



Approved 4/13/22

MINUTES
City of Tacoma
Public Utility Board Meeting
March 23, 2022
6:30 p.m.

Chair Patterson called the Public Utility Board meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Present: Chrissy Cooley, Carlos Watson, John O’Loughlin, Mark Patterson (via Zoom)

Excused: Holland Cohen

The meeting was quorate.

Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Mr. Watson moved that the minutes of the previous meetings be adopted; seconded by Mr. O’Loughlin. Voice vote was taken and carried. The minutes were declared adopted.

Comments by the Public

There were no comments by the public.

Regular Agenda

C-1 Resolution U-11310– Award contracts and approve purchases:

1. Award four-year contract to Bidgely, Inc., for the implementation of a residential home energy report program (\$1,381,066, plus applicable taxes with the option to renew for two additional one-year periods for a projected contract total of \$2,459,891.47, plus applicable taxes [Lonnie Junderson, Conservation Program Manager];
2. Award contract to Northwest Cascade, Inc., for the Mayfield Water System Replacement and Road Realignment (\$2,685,420, plus applicable taxes) [Jason Henry, Power Engineer II];
3. Increase contract to RH2 Engineering, Inc., for additional design tasks and the addition of engineering services during construction for the Tehaleh tank and booster pump station project (Cumulative total \$1,197,362, plus applicable taxes) [Carol Powers, Principal Engineer].

Ms. Cooley moved to adopt the resolution; seconded by Mr. Watson.

In response to a Board request for a summary on item number one, Lonnie Junderson, Conservation Program Manager, shared that this would serve to provide personal home energy reports to customers on a quarterly basis. It would be an educational piece for customers to see how they use energy and it will provide recommendations on how

customers can better use energy. This would go to a randomized control trial of approximately 65,000 customers and it will align well with the new AMI meter portal.

Voice vote was taken and carried. The resolution was adopted.

C-2 Motion 22-06 –That in accordance with Article IV Section 4.18 of the Tacoma City Charter, the Board has completed and approved an annual performance review of Jackie Flowers, the Director of Utilities, and the Board also approves an increase in compensation to Step 4B, which is a \$27,851.20 increase to \$388,003.20 annually, effecting on the next pay period, and approves an award of 20 administrative leave days pursuant to TMC 1.12.250(C)(2), to be used within 24 months, and approves 1 incentive day pursuant to TMC 1.12.345.C.

Mr. Watson moved to approve the motion; seconded by Mr. O'Loughlin.

Chair Patterson summarized that the Director received a positive annual review at the March 9 meeting for her exceptional performance and hard work. At last year's review, the Director asked the Board to forego any pay increases. This proposed step is at market and based on survey information from her peer set. Board Member Cooley thanked the Director for all of her work and incredible integrity and that this motion is a direct reflection of the positive evaluation. Appreciation was extended to the Chair for leading the Board through this process.

Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was approved.

C-3 Motion 22-07 –That in accordance with Article IV Section 4.18 of the Tacoma City Charter, the Board has completed and approved an annual performance review of Jackie Flowers, the Director of Utilities, and the Board reconfirms the appointment of Jackie Flowers to serve as Director of Utilities for a two-year period beginning on a date selected by the City Council, and the Board requests that the City Council concur in the Board's reconfirmation and set a beginning and ending period for the reconfirmation.

Ms. Cooley moved to approve the motion; seconded by Mr. Watson.

Chair Patterson summarized that the city charter requires the Board and Council to reconfirm the Director every two years. Mr. Patterson explained the adjustments to this timeline to allow for this process to better align with the development of the work plan and other surrounding activities. The Council will consider this motion in April.

Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was approved.

C-4 Motion 22-08 - That upon concurrence by the City Council, the Director of Utilities is hereby authorized to approve a final settlement with Lonnesse Taylor, concerning Claim No. W-093-21, arising from a water meter leak, in the amount of \$61,993.05, which is an increase of \$12,464.75 over the settlement amount of \$49,528.30 which was approved by the Board on January 26, 2022.

Ms. Cooley moved to approve the motion; seconded by Mr. Watson.

Tom Morrill, Chief Deputy City Attorney, summarized the motion. The proposed settlement was approved by the Board in the amount of \$49,528.30 on January 26, 2022; however the claimant discovered additional claims that were not included in that amount. In response to a Board inquiry, Mr. Morrill added that some invoices were set aside by the customer and not initially included; after the settlement, these invoices having to do with engineering services for invoices for damage caused to the foundation were found.

Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was approved.

D. Reports of the Director

Covid

Director Flowers reported that last week, marked the two year anniversary since the implementation of mandatory telework for staff who are able to perform their work remotely. Since then, approximately 700 employees have continued to report to job sites, whether in the field, at hydro plants, the water filtration facility, Rail headquarters or at the TPU main campus throughout the pandemic as they perform functions essential to serve customers. Select customer services teams were transition off mandatory telework in August when the lobby reopened to a rotating in person schedule, 58 employees were impacted in that transition. General Government and TPU have announced the schedule for continued reconstitution phasing which will allow the transition of employees back without overwhelming facilities and technology staff. That process will involve transitioning the next group of employees from mandatory telework to their new work protocol. This segment of employees will be working in the office three or more days per week, depending on their work requirement and approved preference for continued telework. This segment of employees includes 220 employees many of whom will return beginning April 18. The next segment of employees, representing 140 employees, could begin transitioning out of telework in June, those who will be teleworking three or more days. The last segment of employees, roughly 338 employees, will remain in telework status with periodic attendance on campus for meetings as required; transition to our future work state is expected by August. On March 11 GG and TPU issued an update to directives eliminating social distancing requirements, conference room capacity limitations, and removing face covering requirements. Tacoma Rail employees are covered by Federal Railroad Administration's Emergency Order 32 and must continue to wear face coverings. The Mayor's disconnect moratorium expires on March 31. As a reminder, this is six months after Governor Inslee's disconnect moratorium expired. For those customers who have accrued a utility balance on their TPU account during the last two years, TPU will transition all balances to a 24-month payment plan. Customers will receive an individual letter providing information on their specific payment plan for their account. On Tuesday March 22, 3,160 installment letters were mailed and on Wednesday, March 23, 10,547 installment letters mailed. Customers are encouraged to complete the assessment form that was mailed at the end of February and is being delivered again door to door this month. Information from this assessment form will aid TPU in connecting customers with utility assistance for which they qualify. The customer services team continues to receive assessment forms from customers, more than 5,000 forms have been returned. Staff is working on a code change to provide relief from connect/disconnect fees during the 24-month payment period. That code change will come before the Board at the next meeting. Pursuant to Mayor's emergency rule, late fees will not be charged on past due amounts accrued

during the period of the disconnect moratorium. Additionally, power will not be shut off so long as the customer makes payments on time.

E. Comments by the Board

Vice-Chair Cooley announced that the Board will hold a special meeting/workshop on Wednesday, March 30, 2022 from 8:00 – 4:30 to discuss budget and rates.

F. Adjournment

There being no further business or comments, the Public Utility Board meeting was adjourned at 7:06 p.m. until Wednesday, March 30, 2022 for a special Board meeting on budget and rates.

Approved:



Mark Patterson, Chair



Carlos Watson, Secretary