of the three utilities.
  - b. Staff noted there are several but would follow-up with an exact number.

### ES Permits and Other Regulatory Requirements

Kurt Fremont, Business Operations Division Manager, opened the presentations and noted he previously provided the Commission with a link to a video regarding the Clean Water Act: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYMf9zJikVU>. He stated there are a vast number of regulations for the three utilities and staff will highlight several key ones today.

Shane Pettit, Solid Waste Management Assistant Division Manager, and Phet Sinthavong, Solid Waste Management Senior Regulatory Compliance Analyst, began their presentation discussing the Solid Waste Permit with the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and the operations covered under that permit. They then reviewed the Consent Decree and post closure care for the Landfill with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Stating the site is currently designated as a Superfund Site. They then concluded the presentation by discussing the Environmental & Sustainability Management System (ESMS) and what that entails regarding compliance.

Discussion followed regarding:

1. ESMS
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola inquired what is ESMS.
  - b. Staff stated ESMS is a management tool under International Organization Standardization (ISO) 14001 Standard. Solid Waste complies with ISO 14001: 2015 Standard, which includes a process with independent audits. Currently, both the Central Treatment Plant (CTP) and the North End Treatment Plant (NETP) also meet the ISO standard.
2. Superfund Sites
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola inquired how many Superfund Sites the City has.
  - b. Staff stated currently there are two: the Thea Foss Waterway and the Tacoma Landfill.

Jason Yost, Business Operations Environmental Compliance Principal Regulatory Compliance Analyst, reviewed the City's Industrial Pretreatment Program and the numerous associated programs. He noted the goals of the program is to prevent inference with treatment plant operation, pass-through pollutants to the Puget Sound, municipal biosolids contamination, and exposure of personnel to chemical hazards.

Commissioner Keller arrived at approximately 4:42 p.m.

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Chair Beaumier paused the presentation, noting Commissioner Keller arrived during the last presentation and with the presence of a quorum the Commission considered the approval of minutes.

**Approval of the meeting minutes of October 12, 2023, November 9, 2023, and January 11, 2024**

Commissioner DiNicola moved to approve the meeting minutes of October 12, 2023, November 9, 2023, and January 11, 2024, as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Sutter. Voice vote was taken and carried. The minutes were approved.

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Kirk Elliott, Wastewater Treatment Operations Assistant Division Manager, reviewed the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permits with Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) for the CTP and NETP. He then discussed the Laboratory Accreditation for the wastewater labs and the CTP and NETP. He also discussed the Stormwater permit, Biosolids permit, and ESMS certification requirements at the CTP.

Discussion ensued regarding:

1. Laboratories
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola asked how many laboratories does the City operate.
  - b. Staff noted there are wastewater treatment laboratories at the CTP and NETP, and a larger more comprehensive laboratory at the Center for Urban Waters with more research capabilities.
2. Sludge Hauling, Receiving, and Processing
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola inquired about the frequent hauling from the NETP to the CTP.
  - b. Staff stated that the sludge from the NETP is processed at the CTP and there are approximately eight hauls a day.
  - c. Commissioner DiNicola asked how many other facilities take their biosolids to the CTP as well as what regulations govern that process.
  - d. Staff noted other facilities such as Nisqually Yelm, and Darigold have dumped here and the requirements for biosolids and solid waste are different.
3. Environmental ESMS
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola inquired what percentage of facilities are ESMS certified.
  - b. Staff stated they are aware of one in Florida and us.

Teresa Peterson, Science & Engineering Facilities Civil Engineer, PE, provided information on the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) permits, noting there are three for the CTP and one for the NETP. She also provided information on the Puget Sound Nutrient General Permit (PSNGP) with the DOE. She then reviewed several of the compliance requirements for the PSNGP, including additional sampling, optimization using the existing infrastructure at CTP and NETP, Action Levels, annual Nitrogen Optimization Plans and Reports, and the Nutrient Reduction Evaluation.

Discussion followed regarding:

1. NETP Odor Scrubbers
  - a. Commissioner DiNicola asked about the new odor scrubber at NETP.
  - b. Staff responded that the new odor scrubber that is being added at NETP was due to recommendations from a yearlong odor study, an odor scrubber alternatives analysis, and design. The scrubber is being commissioned and should be fully operational this spring. The existing odor scrubber will also remain in place.

Dana DeLeon, Science & Engineering Environmental Programs Assistant Division Manager, provided an overview of stormwater regulations, including the NPDES Stormwater Permit, DOE Underground Injections Control Standards, Thea Foss Waterway Stormwater Work Plan, and the EPA/Tribal Waters NPDES Permit to be issued in two to five years. She then discussed the Stormwater Management Program, including areas covered within the program, best management practices and best available science for stormwater treatment. She stated the Thea Foss Waterway was declared a Superfund site in 1983. She discussed clean-up efforts, noting they are working with the EPA to delete the waterway from the National Priorities list, but that long term monitoring will continue.

### **Commissioner Other Items of Interest**

Director Mike Slevin briefed the Commission on the legal status of both nutrient challenges (Washington Supreme Court and PCHB). Commissioner DiNicola stated it would be better to know the true cost to add nutrient treatment sooner rather than later to minimize impacts to rate

payers. Director Slevin explained the cost burden and noted that Ecology has a lot of work to do to justify the costs due to, in the City's opinion, inadequate science at this time.

Commissioner DiNicola stated the following:

1. It is unfortunate the City missed out on the grant for planning services for wastewater treatment facilities.
  - a. Staff clarified that the City is taking full advantage of those grant dollars.
2. Inquired about the Foss Sediment Cap, burping at the head of the waterway.
  - a. Staff stated bubbles are natural and currently there is no burping of coal tar because there is no sheen during low tide. Also noted cleanup at the head of the Foss is Pacific Corp responsibility not the City's.
3. Asked for additional information on the Brown & Caldwell contract and what they are doing for the treatment plant.
4. Asked for contract dates and full scope of work on the comp plan contracts.
5. Expressed concern about amount of information provided to commissioners during the presentation and whether other commissioners feel it is sufficient.
  - a. Chair Beaumier noted staff and the Commission is continually working right-size conversations and information; however, there seems to be a consensus for high-level presentations with the knowledge that if a specific commissioner needs more details, they can work with commission staff to obtain it.
6. Where to provide comments in regard to Home In Tacoma.
  - a. Staff stated comments need to go to Planning as this is their program on ES.

Mr. Fremont noted there are a couple of spaces available at an upcoming CTP tour if anyone is interested. He also stated Commissioner DiNicola will be going on a ride along with the someone from Environmental Compliance, and if other commissioners are interested, he can make arrangements. He finally noted the JMK facility tour will be scheduled the week of March 11.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.