



# MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners Brown, Carlson, Barofsky, McRae and Schlossberg  
FROM: Frank Lawson, General Manager; Anne Kah, Administrative Services Manager  
DATE: August 31, 2022 (September 6, 2022, Board Meeting)  
SUBJECT: Board Meeting Venue  
OBJECTIVE: Guidance

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## **Issue**

The Board Meeting location was moved from EWEB's headquarters to the Roosevelt Operations Center (ROC). Management is seeking Commissioners' feedback on the new meeting venue.

## **Background**

In February 2022, Commissioners returned to the board room after more than two years of virtual meetings as necessitated by the pandemic. Meetings were initially held at EWEB's downtown headquarters building enabled by portable hybrid meeting technology. Over the course of three board meetings, augmented by multiple meeting simulations, EWEB's Information Services team honed the equipment to the extent possible, however due to that equipment's limitations, the audio quality was not acceptable on a reliable basis. Staff gathered requirements for superior options, however, in light of EWEB's impending plans to vacate the headquarters property, Management was reluctant to make substantial investments that would be necessary to significantly enhance the quality of hybrid meetings at that location.

Beginning March 31, 2022, the Board moved its meetings to EWEB's Roosevelt Operations Center (ROC) on a trial basis. The ROC Training Room is furnished with built-in hybrid meeting technology that delivers a consistently reliable audio/visual experience. (Please note the delay experienced just prior to the August 2022 board meeting, was an issue having to do with the Microsoft Teams live event and was unrelated to the meeting room hardware.)

## **Discussion**

In support of our Dynamic Workforce Model, EWEB is evaluating the needs of each meeting room to ensure the rooms are equipped with hybrid meeting technology that fulfills the requirements of the meetings hosted therein. Should the Board choose to carry on its meetings at the ROC, EWEB will continue to improve the board meeting experience for both in person and remote participants by investing in more sophisticated cameras, optimized room configuration, etc.

At a recent board meeting, a Commissioner conveyed sentiments that downtown meeting locations are more conducive to public involvement in some situations. Responsive to these concerns, staff reached out to Lane County and the City of Eugene to explore alternative meeting venues.

Harris Hall, located at 125 E. 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, is available on either Monday or Thursday evenings. EWEB could enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement for use of the meeting space. Should the Board wish to change

its meeting date to accommodate the availability of this new venue, EWEB’s bylaws and Board Policy GP7 would be amended to reflect the new meeting day. A response from the City of Eugene is still pending.

Depending on Commissioners’ interest in pursuing a new meeting venue, staff will look further into the details and logistics necessary to conduct an efficient meeting at a non-EWEB facility.

After nearly two years of 100% virtual meetings, many members of the public and EWEB employees have come to appreciate the accessibility and convenience of remote participation. A review of 2022 YouTube views revealed that people are also taking advantage of the flexibility to watch on demand recordings of EWEB board meetings. Year-to-date, most regular session meetings have received around 100 views; conversely work sessions tend to receive significantly fewer views, with the exception of the Leaburg Canal topic which was well attended. It should be noted there is no way to determine whether viewers watched the entire meeting.

EWEB now provides the opportunity for both virtual and in-person public attendance, as well as three options for providing public testimony; in person, virtual, and written. Regardless of the manner in which testimony is offered, these comments are summarized in the meeting minutes. The below table illustrates trends in public testimony at board meetings pre and post pandemic. For comparison purposes, it is noteworthy that one-third of all public comments received during 2018-2019 were related to advanced metering technology, and during 2020-2021 nearly half (47%) of comments were related to the E. 40<sup>th</sup> water storage project. Also note, the table does not include testimony received during the traditional annual Leaburg remote meeting because of its unique interactive format.

Public Input Type					
Year	Primary Location	In-Person	Phone	Written	Total
2018	HQ	64	NA	NA	64
2019	HQ	56	NA	NA	56
2020	Virtual	5	13	10	28
2021	Virtual/HQ (Aug only)	15	49	10	74
2022 YTD	ROC	8	0	1	9

**Recommendation/ Requested Board Action**

No action is requested at this time. Management is seeking Commissioners feedback to help us identify the venue that best meets the Board’s and the community’s needs.