M E M O R A N D U M

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

Rely on us.

TO:	Commissioners McRae, Barofsky, Brown, Carlson, and Schlossberg
FROM:	Rod Price, Assistant General Manager, Kelly Hoell, Climate Policy Analyst & Advisor
DATE:	February 26, 2024 (March 5, 2024, Board Meeting)
SUBJECT:	EWEB Participation in Equity Community Consortium (ECC) – Annual Update
OBJECTIVE:	Information

Issue

This correspondence provides an annual update on EWEB's participation in the Equity Community Consortium (ECC) for 2024 and describes how EWEB's participation in ECC relates to Strategic Direction (SD) Policy 23, EWEB's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Policy, passed in 2023.

At the February 15, 2022, Board Work Session, Commissioners requested additional information about equity work being undertaken by peer organizations in the local community and utility industry. Correspondence was provided to the Board in July of 2022 to provide examples of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) support and policy language at peer agencies. In this July 2022 correspondence, the Equity Community Consortium (ECC) was introduced.

Background

EWEB is a participating member of the Equity and Community Consortium (ECC). The ECC, which started in 1991, is a group of fourteen agencies and jurisdictions that provide governmental and public services in the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area with the mission to "foster a welcoming and hospitable community". EWEB signed the current version of the ECC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2022.

The shared commitments and requirements outlined in the MOU include:

- Being a public agency serving clients in the Eugene-Springfield metropolitan area.
- Having a publicly available policy or statement demonstrating a commitment to equity.
- Having at least one staff member designated as a point person for equity work and being accessible to them as needed for decision making.
- Participating and contributing by sending at least one representative to ECC's monthly meetings and providing time and resources to develop and advance our shared two-year work plan.
- Presenting annual updates on the agency's equity work at an annual ECC event.

When EWEB's DEI Policy SD23 was passed in fall 2023, this allowed EWEB to meet the MOU requirement of having a publicly available policy demonstrating a commitment to equity. AGM Price and several staff members attend monthly meetings and provide resources and support towards the ECC two-year work plan outlined below. More details about the group's goals and governance can be found on the website: Equity-Community-Consortium Website.

Discussion

Participation in ECC supports the four focus areas outlined in EWEB's Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy passed in 2023, including: a) Access to Products and Services, b) Workforce, c) Engagement (equitable inclusive and respectful community), and d) Board of Commissioners.

To best meet our policies, mission, and values, EWEB needs to connect to our community and ECC participation is one means to get involved from a leadership and employee perspective. Through ECC, EWEB connects with 14 other community-serving agencies. We share information and resources, support one another within the work we do in our community, and learn from each other as we each seek to implement our own DEI policies within our respective organizations.

The overall goal of ECC is to improve equity in our organizations and in our community by jointly sharing experiences and resources to magnify our individual member knowledge, skills, and abilities. Over the last several years, the main resources shared have been employee time related to planning and participating in community events. In 2024, the ECC members have re-committed to formalizing ECC process and structure through clear roles and responsibilities, improving interagency coordination, expanding messaging, and increasing participation opportunities in our community. With the increased commitment, member agencies may be asked for small amounts of financial funding.

There are two main groups in the ECC, the Leadership Group known as the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) composed of senior management in the participating organizations that meet to ensure their organizations remain committed and the Thought Partners group composed of employees who implement tactics in support of ECC plans and goals. EWEB employees supporting the Thought Partner group are representatives of EWEB's Diversity Team and represent EWEB's Communications and Marketing, Workforce Services, and the General Manager's Office teams.

Members of both ECC groups meet jointly two to three times per year for strategic planning and to hear results from the working groups that meet monthly. In February 2023, all members met and finalized goals and strategies for a two-year work plan.

The focus areas and goals for the two-year ECC work plan are as follows (*ECC progress and EWEB's participation in italics*):

ECC Visibility and Engagement (*this part of the ECC work plan supports EWEB's SD23 DEI Policy focus area c) Engagement)*
   o Update ECC member websites to describe their participation in ECC and MOU requirements. (*In progress at EWEB, linking to Board Policy SD23.*)
   o Host monthly Communities of Color and Allies Network (CCAN) First Friday events. The goal of these events is to create a safe space that fosters friendships and networks for people of color, social justice allies, and equity workers in the local area. *(EWEB hosted the June 2023 meeting and will be hosting the April 5, 2024 meeting.)*
   o Create a brand and logo for ECC so that ECC is a group that is recognized in the community. (*EWEB Communications and Marketing staff providing support for this initiative, in progress, needing funding*)
   o Support/attend celebrations/partnerships with marginalized communities. *(EWEB's Diversity Team has developed a 2024 community event participation calendar.)*

Human Resources: Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention (*this part of the ECC work plan supports EWEB's SD23 DEI Policy focus area b) Workforce)*
   o Engagement survey for personnel that can be shared across organizations. (*EWEB is able to share lessons learned from our 2023 and 2024 Employee Engagement Surveys with other organizations.*)

o Gather agency demographic data. *(EWEB data is available, and will be shared when ECC format is finalized)*

Leadership engagement: elected and organizational (*this part of the ECC work plan supports EWEB's SD23 DEI Policy focus areas b) Workforce c) Engagement and d) Board of Commissioners)*
- o Shared training for all ECC Leadership and Thought Partner members through partnership with Lane Community College; identify goals and themes from Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) for the training. (*Training was attended in May 2023 with shared learnings and reinvigoration of all staff efforts to meet the work plan goals.*)
- o Audit of current training and professional development efforts or strategies within each organization. Provide evidence of each organization's support and alignment with the MOU. (*Thought Partners group is tracking fulfillment of MOU commitments by each member organization.*)

Resource Sharing (*this part of the ECC work plan supports EWEB's SD23 DEI Policy focus areas b) Workforce and c) Engagement)*
- o On a rotating basis, share learning and resources at each ECC meeting. *(Ongoing by AGM Price, adding additional EWEB staff to ECC working groups and information sharing at monthly Thought Partner meetings)*

Retention and Belonging (*this part of the ECC work plan supports EWEB's SD23 DEI Policy focus areas b) Workforce c) Engagement and d) Board of Commissioners)*
- o Compile resources and initiatives ECC members are implementing to promote belonging. (*ECC Thought Partners implementing resource sharing platforms and building sharing time into monthly meetings.*)
- o Create shared definitions of belonging and retention. (*This work is in progress and will be documented on the shared ECC website once finalized.*)
- o Build community resources to share with new hires. (*ECC Thought Partners implementing resource sharing platforms and building sharing time into monthly meetings.*)

Recommendation/Requested Board Action
No formal action is being requested currently as this memo is to provide background information.