City of
New Westminster

Minutes

Electric Utility Commission

Tuesday, May 6, 2025
3:00 p.m.

Committee Room 2, Second Floor & Zoom
New Westminster City Hall, 511 Royal Avenue

Present: Lino Siracusa, Chair
Mayor Patrick Johnstone
Councillor Paul Minhas
Sally Bhullar-Gill
Maya Chorobik* *(joined at 3:34)*
Lisa Spitale*

**Attendance by electronic means*

1. CALL TO ORDER IN OPEN SESSION & LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. It was acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. It was recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. AGENDA ADDITIONS & DELETIONS

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the Agenda of the Electric Utility Commission meeting held on May 6, 2025 be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT "Elimination of the 3.5% Climate Action Levy" be added as Item 5.1 under New Business.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3.1 May 22, 2024

MOVED and SECONDED

1. *THAT the Electric Utility Commission's motion on September 3, 2024 to adopt the Minutes of the May 22, 2024 Electric Utility Commission be rescinded; and*
2. *THAT the Minutes of the May 22, 2024 Electric Utility Commission be adopted as corrected and circulated.*

CARRIED

3.2 September 3, 2024

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the Minutes of the Electric Utility Commission meeting held on September 3, 2024 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

3.3 November 5, 2024

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the Minutes of the Electric Utility Commission meeting held on November 5, 2024 be adopted as circulated.

CARRIED

4. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

4.1 Providing Equity in the Delivery of Energy Saving Programs for New West Electrical Customers

Leya Behra, Deputy Director, Climate Action spoke regarding actions taken by staff in response to the referred motion, including:

- seeking approval to update the existing Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) between BC Hydro and the New Westminster Electric Utility; and
- leveraging the residential solar-batter program delivered by BC Hydro through a partnership approach.

The report for the Commission’s consideration focuses on recognizing the differences of experiences of the customers when accessing the utility programs, when being delivered by BC Hydro, the Residential Solar-Battery Program and Peak Saver And Demand Response Programs.

Furthermore, staff brought forward a discussion item on the potential challenges in relation to the partnership with BC Hydro as well as the alignment of the solar-battery and peak saver and demand response programs.

Staff advised the MOU requires updates in order to better align the Solar-Battery Program and the Peak Saver And Demand Response Programs. The current limiting factors of the two programs that the City is currently facing include:

- customers must have advanced metering infrastructure in place that requires AMI hardware deployment and software integration; and
- an administration and application processing protocol need to be developed in order to adopt the solar-battery program in the City.

In response to questions from the Commission, staff advised that:

- the MOU is intended to ensure the equity of delivery to New Westminster Utility ratepayers the potential energy saving programs that BC Hydro implements;
- currently, there is no termination date; and
- the intended updates to the MOU will focus on the source of funds for the potential programs.

MOVED and SECONDED

1. *THAT the referred Council motion titled: "Providing Equity in the Delivery of Energy Saving Programs for New West Electrical Customers" be received for information.*
2. *THAT Staff pursue amending the existing Memorandum of Agreement with BC Hydro, dated March 25, 2010, relating to the availability of Power Smart Programs to electrical service customers in the City of New Westminster.*
3. *THAT Staff continue to develop a partnership approach with BC Hydro to deliver a residential solar-battery program to New Westminster Electric Utility customers.*

CARRIED

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 Elimination of the 3.5% Climate Action Levy

The Commission considered rates which the Electric Utility charges customers and their potential mitigation with the elimination of the 3.5% Climate Action Levy (CAL) via the removal of the CAL from the 2026 Electricity Bills as part of Council's budget development process and would aid in the general reduction of rates paid by New Westminster residents.

The Commission highlighted the need for steady funding and climate adaptation prior to the elimination of the CAL to take place.

In response to questions from the Commission, staff advised that CAL funds are currently used in annual operational budgets in the Energy and Climate Department.

The Commission considered the need for a report which would provide additional information regarding the CAL, prior to making any decision. This report would be brought forward as an agenda item at a subsequent Electric Utility Commission meeting.

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT staff be directed to permanently eliminate the 3.5% Climate Action Levy as part of the 2026 budget, which will be presented to Council for review and approval.

DEFEATED
Opposed: Lino Siracusa
Mayor Patrick Johnstone
Sally Bhullar-Gill
Lisa Spitale

Maya Chorobik joined the meeting by videoconference (3:34 p.m.).

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT staff report back with information and recommendations pertaining to the elimination of the 3.5% Climate Action Levy as well as provide financial analysis of the potential rates and revenues that such elimination would carry.

CARRIED
Opposed: Cllr. Minhas

6. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED and SECONDED
THAT the meeting adjourn (3:37 p.m.).

CARRIED

Certified a true and correct copy of the Minutes of the Electric Utility Commission meeting held on May 6, 2025.

Lino Siracusa	Yuliya Dmitriieva
CHAIR	COMMITTEE CLERK