

RESOLUTION NO. 16294

A RESOLUTION amending the Board of County Commissioners' (BoCC) previously established principles of governance and management for Thurston County utility operations by repealing Resolution No. 09993 and associated Utility Operating Agreements; establishing consolidated rate and fund structures and establishing a consolidated Utility Advisory Committee (UAC).

WHEREAS the Board of County Commissioners recognizes the need to manage water and sewer utilities efficiently and cost effectively.

WHEREAS the current management of the multiple funds does not provide rate stability or rate funded capital improvements and is not consistent in the application of rates among customers.

WHEREAS HDR, Inc. was contracted by Thurston County Public Works to conduct a Utility Consolidation Feasibility Study that determined consolidation of Thurston County water and sewer utilities is logistically and legally feasible.

WHEREAS FCS Group was contracted by Thurston County Public Works to conduct a Water and Sewer Rate Study that recommended consolidation of Thurston County water and sewer utilities into a single water utility and single sewer utility.

WHEREAS Thurston County Public Works has prepared fund consolidation and blended rate structures for the water and sewer utilities, to take effect in 2024, on the basis of improved long-term infrastructure planning, reduced rate volatility, and financial and administrative efficiencies associated with consolidation.

WHEREAS the existence and structure of multiple community-specific Utility Advisory Committees (UAC) were established by Resolution No. 09993 and Utility Operating Agreements, respectively.

WHEREAS Thurston County continues to value the input and consistent communication from the communities served by the water and sewer utilities.

WHEREAS the consolidation of three existing UACs into a single UAC that includes members from each service area will improve administrative efficiency and maintain community engagement.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THURSTON COUNTY, STATE OF WASHINGTON DOES RESOLVE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Resolution 09993 and associated Utility Operating Agreements are repealed effective January 1, 2024. The objectives of Resolution 09993 are to be replaced with the contents of this Resolution.
2. The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) establishes a single operating fund and single reserve fund for a consolidated water utility and a single operating fund and single reserve fund for a consolidated sewer utility effective January 1, 2024.
3. A consolidated Utility Advisory Committee (UAC) is established effective January 1, 2024, which will include member ratepayers from each utility service area. The structure and responsibilities of the UAC are laid out as follows:

4. PURPOSE: The purpose of the UAC is to allow the utility customer community to have elected members communicate and coordinate with Thurston County Public Works regarding operation and maintenance of the utilities, act as a liaison between Public Works and the utility service customers, represent the interests of the ratepayers at the regularly scheduled meetings, and provide feedback to Public Works staff on issues of utility operations, rates, budget, and long-term plans.
5. MEMBERSHIP: The UAC shall be comprised of (7) seven voting members, who are residents from within the utility service areas and are paying utility customers. Two members shall be elected from each of the three utility service areas that provide both water and sewer service (Grand Mound, Boston Harbor, and Tamoshan). One member shall be elected from the utility service area that provides only sewer service (Olympic View).
6. ELECTIONS: Elections shall be a simple ballot method administered by Public Works. UAC members shall be property owners within the respective service area which they are representing. Members shall be elected by a simple majority vote of ballots received and shall serve without compensation for the duration of their term. Each property owner shall have one (1) vote per property address served by water and/or sewer.
7. VACANCIES: A member shall be considered resigned from the UAC following three unexcused absences in one calendar year. Such resignation shall not require any further or formal action by the UAC or Public Works. Vacancies arising during the term of any member shall be filled by special election according to the same provisions set forth above (6) for regular elections. A member elected to fill a vacancy shall serve for the full balance of the term for which their predecessor was elected.
8. TERMS: Memberships of previously established community-specific UACs shall end on December 31, 2023. Newly elected memberships of the consolidated UAC shall begin on January 1, 2024. One member from each of Grand Mound, Boston Harbor, Tamoshan, and Olympic View will serve a full four-year term, and one member from each of Grand Mound, Boston Harbor, and Tamoshan will serve a two-year half term. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes in the initial election will serve four-year terms, with the two-year term awarded to the candidate receiving the second highest vote total. Should a tie occur, election terms will be selected randomly by Public Works. This is to stagger the appointment of UAC members after 2024, with elections occurring every two years. For all elections thereafter, terms shall last four years, unless the member resigns or is removed.
9. OFFICERS: A majority of the UAC shall elect one of its members as a Chairperson and one of its members as a Vice Chairperson. The Chairperson will lead UAC meetings and represent the UAC during communication with Thurston County Public Works staff. Officers shall serve a two-year term, but not more than two consecutive two-year terms in either position.
10. QUORUM AND ACTIONS: A quorum shall be determined by the majority of voting positions that are filled by an appointed member. A vote of the members forming a quorum, as determined from the total membership at the time a vote is conducted, is required to take any action.


11. MEETINGS: The UAC will meet every other month unless cancelled or rescheduled by the Chairperson. The meeting schedule will be determined by Thurston County Public Works staff at the beginning of the year with flexibility to reschedule meetings if necessary. Written minutes of all meetings will be provided by Public Works staff. Minutes will be a summary of the meetings, containing a review of the issues discussed, actions taken, and tasks delegated.

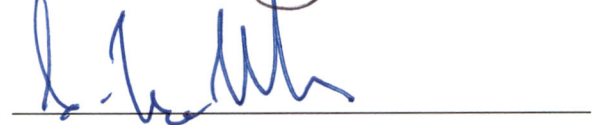
ADOPTED: August 15, 2023

ATTEST:


Clerk of the Board


BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON


CAROLINA MEJIA, Chair


TYE MENSER, Vice-Chair


GARY EDWARDS, Commissioner

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
JON TUNHEIM
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

By: 
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney