



MEMORANDUM
EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD



TO: Commissioners Brown, Carlson, Barofsky, McRae and Schlossberg
FROM: Frank Lawson, CEO & General Manager
DATE: February 10, 2022 (February 15, 2022, Board Meeting)
SUBJECT: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board Policy
OBJECTIVE: Discussion/Guidance (Ten-minute introduction by General Manager; Discussion moderated by Board President)

Issue

In support of 2022 Organizational Goal #2(e), *“build and inspire the workforce necessary to fulfill ongoing business obligations and strategic initiatives amidst a challenging and changing labor and social environment by: (e) developing and nurturing an environment based on the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), Commissioners and Management wish to develop a guiding Board Policy.*

Background

As part of Commissioners’ annual policy review, along with work on revisions to SD15 climate change policy, it was recognized that “equity considerations” were not included within EWEB Board policy. Simultaneously, beginning in the second half of 2021, EWEB management engaged in facilitated discussions of what diversity, equity, and inclusion could mean to the organization. Consistent with best practice, and other organizations, it was determined that diversity, equity, and inclusion are interrelated and should be considered holistically.

Discussion

Policy Development Process

The diversity, equity, and inclusion policy will represent the Board’s and management’s vision and position to both external stakeholders (customers, suppliers, community members, utility colleagues, etc.) and the workforce. Because of this broad impact, management considers it important to understand multiple perspectives, including the Board’s expectations and standards, the organizations and community’s history, assessments of internal systemic practices from a DEI perspective (baseline), and an understanding of the workforce’s perspectives. Over time, external community assessments will also inform the policy. Therefore, this guiding policy is not just a directive or commitment, but a process meant to initially increase the mutual understanding and alignment of the Board and Management (and potentially other stakeholders) on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board Policy Roadmap/Events

<i>Key Activity</i>	<i>Timing</i>
Board Discussion – DEI Policy Development	February 15
Baselining Research (Potential Supplemental Assessments)	March-June
Correspondence – DEI Board Policy Development Status	July 5
Board Discussion/Action – DEI Board Policy	August 2

Policy Definition(s)

Although there is a collective relationship between the terms, comprehensive discussions of diversity, equity, and inclusion should clarify the distinctions and connections between the terms, definitions of each, along with other terminology eventually included in the guiding policy. For this discussion, the following are offered as potential initial definitions.

Diversity – recognizing, including, and valuing the personal characteristics, including different backgrounds, identities, and experiences, in the collective makeup of a group

Equity – creating a fair and unbiased level of access, opportunity, support, and service for all members of a diverse community

Inclusion – fostering an environment where an individual feels a sense of welcome, belonging, and value in a community

Policy Content

After research of other organization's policies, best practices, and consultation, the components of a DEI policy should include at least the following:

- A. Rationale/Vision – Why is it important to have a DEI policy? What's the aspiration or commitment? For example, should the policy create an environment that intentionally evaluates the impacts of decisions and actions across a broad spectrum of people?
- B. Purpose – What is the objective (or primary use) of the DEI policy?
- C. Definitions
- D. Directives/Accountability – many DEI policies classify areas of attention and work, and provide direction in the following areas:
 - a. Education (Affinity)
 - b. Recruitment & Selection
 - c. Compensation and Benefits
 - d. Work Environment (conditions, culture, training, advancement, discipline, etc.)
 - e. Decision Considerations & Process (e.g. Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Methodology)
 - f. Community Outreach/Impacts
- E. Transparency and Reporting (Feedback and Status Methodology)

Recommendation

Management recommends using the approximate ***Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board Policy Roadmap*** as described above, and wishes to propose the following questions for the Board's discussion.

1. What's the Board's desired outcome of a DEI Board Policy? Why create such a policy? Scope?
2. What are Commissioners individual aspirations (vision) around DEI and DEI Board Policy?
3. How might the Board modify the process being proposed to develop a DEI Board Policy?
4. How do the policy components identified above meet (or not meet) your expectations of a DEI Board Policy?

Action

No formal action is being requested at this time. The Board is being asked to discuss perspectives and provide input, guidance, and direction on this matter.