

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
WORK SESSION
EWEB BOARD ROOM
MARCH 20, 2007
6:30 P.M.

Commissioners present: Mel Menegat, President; John Simpson, Vice President; Ron Farmer, John Brown, Patrick Lanning, Commissioners.

Others present: Randy Berggren, Dick Varner, Tom Buckhouse, Dick Helgeson, Debra Smith, Lance Robertson, Dave Koski, Terry Bequette, Marty Douglass, Jim Origliosso, and Judy Chase of the EWEB staff; Rick Lindholm, Cathy Hamilton, Lindholm Research LLC; Ruth Atcherson, City of Eugene minutes recorder.

President Menegat convened the work session of the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) at 6:36 p.m.

ANNUAL CUSTOMER BENCHMARK SURVEY RESULTS

External Communications Coordinator Lance Robertson reviewed the results of the *Benchmark Survey 2007* with the aid of power points.

Consultant Rick Lindholm explained the shift from a 1 to 5 scale to a 1 to 10 scale. He said the reason for using the larger scale was to facilitate further analysis of the results. He averred that it was easier to interpret a more finite ranking.

Commissioner Farmer observed that the ranking stopped at 9. Mr. Robertson responded that no one ranked anything higher than a 9.

Commissioner Farmer commented that at his place of work they focused on moving the people who rank things as an 8 to a 9 or a 10. Mr. Lindholm responded that there tended to be lower expectations for public entities in the benchmark surveys.

Mr. Robertson reviewed the *Satisfaction Ranking by "Why" Response*. Ms. Hamilton explained that the ranking listed as *Critical* was comprised of the critical responses that were not specific to any one element of the utility.

Regarding the *Importance Rankings*, Mr. Robertson underscored that the top three items, water quality, electric reliability, and responsiveness, matched the core mission of EWEB.

In response to a question from Vice President Simpson, Ms. Hamilton clarified that the word 'responsiveness' referred to how customers perceived EWEB and not how efficiently customer services representatives responded.

Commissioner Lanning said the Board often talked about the issue of sustainability as being related to the environmental issues and the cost. He thought one could make the assumption that

there was a higher interest sustainability issues regarding electricity because the water conservation dropped significantly “below the cost control factor.”

In response to a question from Commissioner Farmer, Mr. Lindholm explained that the focus on the performance ranking of 8 through 10 in the power point was because it assumed that rankings of 0 through 7 were not satisfactory for the evaluation. He said 54 percent gave a ranking of 8, 9, or 10 and this was satisfactory. Mr. Robertson stated that the goal was to take a person who gave a ranking of 5 and above and bring them to a ranking of 8 to 10 in satisfaction. He added that the report in the board packet contained the entire distribution.

Commissioner Lanning asked, regarding water conservation, how one could tease out the difference between people who think EWEB was not doing enough and the people who questioned why they should engage in water conservation in an area where it rains a lot. Mr. Lindholm responded that they could look at the other performance questions. He said typically something like that would correlate with the other end of the spectrum having to do with controlling costs and efficiency.

Commissioner Lanning asked if the results were broken out by ward. Mr. Lindholm replied that they were. Commissioner Lanning requested a copy of the report.

Vice President Simpson remarked that community events were still important though they had received a smaller amount of eight through 10 rankings than the other items that were given performance rankings.

Mr. Robertson stated that Mr. Lindholm would conduct a latent issue analysis and would review key drivers for the survey responses.

Mr. Robertson noted that the survey had indicated that the Web was growing as an information resource for customers.

In response to a question from Commissioner Brown, Mr. Lindholm stated that 72 percent of the respondents were home owners.

Commissioner Farmer observed that the overall satisfaction had dropped but the satisfaction in individual categories had risen. He wondered if that meant that the wrong questions were being asked. Mr. Lindholm replied that the drop was not statistically significant. He thought it could be “just a normal bounce.”

Consultant Cathy Hamilton reported that the miscellaneous comments that were solicited did not indicate a new trend or topic.

Commissioner Farmer asked if it would be possible to design a survey that would get at the dynamic tension between issues. He explained that if one asked a respondent if they liked

conservation everyone would respond in the affirmative while if one asked a respondent if he or she would pay 15 percent more on their bills for conservation, the number of affirmative responses would drop. Mr. Lindholm responded that he had employed key driver analysis on the surveys, which indicated that about 43 percent of the movement in performance ratings was summarized by responsiveness to customers by various services and 36 percent were related to control of costs. He said the other 21 percent related to other things.

Mr. Robertson related that a smaller survey had been done earlier in the year related to reliability and whether people would pay for it. He said the survey had asked if people would accept lower reliability in exchange for not having a rate increase.

Commissioner Farmer thought the most important page in the report was the gap analysis. What had jumped out at him was that the largest gap was cost control. He felt EWEB was not adequately addressed in that issue.

Commissioner Lanning thanked staff and the researchers for the presentation and the report. He called it the "best so far."

Vice President Simpson asked what the Public Affairs department used the information for. Mr. Robertson replied that the results were used to determine how to target a certain demographic with a certain message. He also said it was used to determine what media would best serve that purpose.

In response to a follow-up question from Vice President Simpson, Mr. Robertson affirmed that other departments utilized the survey results for information.

President Menegat adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Assistant Secretary

President