



APPROVED 1-25-23

MINUTES
City of Tacoma
Public Utility Board Study Session
December 14, 2022
3:00 p.m.

Chair Watson called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 3:00 p.m. at the auditorium of the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: Carlos Watson, John O’Loughlin, William Bridges, Elly Claus-McGahan

Excused: Holland Cohen

Customer Satisfaction Survey Result

Holly Lucht, Market Development Research Analyst, provided an overview of the survey methodology. Data was collected via both phone interviews and self-administered web surveys among TPU residential customers from July 18 to August 4, 2022. Ms. Lucht shared graphical representation of survey answers in categories such as overall satisfaction, management reputation, controlling costs, ease of doing business, knowledgeable/well-trained employees bill affordability, communication, conservation, environmental stewardship, and rates. Discussion ensued with the Board requesting an update at a future meeting on any programs/actions implemented in response to study results.

Tacoma Water: Groundwater Supply and Anticipated PFAS Regulations

Scott Dewhirst, Water Superintendent, made opening remarks, introduced the presenting staff members, and summarized their experience as subject matter experts on this topic. Glenn George, Sr. Principal Engineer provided an overview of Tacoma’s water supply. The Green River is Tacoma’s primary water source and groundwater is secondary. Mr. George shared graphical representation of demands versus firm yield and of Tacoma’s South Tacoma aquifer location. Tacoma has the ability to pump up to 40M gallons per day at any given time. A majority of this capacity is located in aquifers under South Tacoma. A graph of annual well production was reviewed. Mr. George concluded by detailing South Tacoma groundwater recharge and stable groundwater elevations over time. Scott Hallenberg, Operations Manager, then addressed the South Tacoma groundwater protection district. The groundwater resource is protected by carefully monitoring and managing activities in the area of the city that recharge the aquifer system. Craig Downs, Asst. Water Division Mgr, then provided an overview of drinking water

standards. The EPA works to ensure that drinking water is safe by developing National Primary Drinking Water regulations for new contaminants under the Safe Drinking Water Act. In Washington the Department of Health has primacy from EPA to implement drinking water standards for public systems. They may adopt additional standards, but must be at least as stringent as federal standards. Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) are a large family of human-made chemicals in use since the 1940's to make a wide variety of stain-resistant, water-resistant, and non-stick consumer products. They are widespread and do not break down easily in the environment. Scientific studies have shown that exposure to some PFAS in the environment may be linked to harmful health effects. PFAS regulatory development to date and Tacoma Water PFAS sampling was then reviewed. In 2023, Tacoma Water plans to conduct a comprehensive round of PFAS sampling of all sources. Kim DeFolo, Principal Engineer, then addressed Water's long-term planning regarding PFAS. Tacoma Water is taking proactive steps to prepare for PFAS regulation by incorporating PFAS treatment design into ongoing capital improvement projects at the gravity pipeline wells. Tacoma Water will prepare PFAS management strategy for the South Tacoma wellfield and consider the need for treatment for other sources based on EPA proposals. PFAS treatment options are available, but limited as Tacoma Water's current treatment processes are not capable of removing PFAS. The three primary treatment methods commonly used for PFAS removal are granular activated charcoal, ion exchange, and reverse osmosis. In summary, Tacoma Water has plentiful groundwater capacity available to back up the primary Green River supply. Groundwater supply is protected by the South Tacoma groundwater protection district and regularly monitored for contaminants. There are many unknowns related to PFAS, but Tacoma Water is engaged on regulatory development and is preparing to respond to upcoming regulations.

2023 Board Work Plans and Board Retreat Follow-Up

Director Flowers reviewed follow-up items from the Board retreat in November such as the creation of a forecast schedule for Board discussion item and the development of a Board work plan. Discussion ensued and the dialogue will continue at a future Board study session with an initial plan to examine the Strategic Directives and perhaps identify core principles that will act as the Board's focus.

Closed and Executive Sessions

At 4:55 p.m., Chair Watson moved to convene a closed session (RCW 42.30.140(4)(b)) for labor discussions for approximately 15 minutes followed by an executive session to review the performance of a public employee (RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)) and an executive session to discuss potential litigation (RCW 42.30.110(1)(i)) for approximately minute 70 minutes not to exceed 6:20 p.m.; seconded by Mr. O'Loughlin. Voice vote taken and carried.

Chair Watson announced that after the closed and executive sessions have ended, the Board will not take any action and he would return to adjourn the study session.

Adjournment

At 6:20 p.m., Chair Watson returned to the dais and adjourned the study session.

Approved:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carlos Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "C".

Carlos Watson, Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holland Cohen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "H".

Holland Cohen, Secretary