



Approved 6-8-22

MINUTES
City of Tacoma
Public Utility Board Meeting
May 25, 2022
6:30 p.m.

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

Present: Chrissy Cooley, John O’Loughlin, Carlos Watson, Holland Cohen

Excused: Mark Patterson

The meeting was quorate.

Minutes of the Previous Meetings

Ms. Cooley moved that the minutes of the previous meetings be adopted; seconded by Mr. Watson. 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-11321– Award contracts and approve purchases:

1. Award five-year contracts to Morris & Willner Partners, Inc., and Eight Eleven Group LLC dba Brooksource for temporary IT staffing services, supplemental support, and professional services as needed for delivery of the portfolio of TPU technology related capital projects (\$3,300,000, plus a ten percent contingency plus applicable taxes; and \$2,700,000, plus a ten percent contingency, plus applicable taxes, respectively. Option to renew for one additional five-year term for a projected combined total \$6,600,000, plus applicable taxes) [Tony Landrith, Power Assistant Section Manager];
2. Award two-year contract to i3-Milestone, LLC for phase three e-Portal implementation for the Advanced Meter Program (\$1,256,705, includes option to renew for one additional year, plus applicable taxes) [Tony Landrith, Power Assistant Section Manager];
3. Award three-year contract to Cathcart Rail, LLC, dba Cathcart Field Services, for federally mandated, daily services of freight car inspections, freight car repairs, and terminal and intermodal air test procedures (\$1,300,000, plus applicable taxes. Option to renew for an additional two, one-year extensions for a projected amount of \$1,300,000, plus applicable taxes) [Kari Halliday, Operations Manager].

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

Board Member Watson moved to amend Resolution U-11321 by removing exhibit two from the general purchasing resolution in order to allow staff additional preparation time; seconded by Mr. O'Loughlin. There were no Board comments or public comment on this amendment. Voice vote to remove the exhibit and amend the resolution was taken and carried.

In response to a Board request for clarification on payment responsibilities, Kari Halliday, Rail Operations Manager, stated that Tacoma Rail pays for in-bound cars and is reimbursed by the Class 1 Railroads for repairs paid by the owner.

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

D-2 Resolution U-11322 – Authorize execution of a collective bargaining agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 483, Customer and Field Services Unit, effective retroactive from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024

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

Dylan Carlson, Sr. Labor Relations Mgr, summarized the resolution. The City of Tacoma and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 483, Customer and Field Services Unit, negotiated a proposed Collective Bargaining Agreement (agreement). The agreement covers approximately 123.2 employees assigned to TPU and 31 employees assigned to GG. The agreement provides for the following provisions: 1) Effective January 1, 2022, all bargaining unit classifications will receive a general wage adjustment of 2.25 percent; 2) Effective January 1, 2022, the classifications of Mail & Stock Processor and Meter Reader will also receive a market-based wage adjustment of 2.5 percent; and the classification of Senior Mail & Stock Processor will also be adjusted by approximately 1.5 percent to align the classification to be 10 percent above Mail & Stock Processor; 3) Effective January 1, 2023, all bargaining unit classifications will receive a 2.5 percent general wage adjustment; 4) Effective January 1, 2024, all bargaining unit classifications will receive a 2.75 percent general wage adjustment. Other changes include: an increase to the amount paid annually for reimbursement of up to two pair of safety shoes from \$150 to \$200 per pair for TPU Field Operation employees, and reimbursement for one pair for Mail & Stock Processors and Senior Mail & Stock Processors. In addition, the City and IBEW Local 483 have jointly submitted a unit clarification petition to the Public Employment Relations Commission proposing to transfer the classification of Warehouse Supervisor from the 483 Customer & Field Services bargaining unit to the 483 Supervisors' bargaining unit, where it shares a stronger community interest, and as a result, the City and IBEW Local 483 have agreed that the Warehouse Supervisor classification will no longer appear in the 483 Customer and Field Services agreement.

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

C-3 Resolution U-11323 – Authorize execution of a letter of agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 483, Water Division Unit regarding Water Operator-in-Training opportunity [Dylan Carlson, Sr. Labor Relations Mgr].

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

Dylan Carlson, Sr. Labor Relations Mgr, summarized the resolution. The City of Tacoma and IBEW, Local 483, Water Division Unit, recommends the adoption of a Letter Agreement (agreement), Tacoma Water wishes to provide the opportunity for qualified, skilled, and interested employees to receive the necessary training and development, in combination with their existing education and training, to become certified at the Water Treatment Plant Operator (WTPO) Level 2. This opportunity will require a significant investment on the part of Tacoma Water, and a significant commitment from any staff member selected for this opportunity. Qualified and interested Tacoma Water employees, who have graduated the Tacoma Water apprenticeship program, may place their name on an interest list and candidates selected for this opportunity would be temporarily placed in a Water Treatment Plan Operator-in-Training position and be paid at 90 percent of the Water Treatment Plan Operator rate of pay. Tacoma Water will reimburse 100 percent of the testing fees for successfully passed WTPO certification exams, as well as the annual fees from the state of Washington, for maintenance of the achieved certification. Employees who successfully complete the training program, secure the WTPO Level 2 Certification, and meet education and experience requirements to obtain a temporary WTPO Level 3 Certification, would be eligible to compete for any vacant position in the Water Treatment Plan Operator classification per civil service rules. Applicants would be required to pass the WTPO Level 3 exam prior to completion of probation in the Water Treatment Plant Operator classification.

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

D. Reports of the Director

Director Flowers reported that staff is nearing completion of reconstitution for employees who are in Group 2, planning to be in the office three or more days per week. Reconstitution has progressed as planned with no major issues or concerns causing modifications to approach. The reconstitution team did survey Group 2 employees regarding their reconstitution experience; 41 employees responded. 95 percent indicated they had the tools and resources necessary to successfully reconstitute. Related to reconstitution information, 57.5 percent indicated they felt very informed, 25 percent felt they were informed (no one reported "not at all informed"). Related to satisfaction with experience re-entering campus, 59.46 percent reported they were very satisfied, 18.9 percent reported satisfied (no one reported "not at all satisfied"). Group 3 employees, those who will be in the office less than 3 days per week, will begin transitioning back to the office starting June 6 and will be phased in a similar fashion as Group 2 employees. At the last meeting, staff reported that they were actively focusing on customer accounts with large balances, this group includes both residential and commercial customers. This focal point was also highlighted in the May 11 memo providing an update on activities. On May 10, 1,925 disconnect notices were issued to customers with large balances. At that time it was communicated that these accounts would be eligible for disconnect if no action was taken before May 23. Of those customers, 55 percent (1,073) became eligible for disconnect yesterday. These customers failed to make their monthly payment plan that was automatically established to ease into paying balances from the COVID disconnect moratorium period. Cumulatively these 1,073 customers owe \$2.6M.

TPU continues to encourage customers to respond so staff can assist in re-establishing payment plans and get the customer assistance assessment form completed...

Director Flowers then described a successful customer encounter. A resident of a Tacoma Housing Authority apartment received notice that their services were going to be disconnected. The resident had been living with their parent who was the account holder. Their parent passed away, utilities had not been switched to the resident (adult child), and so the balance had grown. After being contacted and within a few days, Customer Services successfully transitioned the service the survivors name, they received a substantial pledge from LIHEAP and have now been enrolled in BCAP. In response to a Board inquiry, Director Flowers clarified that reconnection fees for those accounts with associated Covid balances have been suspended. Also, with the transition to AMI, TPU will have the ability to do remote disconnects, which will eliminate the need for a fee.

Director Flowers then reminded the Board of the joint TPU/Environmental Services listening session on rates scheduled for May 26 in hybrid format.

E. Comments by the Board

Board Member Cooley expressed appreciation to staff for the tour of seismic drawdown activity at Mossyrock Dam.

F. Adjournment

There being no further business or comments, the Public Utility Board meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m. until Wednesday, June 8, 2022 for a study session at 3:00 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Approved:



Mark Patterson, Chair



Carlos Watson, Secretary