

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
November 7, 2023
6:15 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Sonya Carlson, President; John Barofsky, Vice President; John Brown, Commissioner; Matt McRae, Commissioner; Mindy Schlossberg, Commissioner.

Others Present: Frank Lawson, EWEB General Manager; Brian Booth, Chief Energy Resource Officer; Aaron Bush, Resource Analyst; Jonathan Hart, Power Planning Supervisor; Deborah Hart, Chief Financial Officer; Aaron Balmer, Financial Services Manager; Daniel Davidson, Senior Financial Analyst; Janice Lee, Senior Financial Analyst; Jason Heuser, Public Policy/Government Affairs Program Manager; and Alicia Voorhees, Budget and Rates Supervisor.

CALL TO ORDER

President Carlson called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Agenda Check

There were no changes to the agenda.

Items from Board Members and General Manager [0:29]

Commissioner Brown attended the Northeast Neighborhood meeting with Mr. Lawson. He praised EWEB crews for their excellence conducting ongoing construction projects.

President Carlson shared that EWEB is holding their Run to Stay Warm on November 19, 2023.

Vice President Barofsky reported on his attendance at recent McKenzie Watershed Council meetings. He said progress is being made on the Quartz Creek project and they replaced a bridge. Collaboration between the council and the trust is moving that project forward.

City of Eugene Liaison Update [4:39]

President Carlson provided an update about their meeting with the City of Eugene. Topics discussed included: the headquarters building purchase, billing for the City of Eugene, EWEB climate guidebook, Hilyard water transmission line, replacement of College Hill reservoir, secondary water source, coordinating with the City of Eugene on the upcoming water transmission line, and the 2024 rates forecast.

Vice President Barofsky commented that it was a positive meeting with the Mayor and Council President.

Mr. Lawson emphasized that EWEB stressed to the City the importance of keeping the Public Facilities Service Plan progressing. Being a little behind schedule, they requested anything that the City can do to keep that moving. He reported that the City may approach EWEB again for potential billing mechanisms for some of their fees. At the meeting, there was discussion around both parties' potential interest in EWEB owning the fire hydrants. He pointed out that the City and EWEB are collaborating well together.

Correspondence [8:23]

Mr. Lawson outlined three items. Item #1. Analysis of EWEB and Sacramento Municipal Utility District Programs, which was a follow-up for Commissioners around energy efficiency. Mr. Lawson complimented Julie McGaughey, Anna Wade, and Jennifer Connors on their comprehensive analysis, which provided a reasonable benchmark. Regarding Item #2. November 2023 Legislative Policy Update, Mr. Lawson said staff will bring an update to the board in December about the legislative position and agenda for this year. Regarding Item #3. Procurement Process and Requirements for Board Approval; As a follow-up to Vice President Barofsky asking about the process for EWEB bids, he said Deborah Hart and Quentin Furrow put together the history of how EWEB conducts different types of bids and/or proposals, and what the thresholds and requirements are. Mr. Lawson added that all the individuals who put together the correspondence are available for Commissioners comments or questions.

Public Input [9:26]

The following testimony was provided to the EWEB Commissioners: The Board neither endorses or opposes, or is responsible for the accuracy of content, of testimony including any links or references provided.

Written Testimony:

Victoria Koch of the Jefferson Westside neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon expressed her support of transitioning to clean electricity, stating the need to stop our dependence on fossil fuels.

Greg Miller of the Jefferson Westside neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon shared comments related to carbon aware demand response, including encouraging load shifting not only to times of low demand, but to times of low carbon intensity on the grid and when it can help integrate higher penetrations of variable renewable sources such as wind and solar. He suggested obtaining real time information about the consumed carbon intensity through the US Energy Information Administration's Hourly Electric Grid Monitor, and from emissions data platforms such as Singularity Energy, Electricity Maps, and WattTime.

Patricia Hine of Lane County, Oregon shared her comments relating to reducing fossil fuels by offering a suggestion to take advantage of the Inflation Reduction Act Funds to develop publicly owned local renewable energy generation, such as utility-scale solar and storage, virtual power plants, and geothermal.

Debra McGee of Lane County, Oregon expressed comments related to the transition off fossil fuels and her desire to protect low-income households by making it easier to access benefits, expand bill income eligibility, automatically enroll customers in bill assistance who have past due balances, and provide dedicated outreach funding to community-based organizations.

Andrew Simrin of Ward 7 in Eugene, Oregon provided input relating to the goal of reducing fossil fuels by urging EWEB to work with the City of Eugene to support electric heat pump retrofits and expand weatherization projects. He encouraged EWEB to create a web page to help navigate incentives for weatherization and electrification available through local, state, and federal programs. He added that EWEB should eliminate the \$8,000 maximum for aggregated income-based rebates allowing all customers to access both rebates and zero-interest loans.

Verbal Testimony:

Curtis Blankenship of Springfield shared comments relating to his support of rooftop solar, suggesting that parking lots provide an opportunity to utilize covered parking by placing solar panels on roofs.

BOARD ACTION AND GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS

Approval of Consent Calendar – A, Minutes and Routine Contracts [32:30]

MINUTES

1. October 3, 2023 Regular Session

CONTRACTS

2. **Hyundai Corporation USA** - for Three-Phase Padmounted Transformers. \$3,000,000 (over 5 years) based on Formal Invitation to Bid.
3. **Western Utility Telecom Inc.** - for Tubular Steel Pole Structures for use in EWEB's Thurston to McKenzie River Crossing Transmission Line. \$725,000 (over 5 years) based on Formal Invitation to Bid.

MOTION: Commissioner Brown moved to adopt Consent Calendar A. The motion passed unanimously, 5:0.

Approval of Consent Calendar – B, Nonroutine Contracts and Other Consent Items [32:55]

CONTRACTS

4. **Carollo Engineers, Inc.** – for engineering services to complete EWEB's 2025 Water System Master Plan Update (WSMP). \$952,000 based on Formal Request for Proposals – QBS Process.

5. **HDR Engineering, Inc.** - for Hydraulic Modeling Services. \$500,000 based on Formal Request for Proposals.
6. **Wildish Building Company** - for Turbine Runner Removal at the Leaburg Powerhouse. \$296,000 based on Formal Invitation to Bid.

RESOLUTIONS

7. **Resolution No. 2320** - Trojan Annual Operating Budget.

MOTION: Commissioner Brown moved to adopt Consent Calendar B. The motion passed unanimously, 5:0.

Items Removed From Consent Calendar [33:00]

There were none.

Upcoming Year (2024) Proposed Budgets and Prices [33:33]

Chief Financial Officer Deborah Hart, Financial Services Manager Aaron Balmer, and Budget and Rates Supervisor Alicia Voorhees provided the 2024 proposed budgets and prices.

Ms. Hart offered an overview of the financial planning calendar. She noted that November is midway through the planning process. In October they reviewed the updated long term financial plans and sought direction from the board on the 2024 draft budgets. In November they present the detailed draft document. In December they will seek board action on 2024 budgets and price proposals.

Mr. Balmer said that each budget is the max level of expenditure authorized in the budget process. The following figures correspond to line items for totals in attachment 1 of the 2024 proposed budget document. Operations and Maintenance: Water = \$32.3 million; Electric = \$314.7 million. Capital and Debt Service: Water = \$38.9 million; Electric = \$85.7 million.

The 2024 water budget includes plans to build a water treatment plant on the Willamette River to improve the resiliency of the water supply. It also includes meter technology upgrades, among other items.

The 2024 O & M electric budget includes funding for purchase power costs including rising costs of power supplied by Bonneville Power Administration. It supports broad community services through contributions in lieu of tax payment (CILT), and work to assess readiness for regional organized energy markets. It furthers programs for wildfire safety and prevention, electrification, energy efficiency greenhouse gas reduction, bill assistance programs, and contains funding to address structural vulnerabilities of the Leaburg canal as well as supports continued compliance management efforts related to public utility commission standards and NERC reliability audit preparations and staff training.

The electric capital budget ensures upgrades to the Carmen-Smith hydroelectric project, rebuilding of substations to increase capacity and improve reliability, underground cable replacements to help with reliability and wildfire prevention, ongoing investments to upgrade meter technology to improve service, upgrades to legacy IT systems, and the Bertelsen expansion project.

Overall revenue requirement increases are 7.8% for water and 5.7% for electric.

Ms. Voorhees provided a multiyear cost of service analysis (COSA) review. She explained that in 2021, staff provided a multi-year COSA based on the projected information at that time. The goal was to employ gradualism for each customer class over three years. 2024 is year three of that analysis. They have updated assumptions, revenue, and expense forecasts in both utilities long-term financial plans.

Ms. Voorhees referenced a PowerPoint slide detailing the largest customer classes for each utility and compared the compounded rate increases initially proposed over those three years with the rates implemented in 2022 and 2023 and the rates proposed for 2024. The slide also reflected inflation rates for water and electric. She pointed out that when the initial three year rate trajectory was presented to the board, staff was asked to smooth out the trajectory rate to avoid double digit rate increases. The graph is reflective of those efforts as indicated by an 8% lower overall revenue requirement. As 2024 is the final year of the three year rate proposal, EWEB will present a new three year rate proposal next year. She outlined both water and electric COSA results and proposed prices noting that as this and future years financial outlook signal rate increases, commitment to affordability is even more critical. She highlighted that compared with other Oregon cities, EWEB customers benefit from relative affordability, with the average electric and water utility costs just 3.5% of their median household income. She explained that with the new rate increases, the average customer can expect a \$3/month rate increase for water and an \$11/month rate increase for electric. Given the economic pressures facing so many EWEB customers, they will continue to look for opportunities to control costs.

Discussion ensued between the board and staff about aspects of the budget and the importance of a solid communications plan.

Public Hearing on Upcoming Year (2024) Proposed Budgets and Prices [50:30]

President Carlson opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m. and closed the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Resolution No. 2317, New PURPA Standards for Electric Vehicles and Demand Response [1:30:56]

Chief Energy Resources Officer Brian Booth, Resource Analyst Aaron Bush and Power Planning Supervisor Jonathan Hart introduced new PURPA standards for Electric Vehicles and Demand Response.

Mr. Bush provided analysis of the recent Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) process and timeline, review of public comment, and staff analysis and recommendations. The process began September 5, 2023. Public comment opened September 8, 2023 and closed October 14, 2023. Mr. Bush explained for reference that the goal of the standards is to promote the use of demand response and promote transportation electrification. He reported that in the robust public comment process they received 42 public comments primarily revealing two themes: general support for the standard and concern about rate impacts and the use of customer dollars. Staff responded that comments raised are valid and will be considered prior to implementation. He said EWEB will incorporate considerations such as utility values, cross subsidies across customer class rates, and adopted policies (e.g. DEI) in the decision-making process.

He noted three main areas in the staff recommendation: appropriateness (appropriate for EWEB/PURPA?), implementation (how to implement), and clarifications (EWEB specific). He outlined staff recommendations in relation to the three areas and recommended the board approve Resolution 2317.

Staff responded to questions from the board of commissioners.

MOTION: Commissioner Schlossberg moved to approve Resolution 2317 adopting the staff analysis and recommendation on PURPA's demand response and electric vehicle charging standards. The motion passed unanimously, 5:0.

Quarterly Operational & Strategic Goals Report for Q3 [1:56:22]

Mr. Lawson provided a summary of the 79-page quarterly operational and strategic goals report for quarter three. He said they passed a major milestone in the EWEB Enterprise Solutions (EES) project, moving onto the "build" phase, and even receiving an "innovation and vision" award in the process. He reported that they have a solid year-to-date financial performance, they secured an additional \$3.3 million energy efficiency reimbursement from BPA, and have made much progress on major projects and board actions. He informed the board of a multitude of strategic goals that are currently in progress.

Staff responded to questions from the board of commissioners.

Future Board Agendas [2:15:20]

Mr. Lawson introduced the topic of future board agendas.

He noted that the Leaburg Decommissioning Action Plan has been moved from December 2023 to January 2024 and staff will be working to inform the public of the change.

There was consensus to change the next EWEB Board of Commissioners meeting from January 2, 2024 to January 9, 2024; contingent on the meeting space being available. Staff will report back on availability.

Board Wrap-up [2:20:14]

President Carlson requested feedback regarding the current practice for evaluating the board of commissioners. Mr. Lawson added that per policy the Board of Commissioners needs to do a self-evaluation on an annual basis. He said historically, staff has created a survey and sent it out to the commissioners.

Vice President Barofsky made a request for staff to list relevant page numbers alongside agenda items for easy reference in the meeting packet.

Adjourn

President Carlson adjourned the Regular Session at 8:38 p.m.

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG

Assistant Secretary

President