

**EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
WORK SESSION
VIRTUAL MEETING
October 19, 2021
5:30 P.M.**

Commissioners may pose questions to staff prior to the scheduled Board meeting. To view Commissioners' pre-meeting questions and staff responses, visit <http://www.eweb.org/about-us/board-of-commissioners/2021board-agendas-and-minutes>.

Commissioners Present: Mindy Schlossberg, President; John Barofsky, Sonya Carlson, Matt McRae, Commissioners

Commissioners Absent: John Brown, Vice President

Others Present: Frank Lawson, General Manager; Tyler Nice, Electric Operations Manager; Jeannine Parisi, Resiliency Program Manager; Rod Price, Assistant General Manager

President Schlossberg called the Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

Agenda Check

There were no changes or additions to the agenda.

Draft Wildfire Mitigation Plan Approach and Review

Mr. Price, Mr. Nice, and Ms. Parisi offered the Board a review of the Draft Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) approach, with an accompanying PowerPoint presentation.

Commissioner Carlson wondered about the criteria for designating an area "at risk" as per the WMP.

Mr. Price said the at-risk areas were from fire risk maps created by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). He added those maps were laid atop EWEB's service territory map.

Commissioner Carlson noted that the Plan does not mention coordination with local partners and other upriver stakeholders and asked if that was due to any requirements of Oregon Senate Bill 762 (SB762), a piece of legislation aimed at state wildfire mitigation.

Mr. Price acknowledged her point saying staff would look at that, he further explained that the Public Utility Commission (PUC) was still working on rules surrounding how to enforce SB762, and he expected those rules to be finalized in the next couple of months and consumer owned utilities will need to be compliant by June 2022.

Commissioner Barofsky asked which type of power lines were less susceptible to start a fire.

Mr. Price said statistically distribution systems start more fires than transmission lines, and there are a lot of distribution lines upriver.

Commissioner Barofsky said he was hopeful that with the WMP, EWEB would go beyond the minimal amount of compliance required by the state. He asked if the utility had any mechanisms in place in the event that funding from state and federal governments was not available, or otherwise unusable.

Mr. Price said there will be both O&M and capital projects, and hopefully funding from outside sources for the latter. EWEB's Capital Plan has a fairly robust amount allocated for this work. Management will work with the Board to prioritize projects and funding based on the highest risks.

President Schlossberg asked for details about engaging public stakeholders.

Mr. Price said it was mostly an issue of coordinating with said stakeholders, which was to be discussed by Ms. Parisi later in the presentation.

President Schlossberg wondered about the WMP's timeline.

Mr. Price replied the utility had earmarked \$1 million for wildfire mitigation projects in the Capital Plan (CP). He added that EWEB was trying to add to the existing programs that have been implemented for the last two or three years.

Commissioner McRae offered his biggest concern was with the communications and preparations for public safety power shut-off. He asked how much EWEB was already spending on wildfire mitigation.

Mr. Nice said currently, the WMP was budgeted for about \$33 million over the ten years of the plan.

Commissioner Carlson asked if video surveillance of at-risk areas would be possible within the WMP.

Mr. Price referenced California power providers who have seen success with artificial intelligence (AI) surveillance.

Commissioner Carlson wondered if any of the FEMA funding would be applied to installing metal poles.

Mr. Price said as far as he knew at this time, yes.

Mr. Lawson added that resiliency, for both the water and electric sides of the Utility, was emphasized in the modifications to EWEB's strategic plan.

Commissioner Barofsky wondered if the inspections of EWEB equipment such as power poles were done in-house.

Mr. Nice said the inspections were contracted out, but the compiling of the data generated by the inspections would be done in-house.

Commissioner Barofsky offered that, at some point, it may be beneficial for EWEB to do this kind of work in-house. He asked if EWEB was tracking how long it takes for a crew to inspect outages in person.

Mr. Nice said that following an outage, it is normal practice for troubleshooters to conduct a visual inspection before re-energizing, and this inspection typically takes one to two hours. He commented that travel time is a big factor for the upriver community.

President Schlossberg wondered how many upriver ratepayers were taking advantage of the undergrounding of their electric utilities during the rebuild after the Holiday Farm fire.

Ms. Parisi said they were tracking those metrics, but she would have to get back to the Board with specifics.

President Schlossberg asked if the low-or no-interest loans for EWEB ratepayers to purchase generators was still in place.

Ms. Parisi said yes.

Commissioner McRae asked how EWEB was working with the City of Eugene on wildfire mitigation.

Ms. Parisi said they had preliminary conversations with City of Eugene staff, and the utility would also be working with the local fire department.

President Schlossberg adjourned the Work Session at 6:46 p.m.

Recorded by Rodney Cimburke

Assistant Secretary

President