



SCA Public Issues Committee

MINUTES

June 10, 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. 26 cities had representation ([Attachment A](#)). Guests present included Councilmember James Jeyaraj, Auburn (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Barbara de Michelle, Issaquah (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Ernest Thompson, Normandy Park (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Vanessa Kritzer, Redmond (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Tom Agnew, Bothell (PIC Alternate); Deputy Mayor Nancy Tosta, Burien (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Kent Treen, Sammamish (PIC Alternate); Councilmember Susan Honda, Federal Way; Councilmember Valerie O'Halloran, Renton; Jenny Huston, King County staff; Dorian Waller, King County staff; Beth Mountsier, Bellevue staff; Joyce Nichols, Bellevue staff; Kelsey Beck, Seattle staff; Tom Goff, King County staff; Doug Levy, Renton Consultant; Diana Hart, Woodinville staff; Madelina Cavazos, King County staff; Pat McLaughlin, King County staff; John Walsh, King County staff; Jackie Wheeler; Brian Halverson.

Chair Malchow stated that the PIC meeting was being held telephonically and online due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and consistent with the Governor's Safe Start-Stay Healthy Proclamation. She noted that the SCA bylaws provide for meetings to be held by telephone in the event of an emergency.

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](#)).

2. Public Comment

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

3. Approval of the May 13, 2020 PIC Minutes

Chair Malchow asked if there were any amendments to the May 13, 2020 PIC minutes. **Vice Chair Bill Boyce, Kent, moved, seconded by Councilmember Ross Loudonback, North Bend, to approve the May 13, 2020 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Chair's Report

Chair Malchow reported that SCA board leadership would be meeting with King County Executive Dow Constantine on June 11 and encouraged members to suggest any questions or issues to address during the meeting. She said the SCA board approved the anti-bias

proclamation recommended by PIC, and that a copy of the signed proclamation was included in the meeting packet as an informational item. In addition, SCA President Mayor Dana Ralph, Kent, and SCA Vice President Councilmember Ed Prince, Renton, recently issued a statement condemning racism on behalf of SCA, which was also included in the meeting packet as an informational item.

5. Executive Director's Report

SCA Executive Director Deanna Dawson provided a report. She drew members' attention to the informational item in the meeting packet regarding the Regional Homelessness Authority. The Governing Committee for the Authority met for the first time on May 21 and reviewed a draft timeline for making the Authority fully operational that is included in the informational item. At its June meeting, the Governing Committee is expected to decide on co-chairs (if any); review a staff recommendation on a CEO recruitment firm; receive an update on seating of the Implementation Board; and review draft bylaws. The staff group (which SCA serves on) is going to discuss appointments to the implementation Board on Friday, June 12.

Dawson said SCA is in the process of filling a vacant policy analyst position and is hoping to have the position filled by the next PIC meeting.

Dawson reiterated that SCA board leadership would be meeting with King County Executive Dow Constantine the following day, and noted that SCA would be seeking information on the status of funding to cities for small business grants as approved by the County Council.

Dawson said that it is a challenging time for everyone and that is an important time to remember the Guiding Principles that SCA adopted earlier this year as members engage with each other:

- Assume that others are acting with good intent
- No surprises!
- Have each other's backs
- Think about who is not at the table
- Be candid, but kind
- Once a decision is made, work together to make it work
- Show up to meetings prepared
- Extend grace to others – cut them some slack
- Remain open-minded
- Respect differing views

6. Proposed King County Rates and Fees

SCA Policy Director Brian Parry reported that at its May meeting, PIC voted to consider recommending a policy position to the SCA board related to proposed increases to rates and fees. The proposed position states, "The Sound Cities Association (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 discussion at the May meeting was prompted by proposed increases to the King County sewer rate and solid waste tonnage fees, but Parry noted that the policy position as written is broader than those two fees.

Parry said concern was expressed by members at the May PIC meeting about the impact of increasing fees – even relatively small increases – during the COVID-19 health emergency and as cities, utility providers, and customers are addressing its economic impacts. At the SCA board meeting in May, there was discussion about whether the position should be considered in terms of strongly urging that every possible alternative be explored before any increases in rates and fees are proposed. Members were asked to provide direction on the policy position as proposed and for any additional feedback to inform further SCA board discussion.

Since the last PIC meeting, the King County Council approved a 4.5% increase to the sewer rate for 2021 and is continuing to develop a 2021-2022 solid waste fee recommendation. The proposed solid waste fee is expected to be transmitted within the next month. The King County Solid Waste Division is currently recommending a rate increase of 6% in 2021 and 8% in 2022. On average, this would add 46-cents in 2021 and 65-cents in 2022 to the monthly residential curbside customer. That proposal will be reviewed by the Solid Waste Advisory Committee before the county executive transmits his final proposal to the council.

Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah, said that the Issaquah City Council was split on whether to support the proposed policy position recognizing that these are very difficult times economically but also that the proposed fees support important regional services.

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, said that she is concerned about the proposed rate increases but understands why the county is seeking them. She said Redmond is planning to absorb the proposed rate increases in order to avoid increasing costs to residents and businesses, but that this would require program cuts. She said some service providers, including cities, may need to consider increasing revenues in order to remain viable and that she would like to hear feedback from other cities about the proposed policy.

SCA Executive Director Deanna Dawson said at the May SCA board meeting, board members stressed the importance of the county and other entities looking at all alternatives before proposing to increase rates.

Councilmember Kelli Curtis, Kirkland, said that Kirkland would also look to absorb any increases in rates to avoid increasing costs to residents and businesses. She said the city wrote a letter to King County Executive Dow Constantine expressing concerns about the rate proposals and that based on the response they received she did not expect the county to agree to not raise utility rates.

Councilmember Katherine Ross, Snoqualmie, said Snoqualmie is spending significant resources to upgrade utilities serving their downtown and could be faced with a need to increase rates to support that work. She said urging entities not to raise rates does not need to be an absolute rejection of fee increases, recognizing that everyone is facing difficult budget decisions.

Councilmember James McNeal, Bothell, said the Bothell City Council discussed the proposed solid waste rate and a majority felt an increase to the solid waste fee could be justified. He said

based on the majority recommendation from his city council, he would not be voting in favor of the proposed policy position.

Vice Chair Bill Boyce, Kent, moved, seconded by Councilmember Ed Prince, Renton, to recommend the SCA board adopt the following policy position: The Sound Cities Association (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 the resulting economic impacts. The motion passed with 20 cities voting in yes, two cities voting no (Bothell and Issaquah), and three cities abstaining (Burien, Snoqualmie, and Woodinville).

7. COVID-19 Legislative Priorities

SCA Policy Director Brian Parry reported that at its May meeting, PIC voted to consider recommending a policy position to the SCA board related to legislative priorities and COVID-19 response and relief in advance of a potential special session of the Washington State Legislature in 2020. The proposed position states:

As the Legislature considers necessary actions to address the impacts of COVID-19 on our state, SCA asks that priority be given to support for cities and towns in the following areas:

Financial support

- o Maintain critical state shared revenues that provide funding for essential public services.*
- o Provide fiscal relief to cities hard hit with costs for emergency response and loss of tax revenue.*

Fiscal flexibility

- o Provide flexibility within existing restricted revenues to allow cities to use funds where they are most needed right now.*

Regulatory relief

- o Continue the emergency action taken by the Governor to provide flexibility on deadlines for permitting and land use timelines. Cities hard hit by this emergency may still be experiencing staffing shortages and back-logs that will impact their ability to comply with typical statutory deadlines.*

City-owned utility support

- o Allow city-owned utilities that have waived late fees and shut-offs and extension of their ability to collect outstanding debt so that they can work with rate payers to extend payment plans without impacting the financial viability of the utility or raising rates on other customers.*
- o Provide funding to help offset losses related to forgiving late fees and delinquent accounts for those customers hard-hit by the emergency.*

Economic stimulus

o Investing in public infrastructure projects is one of the best ways to support economic stimulus as infrastructure investments have a positive economic multiplier with the creation of family-wage jobs and support increased economic activity.

Cities also support efforts to help the most vulnerable residents and our small businesses

o Cities support programs to provide emergency rental assistance and emergency housing.

o Cities support programs to provide emergency assistance to small businesses.

Parry said that the proposed legislative priorities are the same as those recently adopted by the Association of Washington Cities and that no changes were made to the proposal since the last PIC meeting. Parry said it is important for cities to be out in front of any special session and communicating city priorities with legislators. He said timing of any special session is still to be determined with some legislators suggesting a special session could happen any time before the end of the year or may not happen at all.

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, said she supports the proposed legislative priorities. She said in meetings with legislators she is strongly advocating for not reducing shared revenues as was done during the last major recession. She said many of the service reductions that happened because shared revenues were reduced in that time are exacerbating challenges happening today, such as gaps in behavioral health services.

Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah, said the Issaquah City Council supports the proposed legislative priorities. He said the City is fortunate to be represented by legislators with local government backgrounds who understand issues important to cities.

Councilmember Traci Buxton, Des Moines, suggested revising the proposed language related to economic stimulus to make the statement more action-oriented.

Councilmember Ed Prince, Renton, said he supports the proposed legislative priorities and that they are consistent with Renton's adopted priorities.

Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah, moved, seconded by Mayor Marianne Klaas, Clyde Hill, to recommend the SCA board adopt the legislative priorities as proposed and shown on [page 17 of the June PIC packet](#):

As the Legislature considers necessary actions to address the impacts of COVID-19 on our state, SCA asks that priority be given to support for cities and towns in the following areas:

Financial support

o Maintain critical state shared revenues that provide funding for essential public services.

o Provide fiscal relief to cities hard hit with costs for emergency response and loss of tax revenue.

Fiscal flexibility

o Provide flexibility within existing restricted revenues to allow cities to use funds where they are most needed right now.

Regulatory relief

o Continue the emergency action taken by the Governor to provide flexibility on deadlines for permitting and land use timelines. Cities hard hit by this emergency may still be experiencing staffing shortages and back-logs that will impact their ability to comply with typical statutory deadlines.

City-owned utility support

o Allow city-owned utilities that have waived late fees and shut-offs and extension of their ability to collect outstanding debt so that they can work with rate payers to extend payment plans without impacting the financial viability of the utility or raising rates on other customers.

o Provide funding to help offset losses related to forgiving late fees and delinquent accounts for those customers hard-hit by the emergency.

Economic stimulus

o Investing in public infrastructure projects is one of the best ways to support economic stimulus as infrastructure investments have a positive economic multiplier with the creation of family-wage jobs and support increased economic activity.

Cities also support efforts to help the most vulnerable residents and our small businesses

o Cities support programs to provide emergency rental assistance and emergency housing.

o Cities support programs to provide emergency assistance to small businesses.

The motion passed unanimously.

8. King County Emergency Management Coordination

SCA Policy Director Brian Parry reported on a proposal being considered by King County related to emergency management coordination and specifically support to cities provided by two Zone Coordinators. SCA cities and many special purpose districts in the county are served by two Zone Coordinators whose contracts are managed by King County. Despite being overseen by the county, these zone coordinators have a role as independent advocates within the regional emergency management system and support cities in fulfilling emergency management responsibilities and planning required under state law. Smaller cities, most of which do not have the resources to staff a full-time emergency manager, in particular have provided feedback to SCA expressing how important the role of the zone coordinators are in both supporting their work and advocating with the county during emergencies.

The County Office of Emergency Management (KCOEM) recently proposed changing the structure of how these contract positions are managed. KCOEM initially gave notice that the contracts would be eliminated in June and their duties managed in-house by existing county

staff. This was initially acted upon without any input from cities or even the Emergency Management Advisory Committee on which SCA has three representatives. In response to feedback from Emergency Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) members, emergency managers, several cities and SCA staff, KCOEM agreed to delay any decision to the end of 2020 and committed to working with EMAC in the interim on a plan going forward.

The proposal from KCOEM raised concerns about the proposal potentially leading to cities losing the independent advocacy services provided by the Zone Coordinators and more broadly whether the services cities rely on would truly continue to be provided under the new structure. Parry said some cities have provided feedback that absorbing the work of the Zone Coordinators within existing county staff is a non-starter; meanwhile, others have suggested some openness to restructuring how the positions are managed if safeguards are in place to ensure the work important to cities continues.

Parry asked members to provide feedback to guide SCA representatives on EMAC as they engage in discussions with the county. Members were asked to provide feedback on the current role of zone coordinators within their cities; how important it is for the Zone Coordinators to maintain some independence; and, whether members would be open to a model where the Zone Coordinators become county employees if cities and EMAC have a defined role in developing their workplan and other assurances that they will continue to provide the same level of service to cities.

Councilmember Traci Buxton, Des Moines, said that she would support maintaining the current structure for managing the Zone Coordinators if other cities find that the services provided are valuable to them.

Councilmember Sue-Ann Hohimer, Normandy Park, said Normandy Park values the support provided by their Zone Coordinator and that their police chief works very closely with them.

Councilmember Tola Marts, Issaquah, said Issaquah sent a letter to the county in support of extending the Zone Coordinator contracts. He said that the city has emergency management staff, but that they rely on the Zone Coordinators as well and value the services they provide.

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, echoed the comments of previous speakers. She said there is value in maintaining some independence for the Zone Coordinators that could be lost if they become directly employed by the county. She said any decision should go through EMAC.

Councilmember Erin Stout, Black Diamond, asked about the timeline for making a decision about the Zone Coordinators. SCA Policy Director Brian Parry said the director of the King County Department of Emergency Management committed to working on the issue with EMAC and cities directly, but that process has not yet been outlined.

Mayor Marianne Klaas, Clyde Hill, said that she serves on EMAC and knows firsthand the importance and scale of work performed by the Zone Coordinators. She said members of EMAC pushed back strongly against eliminating the Zone Coordinator contracts. She said she is

concerned that if the positions are absorbed within the county the voices of cities will be diluted and city needs will not be prioritized.

Councilmember Kelli Curtis, Kirkland, said that the timing of the decision during a pandemic was concerning. She said Kirkland is fortunate to have full-time emergency management staff and she could support the proposal by King County to perform the Zone Coordinator work with county staff.

Councilmember Michelle Hogg, Duvall, said Duvall's emergency manager is part-time and frequently relies on the Zone Coordinators to provide support, especially during flooding emergencies. She expressed concerns that if the Zone Coordinators are county employees the city would not have the same access to resources to respond during an emergency, communication and coordination would be reduced, and ultimately the positions may be eliminated altogether.

Chair Malchow said there needs to be a defined timeline and process to clarify what is being proposed by the county and that EMAC needs to be part of that discussion. She said that the Zone Coordinators may be less necessary for larger cities who have their own emergency management staff, but that they still play an important role that needs to be maintained.

9. Potential Upcoming Issues

SCA Executive Director Deanna Dawson said it is becoming increasingly clear that in-person events were likely on hold for the remainder of the year. She said SCA is working on a number of educational and training events to be held in the next several weeks and asked members for their feedback on other events that would be of interest.

Dawson highlighted planned upcoming events for SCA members, including:

- Webinar on providing support for neighborhood businesses as King County transitions to Phase 2 of the reopening plan. Speakers include Seattle Southside Chamber President and CEO Andrea Reay; Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, Division of Occupational Safety and Health Operations Manager Pam Cant; and, Redmond Manager of Strategic Initiatives Sara Pyle. *(The webinar was held on Monday, June 15, 2020 and a recording can be found on the [SCA website.](#))*
- Partners Forum with CenturyLink and Puget Sound Energy on how cities and utilities can partner as we enter economic recovery.
- Webinar with the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center to brief local officials what survivors are experiencing, changing trends, and policy implications resulting from the COVID-19 crisis. The webinar will be provided at two different times on Wednesday, June 17.
- SCA is also working to host:
 - A panel discussion led by African-American elected officials on racial equity;
 - A webinar with King County Metro on the impacts of COVID-19 on service and operations; and
 - A training on how to hold effective online meetings with Ann Macfarlane of Jurassic Parliament.

Dawson highlighted a number of priorities for SCA that were adopted earlier in 2020, including: transportation; budget challenges and infrastructure needs; homelessness; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. She asked members to provide ideas for other topics that SCA should look to support workshops and trainings over the next several months. She said SCA recognizes there are a lot of important conversations that need to happen right now and that these conversations are even more difficult to have in large online meetings where there is limited time for each member to speak, and that members should use SCA as a resource for helping to convene productive meetings.

Deputy Mayor Krystal Marx, Burien, said she appreciates the work SCA is doing to support cities. She said her fellow Burien City Councilmember Nancy Tosta suggested holding a convening to explore opportunities to restructure and improve systems as we approach a “new normal.” She also suggested working with the Board of Health on a presentation on their data dashboard and programs.

Councilmember Janice Zahn, Bellevue, suggested a briefing on a potential federal infrastructure package. She said the Board of Health is considering a proclamation declaring racism a public health crisis and suggested PIC should consider a similar proclamation.

Councilmember Traci Buxton, Des Moines, said diversity, equity, and inclusion should be the top priority. She said communities are struggling with the best and most compassionate way to work through challenging issues and would benefit from learning about successful events, policies, and programs others are organizing.

Mayor David Baker, Kenmore, thanked Councilmember Zahn for raising the issue of declaring racism a public health crisis. He asked whether members would support bringing an item to the next PIC meeting for potential action and encouraged members to begin having conversations with their councils and mayors.

10. City Roundtable Discussion

Members provided brief updates on some of the important work happening in their cities. Many highlighted efforts to respond to the COVID-19 emergency and its economic impacts; recent demonstrations held in their cities in support of Black Lives Matter; and, community discussions about policing and potential police reforms. Some members asked for more information on the “8 Can’t Wait” police reform proposals, which can be found on their [website](#).

11. Informational Items

Chair Malchow highlighted informational items in the packet on the following topics: the King County Regional Homelessness Authority; the approved SCA COVID-19 anti-bias proclamation; a statement from SCA President Dana Ralph and Vice President Ed Prince condemning racism; and, an update on levies and ballot measures in King County.

12. Upcoming Events

- a. SCA Public Issues Committee – Wednesday, July 8, 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.

Vice Chair Boyce announced that Councilmember Fran Hollums, Covington, was retiring from public office and recognized her for her contributions to PIC and to the region.

Mayor Angela Birney, Redmond, said she is impressed by the way cities are working together to address many challenging issues.

Councilmember Kate Kruller, Tukwila, apologized for joining the meeting late due to a conflict with a Youth Council meeting (*Councilmember Kruller joined the meeting during item 10*). She said that she appreciates the camaraderie among cities and that now is a time to listen to the changes people are seeking and find reasonable solutions.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 PM.

**Public Issues Committee Meeting
June 10, 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.

SCA Public Issues Committee – June 10, 2020
Attachment B – Zoom Meeting Chat Log

18:52:31 **From Leah (SCA) to James Jeyaraj and all panelists :** Hi James--did you mean to have your hand up? What can I help with?

18:53:25 **From Brian Parry (SCA) to James Jeyaraj and all panelists :** Hi Councilmember Jeyaraj, I see you have your hand up. Can I help you with something?

19:02:05 **From James Jeyaraj to All panelists :** Oh sorry no.

19:02:06 **From Tola Marts, Issaquah to All panelists :** I'm not seeing the raise hand option...

19:03:16 **From Seattle Pride to All panelists :** Krystal Marx - I should be the voting member tonight

19:03:40 **From Marianne Klaas, Clyde Hill to All panelists :** Raised hand shows up when you open Participants option

19:06:02 **From Tola Marts, Issaquah to All panelists :** Saw it now, thx.

19:06:41 **From Vanessa Kritzer to All panelists :** Vanessa Kritzer, Alternate for Redmond Present

19:08:08 **From Jennifer Garone, Medina to All panelists :** Jennifer Garone in Medina joined late

19:08:49 **From Kelsey Beck, Seattle to All panelists :** Just announcing myself as a guest, Kelsey Beck from the City of Seattle. Thank you!

19:11:31 **From Deanna Dawson, SCA :** Thanks Jennifer - we have so noted!

19:17:09 **From Marianne Klaas, Clyde Hill to All panelists :** I screwed up my laptop audit- so joining audio with my phone ending 8910 in case you need to know- Marianne

19:56:22 **From Deanna Dawson, SCA to All panelists :** Martin Moore is on as an attendee - can staff please move him to a panelist

19:56:47 **From Councilmember Martin Moore to All panelists : thanks so much!**