



SCA Public Issues Committee

MINUTES

May 13, 2020 – 7:00 PM

TELEPHONIC

1. Welcome and Roll Call

PIC Chair Deputy Mayor Christie Malchow, Sammamish, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. 34 cities had representation ([Attachment A](#)). Guests present included Councilmember Lydia Assefa-Dawson, Federal Way (PIC alternate); Councilmember James Jeyaraj, Auburn (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Barbara de Michelle, Issaquah (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Ernest Thompson, Normandy Park (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Jeremy Barksdale, Bellevue (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Corina Pfeil, Kenmore (PIC Alternate); Councilmember James Jayaraj, Auburn (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Vanessa Kritzer, Redmond (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Tom Agnew, Bothell (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Susan Honda, Federal Way; Councilmember Wendy Weiker, Mercer Island; Councilmember Kathy Lambert, King County; Jenny Huston, King County staff; Dorian Waller, King County staff; Beth Mountsier, Bellevue staff; Joyce Nichols, Bellevue staff; Kelsey Beck, Seattle staff; Pat McLaughlin, King County staff; Tom Goff, King County staff;

2. Public Comment

Chair Malchow asked if there was anyone else who would like to provide public comment. Hearing none, Chair Malchow closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

3. Approval of the March 11, 2020 PIC Minutes

Chair Malchow asked if there were any amendments to the March 11, 2020 PIC minutes. **Vice Chair Bill Boyce, Kent, moved, seconded by Mayor David Baker, Kenmore, to approve the March 11, 2020 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Chair's Report

Chair Malchow stated that the PIC meeting was being held telephonically and online due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. She noted that the SCA bylaws provide for meetings to be held by telephone in the event of an emergency situation.

SCA Policy Director Brian Parry provided an overview of how the meeting would be facilitated using Zoom Webinar software. He noted that any discussion in the chat logs would be maintained for public records purposes ([Attachment B](#)).

5. Executive Director's Report

SCA Executive Director Deanna Dawson provided a report. She drew members' attention to the informational items in the materials. She updated members on SCA Board action on SCA dues for 2021, which will be kept at 2020 rates in light of the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on city

finances. She informed members that the County Council had approved funding for small businesses in cities. She informed PIC members of an upcoming meeting with the County Executive.

6. Proposed King County Rates and Fees

SCA Policy Director Brian Parry reported that King County is currently in the process of developing sewer rate and solid waste fee proposals for 2021 that could increase costs passed on to cities, local utility providers, and rate payers.

The sewer rate is expected to be transmitted in early May, and the King County Wastewater Treatment Division is proposing a 4.5% increase for 2021. The Solid Waste Division has presented a range of options from no increase in the tonnage fee in 2021 to an increase of 8%. SWD is also considering initiating new fees for recycling and disposal of items such as mattresses, appliances, and yard waste.

Parry said that feedback to date from cities has been to urge the County to forego rate increases at this time due to the COVID-19 emergency and the economic crisis. PIC members were asked to provide feedback on SCA potentially adopting a formal position to that effect.

Mayor Leanne Guier, Pacific, said that she could not support an increase on rates paid by businesses and residents while at the same time the city is working to avoid shutting off utilities for those who are unable to pay their utility bills.

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, said that she has grave concerns about the impacts of any rate increases this year and said the city of Redmond is already planning to forego rate increases. She said that she would support emergency action to recommend a policy position to the board opposing the proposed rate increases.

Mayor Benson Wong, Mercer Island, said that the Mercer Island city council discussed the issue and is unanimous in supporting no fee increases at this time in light of the impact on the public.

Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue, said that she agreed with the previous speakers and that King County should consider its rates in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis.

Councilmember Kelli Curtis, Kirkland, agreed that it is not the right time to increase rates. She said the Kirkland City Council would be discussing a comment letter to send to the county council at an upcoming meeting asking any fee increases to be deferred until at least 2022.

Councilmember James McNeal, Bothell, said that the city is already carrying significant debt within its utility services and that increasing regional utility rates will make the problem worse.

Councilmember Katherine Ross, Snoqualmie, said that the proposed fees should be considered in the context of other rates or fees for service that may need to be adjusted.

Councilmember Kate Kruller, Tukwila, said that she agreed with the comments of others. She said she recognized the important work supported by the proposed rates, but that the utility divisions need to be sympathetic to what is going on with COVID-19 and the economy.

Vice Chair Bill Boyce, Kent, moved, seconded by Councilmember Kate Kruller, Tukwila, to bring a proposed policy position to the next PIC meeting stating that SCA urges King County and other entities to forego any increases in rates and fees in light of the COVID-19 public health emergency and resulting economic impacts. The motion passed unanimously.

7. COVID-19 Legislative Priorities

SCA Policy Director Brian Parry reported that there is speculation that the Washington State Legislature will hold a special session in 2020 to make immediate budget adjustments in response to COVID-19. This is expected to precede significant additional budget cuts when the Legislature reconvenes in January 2021. Recent forecasts are projecting a \$7 billion general fund gap in the next two budget cycles. In addition, the state transportation budget is will be impacted by a significant drop in fuel tax revenues and revenue lost due to the passage of I-976 unless the measure is overturned by the courts.

Parry said a special session could come as early as June and that it is expected decisions would be made very quickly. Because of the speed with which the Legislature is likely to act, Parry said that it is important for cities to be communicating now with their legislators about their priorities.

In preparation for a potential special session, the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) adopted priorities to be communicated to legislature. These include:

- Providing financial support by maintaining shared revenues and offering direct fiscal relief;
- Loosening restrictions on the use of some fund sources so they can be directed where they are most needed right now;
- Relieving cities from state-mandated regulatory timelines that may be impossible to meet in the current environment;
- Providing more flexibility for city-owned utilities to provide waivers to rate payers and fiscal support to offset losses;
- Encouraging economic stimulus – both in the form of public infrastructure investments as well as emergency assistance to businesses; and,
- Providing support for rental assistance and emergency housing for vulnerable residents.

Parry asked PIC members to provide feedback on whether they SCA should consider adopting a position statement endorsing the priorities highlighted by AWC or a similar agenda. If recommended by PIC members, Parry said a position statement would be brought to the next PIC meeting for action.

Councilmember Traci Buxton, Des Moines, noted that some of the language in the principles adopted by AWC could be revised for consistency.

Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue, said that the AWC list generally lists the right priorities and noted that details about federal and state funding for city response to COVID-19 are still in flux.

Mayor Benson Wong, Mercer Island, said he supports endorsing the AWC legislative priorities.

Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah, said the Issaquah City Council had not yet discussed the proposal and that it is difficult for cities to discuss many issues because of restrictions related to COVID-19.

Vice Chair Bill Boyce, Kent, moved, seconded by Mayor David Baker, Kenmore, to bring a proposed policy position to the next PIC meeting in support of the legislative priorities approved by AWC and as shown in the [May PIC packet as Attachment A to Item 7](#). The motion passed unanimously.

8. Proclamation of Commitment to an Inclusive Community that Rejects Stigma and Bias Related to COVID-19

SCA Policy Analyst Alexis Mercedes Rinck reported that SCA members and residents of SCA member cities have voiced concerns about how xenophobia (discrimination based on national origin) and racially biased actions and harassment are impacting their neighborhoods, families, and businesses. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been a regional and national increase in bias, harassment, and hate crimes against Asian American, Black and African American, and other marginalized communities. This has had a devastating impact on Chinese and other Asian (and Pacific Islander) communities and unsheltered neighbors. There have also been concerns about stigma around Black, Indigenous, and people of color using preventative masks.

SCA cities including Bellevue, Burien, Redmond, Renton, and SeaTac have adopted resolutions or proclamations denouncing stigma and bias related to COVID-19 and declaring a commitment to an inclusive community, and other SCA cities are looking to take up similar action. Rinck asked PIC members to provide feedback on potentially following suit by recommending the SCA board adopt an anti-bias proclamation as shown in the [May PIC packet as Attachment A to Item 8](#).

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, stated that she fully supports SCA adopting, and that Redmond recently approved a similar proclamation. She suggested re-ordering of the recommended action section so to clarify that individuals should contact 911 first if there is an emergency. She said she is concerned the State Human Rights Commission has a serious backlog of cases and calling 911 would yield better results for people.

Councilmember Kate Kruller, Tukwila, stated that Tukwila has an overarching intolerance to hate and bias resolution and that they were taking up a COVID-specific resolution that adds a special emphasis to that commitment.

Councilmember Chris Roberts, Shoreline, stated that he believes this is incredibly important and that that it should be adopted as an emergency resolution during the meeting.

Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue, noted that May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage month and stated that passing the proposed resolution during the meeting would be very timely.

Councilmember Nancy Tosta, Burien, voiced support for the proclamation and for taking emergency action.

Mayor David Baker, Kenmore also voiced support for the proclamation and for taking emergency action.

Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah, said that he supports the proclamation and taking emergency action. He noted prior action by the Issaquah city council to denounce discrimination.

Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue highlighted that as the economy restarts and more people come out of quarantine, there will be increased socialization and potential for biased behavior. By getting this proclamation out now ahead of that, it sets the tone for post-quarantine.

Councilmember Kate Kruller, Tukwila, said that it feels like it is timely to take action now.

Councilmember Traci Buxton, Des Moines, stated that the proclamation describes potential behavior that requires such an urgent response that residents are urged to call 911, and that this seems like grounds for PIC to consider the issue an emergency and take immediate action.

Mayor Benson Wong, Mercer Island, stated that he is personally very supportive of the proposed resolution, but that he did not feel he was authorized to vote at the meeting as the Mercer Island City Council has not had the opportunity to formally discuss the proposal. He said he believed his fellow city councilmembers would be supportive, but that procedurally it was an issue.

Councilmember Martin Moore, Federal Way, stated that he feels confident supporting this measure and that the action was timely.

Chair Christie Malchow stated that the Sammamish City Council also has a rule requiring council review before voting on regional issues and that she would not be able to vote on the issue at the meeting as an emergency.

Executive Director Deanna Dawson explained the procedures for PIC recommending emergency action. She said that the SCA bylaws allow that 85% of those present at a regularly scheduled PIC meeting may declare an issue an emergency and the issue may be discussed and voted upon at the same meeting. In addition, in order to advance a public policy position to the Board, final adoption would require support by two-thirds of those cities represented at the meeting.

Mayor David Baker, Kenmore, moved, seconded by Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue, to declare the issue an emergency. **The motion passed with 30 cities voting yes, and four (Beaux Arts Village, Medina, Mercer Island, and Sammamish) abstaining.**

Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue, moved, seconded by Mayor David Baker, to adopt the Proclamation of Commitment to an Inclusive Community that Rejects Stigma and Bias Related to COVID-19 as shown in the [May PIC Packet in Attachment A to Item 8](#).

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, moved, seconded by Mayor David Baker, Kenmore, to amend the proclamation to place “call 911” before calling the Washington State Human Rights Commission. There was no discussion. The amendment passed unanimously.

Chair Malchow asked if there was further discussion on the main motion. **There was no discussion. The motion passed with 28 cities voting yes, and six (Beaux Arts Village, Carnation, Medina, Mercer Island, Normandy Park, and Sammamish) abstaining.**

9. King County Regional Homelessness Authority

SCA Policy Analyst Alexis Mercedes Rinck reported that the Governing Committee for the King County Regional Homelessness Authority has now been fully seated and the first meeting of the Committee is set for May 21, 2020. Items on the agenda for this first meeting of the Governing Committee are anticipated to include an update and proposal for the CEO recruitment process, a staff update on the timeline to achieve full operation of the Authority, review of a plan to appoint the Implementation Board, and selecting co-chairs for the Committee.

Rinck also stated that SCA will appoint two members to the Implementation Board and encouraged PIC members to send names of potential nominees to Executive Director Deanna Dawson by Friday May 15.

Rinck said SCA is still collecting responses to several questions to aid the work of SCA’s representatives on the Governing Board. These include:

- What is your city’s philosophy when it comes to homelessness crisis response?
- What is your city doing to provide homelessness crisis response services currently?
- What are the gaps in crisis response in your city? Where are additional resources needed?

PIC members were asked to send their responses to SCA staff.

10. COVID-19 Impacts and Response

SCA Executive Director Deanna Dawson reported that SCA is providing frequent updates on the COVID-19 health emergency to members by email. Recent high priority issues for cities include eligible uses for CARES Act funds; rules issued by the Governor’s Office concerning reopening economic activity; and, the Governor’s proclamation regarding the Open Public Meetings Act. Dawson highlighted resources available related to each of these issues in the [May PIC packet under Item 10](#). PIC members were asked to provide updates from their cities or highlight

questions for additional research by SCA staff. A roundtable discussion was held with members providing updates from their cities.

11. Informational Items

Chair Malchow said that two informational items are included in the May PIC packet. The first relates to upcoming ballot measures and the other to potential upcoming SCA issues. There was no discussion.

12. Upcoming Events

- a. SCA Public Issues Committee – Wednesday, June 10, 2020 – 7:00 to 9:00 PM

13. For the Good of the Order

Chair Malchow asked if any members had any items for the good of the order. There was no discussion.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 PM.

**Public Issues Committee Meeting
May 13, 2020**

City	Representative	Alternate
Algona	Dave Hill	
Auburn	Nancy Backus	James Jeyaraj
Beaux Arts Village	Tom Stowe	Aletha Howes
Bellevue	Janice Zahn	Jeremy Barksdale
Black Diamond	Erin Stout	Tamie Deady
Bothell	James McNeal	Tom Agnew
Burien	Krystal Marx	Nancy Tosta
Carnation	Dustin Green	Kim Lisk
Clyde Hill	Marianne Klaas	Kim Muromoto
Covington	Fran Hollums	Joseph Cimaomo
Des Moines	Traci Buxton	
Duvall	Michelle Hogg	Jennifer Knaplund
Enumclaw	Chance LaFleur	Tony Binion
Federal Way	Martin Moore	Lydia Assefa-Dawson
Hunts Point	Joseph Sabey	N/A
Issaquah	Tola Marts	Barbara de Michele
Kenmore	David Baker	Corina Pfeil
Kent	Bill Boyce	Toni Troutner
Kirkland	Kelli Curtis	Toby Nixon
Lake Forest Park	Tom French	Semra Riddle
Maple Valley	Sean Kelly	Les Burberry
Medina	Jennifer Garone	Jessica Rossman
Mercer Island	Benson Wong	David Rosebaum
Milton	Jim Gillespie	Shanna Styron Sherrell
Newcastle	Linda Newing	Tony Ventrella
Normandy Park	Sue-Ann Hohimer	Ernest Thompson
North Bend	Ross Loudenback	Heather Koellen
Pacific	Leanne Guier	David Sporaasli
Redmond	Angela Birney	Vanessa Kritzer
Renton	Ed Prince	Armondo Pavone
Sammamish	Christie Malchow	Kent Treen
SeaTac	Erin Sitterley	Pam Fernald
Shoreline	Chris Roberts	Will Hall
Skykomish	Henry Sladek	
Snoqualmie	Katherine Ross	Matt Larson
Tukwila	Kate Kruller	Thomas McLeod
Woodinville	Elaine Cook	Gary Harris
Yarrow Point	Dicker Cahill	
SCA	Deanna Dawson Brian Parry	Alexis Mercedes Rinck Leah Willoughby

Cities present at the meeting are **bolded**. Voting representatives present are highlighted.