

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
February 4, 2025
5:45 p.m.

Commissioners Present: President, John Barofsky; Vice President, Mindy Schlossberg; and Commissioners Sonya Carlson, John Brown, and Tim Morris

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: Frank Lawson, EWEB General Manager; Deborah Hart, Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer; Brian Booth, Chief Energy Resource Officer; Karen Kelley, Chief Operations Officer; Sarah Gorsegrner, Business Continuity Manager; Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer, Adam Rue, Rates Manager (online), and Jason Heuser, Public Policy and Government Affairs Program Manager (online).

REGULAR SESSION

Call to Order [00:00:00]

President John Barofsky called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

Agenda Check [00:01:08]

There were no changes to the agenda.

Items from Board Members and General Manager [00:01:30]

Commissioner Carlson reported that Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) is accepting nominations for elected officials, public employees, businesses, nonprofits, and citizens through Monday, February 10, 2025, to be recognized at their annual awards ceremony on March 7, 2025.

Commissioner Brown recognized the positive work being done at College Hill. Regarding restoration of the Willamette Watershed, he suggested the possibility of an air tour. He spoke about the proposed City of Eugene fire service fee. He expressed opposition to having non-utility charges on utility bills. He urged holding a prompt discussion on the topic.

Commissioner Morris voiced appreciation for the work being done at College Hill, including excellent communications. He reported that he toured the Hayden Bridge Water Filtration Plant. He highlighted the positive feedback received from residents about the proactiveness of EWEB informing customers when their usage is high.

General Manager Lawson thanked Commissioner Carlson for her invitation to meet with key players and community members to discuss the BRING Rethink Business Program. Responding to Commissioner Brown's request for a discussion about the fire service fee, he said time may be set aside during an upcoming meeting.

Public Comment [00:12:30]

Max Liebreich shared comments about EWEB's new accounting system. He manages multiple accounts and requested that the payment process be made simpler.

Isaac McCoy-Sulentich, of Ward 7, spoke on the topic of rate design. He recommended figuring out how to modify the rate design such that it empowers consumers to be efficient and use solar and other energy saving methods.

KGN (online), shared comments related to EWEB late fees and rate increases, stating that they are unfair to Eugene's most vulnerable, low-income residents.

Vice President Schlossberg requested information about the number of residents getting their utilities shut off due to nonpayment.

Commissioner Carlson requested information about the practice of waiving late fees when individuals set up repayment plans.

Mr. Lawson responded that staff will provide statistics and data related to limited income support during their upcoming year-end recap during next month's meeting.

Correspondence [00:27:36]

Regarding the State Legislative agenda, Commissioner Carlson asked if there will be ongoing updates and if commissioner support is warranted. She asked about a visit to the state capitol.

Mr. Lawson responded affirmatively. He added that a legislative trip is scheduled for mid-March.

President Barofsky asked if Legislative Representative Jason Heuser is following a bill being supported by Representative Lisa Fragala involving the McKenzie River Trust.

Mr. Heuser confirmed that McKenzie River Trust has brought Senate Bill 428 forward and EWEB has provided a letter in support of the measure.

Regarding the bylaw review, Commissioner Carlson asked if there is a state definition for attendance.

Mr. Lawson responded that he would follow up with more information.

BOARD ACTION ITEMS**Approval of Consent Calendar – A, Minutes and Routine Contracts [00:35:30]****MINUTES**

1. January 7, 2025 Regular Session

CONTRACTS

2. Robert Motors, Inc. – for As-Needed Vehicles \$450,000 (January 1, 2025, to April 30, 2026) based on a cooperative contract.

MOTION: Commissioner Brown moved to adopt Consent Calendar A. **The motion passed unanimously, 5:0; President Barofsky, Vice President Schlossberg, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Morris all voting in favor.**

Approval of Consent Calendar – B, Nonroutine Contracts and Other Consent Items [00:36:30]

CONTRACTS

3. Pacific Excavation – for the construction of two 7.5-million-gallon tanks at EWEB's College Hill Storage Tank Site. \$25,506,000 based on Formal Invitation to Bid (ITB).

RESOLUTIONS

4. Resolution No. 2504 – Board Appointments, Committees, and Outside Liaisons

MOTION: Commissioner Brown moved to adopt Consent Calendar B. **The motion passed unanimously, 5:0; President Barofsky, Vice President Schlossberg, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Morris all voting in favor.**

Items Removed from Consent Calendar [00:40:40]

There were none.

Annual Goals Amendment(s)/Additions [00:41:10]

Mr. Lawson presented information related to Annual Organizational Goals Revision(s) via PowerPoint presentation. In January, the Board approved the 2025 organizational goals. Based on their feedback, the following changes are being proposed:

1. Revision to Goal #4 "Limited Income Programs" to read: *Enhance the impact of EWEB's limited income support programs, including existing programs such as EWEB Customer Care and new potential payment options such as Pre-Pay, in support of SD23 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy and rate design.*
2. New Goal #8 "Energy Efficiency of Rental Stock" to read: *Based on updated baseline information, including but not limited to demographic and stock assessments, customer awareness surveys and participation rates, and the results of the Demand Side Potential Assessment, develop and execute plans and actions designed to drive intentional outcomes, endorsed by the Board, of EWEB's energy efficiency programs within Eugene's rental stock segment.*

Mr. Lawson presented the following eight organizational goals:

1. Operational Efficiency and Effectiveness

2. Succession Planning / Dynamic Workforce Model (hybrid work)
3. Energy Supply Contract(s)/Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)
4. EWEB Limited Income / Payment Options
5. Rate Design Preparation (Fixed/Variable Alignment & Residential Demand)
6. Asset Management Planning
7. Environmental Policy Alignment (SD2 Environmental, SD15 Climate Change)
8. Energy Efficiency of Rental Stock

President Barofsky asked when they can expect the demand side potential assessment and if there is a timeline to develop an action plan for goal #8.

Mr. Lawson responded that the demand side potential assessment is on the agenda during an upcoming March work session, and they expect to determine an initial action plan by the end of the year.

MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to adopt the proposed revisions to the 2025 organizational goals. **The motion passed unanimously, 5:0; President Barofsky, Vice President Schlossberg, Commissioner Carlson, Commissioner Brown, and Commissioner Morris all voting in favor.**

Organizational Goal #3: BPA Product Choice Authorization Framework [00:54:20]

Mr. Lawson presented information related to Organizational Goal #3: BPA Product Decision Considerations and Process via PowerPoint presentation. He highlighted an updated decision timeline and recommendation considerations and engaged the Board in a discussion. He added that in June 2025, the Board will be presented with a recommendation based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative assessments and analysis.

Vice President Schlossberg urged that the Board be provided with enough time to digest the information as the decision is likely one of the biggest that they will make.

Mr. Lawson responded that Board members have an opportunity to hold discussions with staff members. He stated that the deadline to inform Bonneville of their decision is July 2025.

Commissioner Carlson agreed that the Board may need additional time. She brought attention to comparing different business models, and identifying what the costs would look like if EWEB went with BPA only.

President Barofsky underscored the importance of having the entire Board engaged in discussions and said he wants to understand the cost of building in flexibility for future Boards.

Break [01:19:50]

EWEB/City of Eugene Joint Initiatives Agenda [01:35:20]

President Barofsky spoke about the EWEB/City of Eugene Joint Initiatives Agenda. He explained that the Board President and Vice President regularly meet with City of Eugene leadership. He referenced a document provided in the meeting packet containing topics of discussion and engaged Board members in a discussion.

Commissioner Brown raised the issue of fire hydrants, specifically the responsibility of maintaining and replacing them, including any associated costs.

Mr. Lawson responded that under most community models, the drinking water utility manages the source all the way through the hydrant. There has been a decades long interest in EWEB taking over ownership, operations, and maintenance of the fire hydrants. They are still assessing costs, liabilities, and more.

Commissioner Carlson pointed out that there will need to be a rate mechanism for fire hydrants.

Vice President Schlossberg urged thinking about the purpose of meetings with City leadership. She brought up joint billing and how rate increases impact people. She said they have not gotten a lot of traction with the City regarding energy efficiency with rental units.

President Barofsky suggested that Board members might identify their top three goals for upcoming discussions with City leadership.

GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS

Future Board Agendas [02:00:10]

Mr. Lawson noted changes to future agendas with respect to meeting time priorities.

Vice President Schlossberg said she found it helpful to see the topics that are recurring.

President Barofsky requested more time for discussion during the upcoming work session in March.

Board Wrap Up [02:06:10]

Commissioner Carlson requested information about federal impacts, specifically risk to EWEB's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) policy. She brought up bill inserts and communications within the new billing system.

Vice President Schlossberg asked how to handle comments received related to the new billing system.

Mr. Lawson requested that comments be forwarded to EWEB.answers@EWEB.org or be sent to him directly.

Commissioner Morris requested a high-level overview of common challenges that community members are reporting related to the new system.

Adjourn [02:14:49]

President Barofsky adjourned the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

Recorded by Terah Van Dusen, LCOG

Assistant Secretary

President