

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
WORK SESSION
October 15, 2024
5:00 p.m.

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

Commissioners Absent: John Brown

Others Present: Frank Lawson, EWEB General Manager; Rodney Price, Assistant General Manager; Deborah Hart, Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer; Brian Booth, Chief Energy Resource Officer; Aaron Orlowski, Communications Specialist; Ben Ulrich, Energy Resource Analyst; and Aaron Bush, Energy Resource Analyst.

WORK SESSION

Call to Order [0:0:0]

President McRae called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Agenda Check [0:0:45]

Qualitative Considerations for BPA Product Choice [0:1:11]

Brian Booth introduced EWEB staff Aaron Bush, Aaron Orlowski, and Ben Ulrich, and provided a PowerPoint presentation regarding Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) energy products and services, EWEB's product choices, and the timeline.

Community Table Update [0:4:25]

Aaron Orlowski provided the results of a community-centric focus group session and solicited Board feedback in preparation for another focus group session in early December.

Commissioner Schlossberg requested clarification about the use of feedback received from the focus group.

Commissioner Carlson requested information about the communications to the focus group regarding expectations.

Vice President Barofsky requested information about the makeup of the focus group, other than they were EWEB customers.

President McRae requested information about whether focus group members were paid to participate, or if not, whether some people did not participate because of that.

Commissioner Schlossberg commented that of 25 invited, 14 participated, and she asked staff if they knew why the others had not.

Mr. Orlowski replied that participation was voluntary.

General Manager Lawson reiterated that the Board provided guidance to EWEB, and while staff engages with affected community groups, the focus groups were not designed to influence specific EWEB decisions.

Vice President Barofsky suggested reaching out to additional voices, suggesting that staff consider a participation stipend, and Ward representation. President McRae concurred.

Values, Key Factors, & Relationship to Product Choice (0:24:01]

Brian Booth and Aaron Bush highlighted PowerPoint slides illustrating product choice options and decision factors.

Discussion: Key Factor Trade-offs: [0:35:10]

Aaron Bush discussed slides that illustrated the trade-offs in EWEB's decision to utilize more or fewer BPA services.

Commissioner Carlson asked staff to comment on which options would provide greater flexibility in dealing with unforeseen events.

General Manager Lawson responded on the value of flexibility as well as various forms of risk.

Commissioner Schlossberg affirmed BPA was created by Federal statute and commented that she found value in EWEB's autonomy.

Vice President Barofsky opined EWEB had been positioning the Utility for local control.

President McRae asked staff to provide information in December about how EWEB is doing in keeping prices stable. He added that local control is highly desired.

Electric Business Model Perspectives [1:23:30]

General Manager Lawson stated the purpose of this agenda item was to broaden the conversation about BPA, to expand it into a larger business model by understanding how the present model was developed. He provided a slide presentation illustrating EWEB's path to the retail and wholesale markets, and options for changing its business model.

Vice President Barofsky stated he was most concerned about regulatory risks related to the dam. He said he leaned towards continuing EWEB's present business model.

Commissioner Schlossberg stated her satisfaction with EWEB's current values and nimbleness.

General Manager Lawson discussed pros and cons of different business models.

President McRae suggested that conservation would gain importance in the next 10 years. Mr. Booth explained there are nuances to the BPA contract which have influence, and in his opinion local values were a driver of EWEB's commitment to serve load growth with energy efficiency, and the ability to do so for fifteen years. He added that EWEB had staff and willpower to do this well. General Manager Lawson concurred, and cited examples of EWEB's conservation activities going back several decades.

Commissioner Carlson said she wanted to ensure that EWEB's portfolio was sound in its ability to prepare for risks.

General Manager Lawson summarized the Board's sentiments around the importance of being nimble and flexible, and the upside of local control - as long as the Utility can mitigate and manage the associated risks which could manifest in pricing, affordability, and reliability. He added that he perceived the Board was comfortable with decisions and business models that align with EWEB's present strategy, and creating flexibility while mitigating and balancing the load and the supply side in a way that optimizes it.

ADJOURN [2:13:00]

President McRae adjourned the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

Recorded by Pam Berrian, LCOG

Assistant Secretary

President