

UTILITY ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

April 10, 2025 at 5:15 PM

Water Utility Shop 2520 Barrett Ave./Zoom Webinar



<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/83013202186> or 1-253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 830 1320 2186

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by Chair Campbell at 5:15 PM.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land, and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. *Gunalchéesh!*

C. ROLL CALL

UAB Members Present: Andrew Cambell (Chair), Stuart Cohen, Grant Ritter, Geoff Larson, Buffy Pederson

CBJ Staff Present: Brian McGuire, Utilities Superintendent; Chad Gubala, Utilities Production & Treatment Manager; Nathan Bodensadt, Administrative Coordinator

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approved without comment.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. March 13, 2025 - Regular Meeting

Approved without comment.

F. AGENDA TOPICS

2. Utility Update

Mr. McGuire shared several utility updates. In wastewater operations, the crusher project for biosolids was awarded to Dawson Construction. A new Source Control Coordinator position was approved and classified by HR to manage industrial sewer discharges. The outdated thawing code from 2011 was successfully repealed at the 4/7/2025 Assembly meeting. The Juneau-Douglas Treatment Plant Clarifier project received funding approval at the 4/7/2025 meeting, with approximately \$1M allocated for this year and \$9M for next year, with construction expected to extend beyond the cruise ship season. The 2024 rate study will be discussed at the Assembly Finance Committee on April 30th. New 2025 cruise ship contracts will include monitoring requirements to assess pollutants of concern (including PFAS). These contracts are renewed annually.

Regarding water utilities, Mr. Gubala shared that planning is underway for the Salmon Creek outage scheduled to begin in April 2026. The utility plans to take a conservative approach to cruise ship water supply during the outage period, prioritizing community and fire protection needs. The department has improved its understanding of system performance based on the past year's experiences and is developing emergency water supply protocols.

3. Annual Report - Due May 31, 2025

Chair Andrew Campbell noted UAB member Janet Schempf's absence and her previous experience and interest in preparing the annual report. Mr. Larson confirmed the submission deadline of May 31st, with one more meeting scheduled before then. The board discussed reaching out to Janet to see if she would be willing to prepare the report again between meetings, and then review it at the May 8, 2025 meeting. The board agreed to maintain this item on the next meeting's agenda.

4. Discussion: Pyrolysis

The Board discussed the implementation of pyrolysis technology for biosolids management. Mr. Gubala provided a detailed overview of why pyrolysis was selected as the preferred technology over other options like plasma treatment. He explained that the primary objective was to reduce waste to components that could be disposed of locally, reducing/eliminating the current \$1.2-2.8 million annual cost of shipping biosolids to Arlington, Oregon.

Mr. Gubala addressed regulatory considerations, noting that EPA certification for PFAS treatment is complex due to the limited ability to quantify all PFAS variants (only about 80 of over 15,000 types can be measured). He highlighted that the selected pyrolysis technology has been successfully implemented in 14 different installations with EPA and state approval. The process generates valuable byproducts including carbon black and biochar, with potential for buyback agreements and financial incentives from vendors.

Mr. Cohen inquired about biosolid volumes and potential revenue from byproducts. Mr. Ritter and Cohen discussed the practicality of local use for these byproducts, noting that shipping costs could offset potential profits for distant sales.

Mr. Larson raised concerns about PFAS emission standards and project commitments. Mr. Gubala clarified that the current phase involves a \$2 million forgivable loan for design studies, with no obligation for the city to proceed with implementation. He explained that while exact PFAS safety standards are still being developed by EPA, the technology employs a layered approach including primary processing, secondary afterburner, and GAC scrubbing to manage PFAS compounds.

Mr. Ritter brought up broader waste management concerns, referencing a Southeast Conference report on municipal solid waste to energy possibilities for Southeast Alaska. He questioned why regional collaboration wasn't being pursued for a comprehensive waste solution.

Mr. Gubala emphasized that while a regional solution would be ideal, the current pyrolysis proposal addresses an immediate need to manage biosolids, particularly given the risk that the Oregon disposal facility that currently accepts biosolids might eventually refuse CBJ materials. The project represents a practical step forward while broader waste management solutions continue to be explored.

G. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ethan Roemeling introduced himself as a newly appointed member of the Utility Advisory Board, with his term beginning in June. He stated he was attending to familiarize himself with the board's current activities. Chair Campbell welcomed Mr. Roemeling.

H. NEXT MEETING DATE

5. May 8, 2025 @ 5:15 PM

I. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

J. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM.

ADA accommodations available upon request: Please contact the Clerk's office 36 hours prior to any meeting so arrangements can be made for closed captioning or sign language interpreter services depending on the meeting format. The Clerk's office telephone number is 586-5278, e-mail: city.clerk@juneau.gov.