

APPROVED 6-30-21

MINUTES  
City of Tacoma  
Public Utility Special Board Meeting  
June 9, 2021  
3:00 p.m.

Chair Flint called the Public Utility Board meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Present via Zoom:** Bryan Flint, Carlos Watson, Christine Cooley, Joe Bushnell, Mark Patterson

The meeting was quorate.

**Minutes of the Previous Meetings**

Mr. Patterson moved that the minutes of the previous meetings be adopted; seconded by Ms. Cooley. Voice vote was taken and carried. The minutes were declared adopted.

**Comments by the Public**

Board Member Patterson moved to suspend the rules of Public Utility Board Government Process Eight (GP8) to allow all public comment for all topics, whether on or off the agenda, at one time; seconded by Board Member Cooley. Voice vote was taken and carried.

There were no comments by the public.

**Regular Agenda**

C-1 Resolution U-11257 - Award contracts and approve purchases:

1. Award contract to Combined Construction, Inc., for structural seismic upgrades for four Tacoma Water Facilities: Hood Street Pump Station and Hydro Facility; Hood Street Chlorination Building; Hood Street Reservoir, and the South Tacoma Pump Station and Wet Well (\$4,012,911, plus a ten percent contingency for a cumulative total of \$4,414,202.10, plus applicable taxes) [Michel Peloquin, Professional Engineer].

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

Board Member Patterson made remarks about the importance of resilience and retrofitting being an important part of the program for safety and adequacy. In response to a Board inquiry concerning the timeline, Michel Peloquin, Professional Engineer, explained that the majority of the work can't begin until November and will be completed by the end of May 2022 to ensure groundwater is available by June of 2022. In response to a Board inquiry concerning which parts of the infrastructure are to be

retrofitted, Mr. Peloquin clarified that most of the projected is limited to the structures like the pump station houses and not the actual wells or pumps. The same thing is true for the chlorination building. The largest amount of the funding is for the Hood Street reservoir where flexible joints and a lining will be put in so that if there are cracks during a seismic event, water won't leak out. The 2015/2016 vulnerability assessment identified many water facilities, but the ones that supply the groundwater supply system if the Green River is ever unavailable are being addressed first. Future investments will be made along Pipeline 1 and others not supplied by the groundwater system in the future.

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

C-2 Resolution U-11258 – A resolution relating to reducing the TPU's municipal carbon footprint by restricting the use of natural gas and new fossil fuel for existing TPU buildings and facilities and future TPU capital improvements.

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

LaTasha Wortham, Regional Relations Manager, summarized the resolution. On April 20, 2021 the Tacoma City Council adopted RES40776 a resolution reducing the City's municipal carbon footprint by restricting the use of natural gas and new fossil fuel for existing buildings and future capital investments, encouraging other local jurisdictions to do the same, and assessing impacts for imposing the same restrictions on new commercial and residential construction effective January 1, 2022. Councilmembers Walker and Beale requested that the Public Utility Board adopt a similar resolution to reduce Tacoma Public Utilities' carbon footprint. On April 14, 2021 the proposed "decarbonization" resolution was presented to the Board for feedback. After incorporating that feedback, the current resolution is now before the Board for consideration. The resolutions explains that "Director shall inventory TPU-owned facilities that use fossil fuels and evaluate the feasibility of retrofitting existing facilities to low-emission sources by 2030". This inventory and evaluation will make use of existing reports and data to prepare recommendations regarding feasibility and life-cycle costs. The report will be completed by January 1, 2023, and a presentation will be made to the Board. Also, that the TPU Director shall develop a plan to retrofit TPU-owned parking facilities and buildings with electric vehicle ("EV") charging stations by 2030, where operationally and economically feasible. This plan will be completed by January 1, 2023, and a report will be made. These items will likely cause expenditures that will be considered in future budgetary planning.

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

C-3 Motion 21-06 – Approve settlement of property damage claim #W-024-18 of Pamela Frost in the amount of \$55,206.54.

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

Tom Morrill, Chief Deputy City Attorney, summarized the motion. This motion is to settle the property damage claim of Pamela Frost for damaged caused by water released from a failed water main in the amount of \$55,206.54.

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

## **D. Reports of the Director**

### Covid

Director Flowers shared that the State is anticipating opening fully at the end of June, depending on case count. Telework has been extended to the end of July, which will provide time to refine reconstitution plans and integrate further changes to workplace protocols.

The plan for reopening of the lobby was then reviewed. Historically, approximately 10,000 customers visit TPU's lobby per month; the lobby has been closed since April 2020 due to the pandemic. The plan is to reopen the lobby to the public on August 2. Approximately 28,500 (14 percent of all customers) are currently 30 days or more past due. Safety measures that will be undertaken were then outlined, these include appointments, reconfiguration, security, and other on-site logistics. The communication plan to customers was then reviewed.

### Equity Index

Jacques Colon and Bucoda Warren of the General Government Strategy Office provide the presentation. The Equity Index (EI) highlights areas of higher and lower opportunity and guides equitable service delivery and resource allocation. Since the last presentation to the Board, user interface changes to the self-service tool have been made easier to use and there are nine new environmental indicators. The new equity map layers for TPU Water, Power, and combined service areas. A county level index is forthcoming. The purpose of the EI is to identify and track disparities, support data-driven decision making, and increase transparency and accountability. The Tacoma 2025 goal areas are livability, economic and workforce, education, civic engagement, and accessibility and equity. How the EI could be applied to each was demonstrated. Next steps include incorporating the EI into program analysis and racial equity action plan goals, use the EI for resource prioritization, and to support implementation across TPU.

### Strategic Directive Four (SD4) Stakeholder Engagement

LaTasha Wortham, Regional Relations Manager; and John Gaines, Community Relations Manager, provided an overview of SD4. The purpose of SD4 is to proactively engage and have open dialogue with customers and other stakeholders to understand their needs and improve service that informs decision making while enhancing community understanding of TPU's operations, programs, and services. How stakeholder engagement was adjusted during the pandemic was reviewed. Engagement statistics and proactive messages were reviewed. Proactive messaging involved customer assistance, moratorium policies, advanced meters, electrofuels rate, water conservation and commitment to equity. Hollie Coates-Seamster summarized Customer Services' engagement which included assistance programs, CARES for small businesses, virtual webinars, and the outbound calling campaign to customers. Rochelle Gandour-Rood, Water Program Specialist, provided an overview of Water's engagement, which water included education for youth and teachers and partnering with Customer Solutions. Sarah Sweet, Conservation Program Manager, and Katherine Rice, Management Analyst, provided an overview of Power's engagement, which

includes electric vehicle education and outreach, electric school buses, and pole-mounted EV charging in business districts. Ms. Wortham concluded by providing an overview of future engagement plans, which include payment plans, reopening safety practices, advanced metering, climate action plan, and summer water conservation. Board Members made positive remarks about the outstanding engagement during such a difficult time and the importance of outreach to customers and stakeholders.

#### Tacoma Power Natural Resources Program

Chris Mattson, Generation Manager, shared Generation's mission, which is to create clean, reliable, marketable energy while ensuring the stewardship of resources. Generation's roles were summarized, these include environment leadership, collaboration with Tribes and regulators, mitigate the impacts of the operation and enhance the environment, create recreational opportunities, and protect/preserve wildlife habitat on Power's 20,000 acres of land. Mr. Mattson provided an overview of all of Power's hydro projects and investments in natural resources. Over \$200M in license implementation investments have taken place over the last 20 years to include \$120M at the Cowlitz River project for the remodel of the salmon hatchery and new juvenile fish passage facility and \$80M at Cushman for adult/juvenile fish passage facilities and two new fish hatcheries. Matt Bleich, Acting Natural Resources Manager, then addressed the fisheries programs at both Cushman and Cowlitz. The North Fork Skokomish salmon hatchery raises spring Chinook and winter-run steelhead and Coho. The Saltwater Park sockeye hatchery raises only sockeye. The downstream juvenile fish collector attached to Cushman No. 1 Dam was completed in 2015 and received the Outstanding Stewards of America's Waters award in 2016. Hatchery production and collection were detailed. Mr. Bleich concluded by outlining staff members and contractors who make up the natural resources organization and thanked partner organizations including Tribal partners, state/federal regulators, and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

#### Non-interim Tidelands and Industrial Land Use Regulations

LaTasha Wortham, Regional Relations Manager, summarized the draft letter that may be sent by the Board to the City Council on the topic of non-interim tidelands and industrial land use regulations. The proposed letter does not take a position on the current recommended ordinance. It conveys information on areas of impact to TPU policies and strategic directives. It advocates for the recognition of hydropower, recommends a clearer definition of 'renewable fuels' and reiterates TPU's commitment to protecting the environment and ensuring a sustainable economy that ensures equity. Discussion ensued with the Board requesting additional language with regard to electrofuels. This item will be scheduled as a motion to approve the final letter at the next Board meeting.

#### **E. Comments by the Board**

Chair Flint made comments about Barbara Bischel, who passed on May 13. Ms. Bischel was the first Council Member elected from the East Side in 1975 and served until 1985; being the only woman serving during that time and was Deputy Mayor for two years. Ms. Bischel was appointed in 1986 to the Public Utility Board and served eight years. Positive remarks about the public service and dedication of Ms. Bischel were made.

**F. Adjournment**


There being no further business or comments, the Public Utility Board meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m. until June 23, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

Approved:



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Bryan Flint, Chair



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Christine Cooley, Secretary