



APPROVED 7-25-18

MINUTES
City of Tacoma
Public Utility Board Study Session
July 11, 2018
3:00 p.m.

Mr. Jones called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 3:04 p.m. at the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: Mark Patterson, Karen Larkin, Bryan Flint, Woodrow E. Jones, Jr., Christine Cooley

Mr. Jones opened the meeting by introducing the new Board Member, Christine Cooley.

Cushman and Adams Substations Update

Clark Mather, Community and Government Relations Manager, began by providing an overview of the Adams Street and Cushman Substation properties. As background, this item was reviewed by the Board at its study session of March 28, 2018 and was presented to the Council's Infrastructure, Planning, and Sustainability Committee on May 30, 2018. Taking feedback from these two presentations, changes to section 6 of the draft MOU pertaining to master planning and community outreach were made. Proposed next steps in the process include the Interim Director and City Manager signing the MOU; a joint staff task force will work to identify scoping of the outreach and initial master planning; and General Government identifies a consultant and initiates outreach and initial master planning.

Legislative Policies

Clark Mather, Community and Government Relations Manager, began by providing an overview of the outcome of the 2018 federal elections and summarized actions affecting each of the operating divisions such as: pole attachment legislation; energy legislation; spending bills for the Cushman Hydroelectric Project; water resources legislation; Rail tax credits; and net neutrality. Marian Dacca, State Relations Manager then summarized the state 2018 elections and make-up of the House and Senate. Ms. Dacca then summarized actions affecting each of the operating divisions such as: pole attachments, small cell technology, and broadband deployment; electrification of transportation; solar incentives; and the Hirst and Foster Supreme Court decisions for Water. Mr. Mather then covered ways TPU and General Government public affairs teams coordinate efforts and outlined new ideas for further coordination and collaboration.

Tacoma Power: Low-Income Solar Initiatives

Clay Norris, Power Manager, reviewed the elements of Power’s residential solar plan and provided an update on solar adoption in Tacoma. Mr. Norris discussed challenges with the low-income loan program and shared preliminary research on community solar and the multi-family pilot. Tacoma Power has developed a zero-interest loan package for low-income customers that include upfront purchase of the renewable energy credit and waived inspection fees. Staff is concerned about marketing a poor financial investment for low-income customers. Recommended next steps for staff are to: hold low-income loan until economics are favorable for low-income customers; continue pursuing legislative changes to help increase solar adoption; evaluate options that include public/private partnership to obtain a new community solar project; evaluate options that include grants and a public/private partnership, including a non-profit, for multi-family project; promote solar through the TPU website and WattPlan solar calculator.

Technology Strategic Plan Update

Joe Tellez, Power Section Manager, reviewed the UTS strategic plan components: modernize and optimize infrastructure technology; enable smart utility integration; enhance cybersecurity posture; and excellence in service delivery. Mr. Tellez showed a technology strategic roadmap with projects from 2014 – 2018. Key and transformational initiatives include the Energy Management System, Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI), utility bill redesign, and the Workforce Connect project. Mr. Tellez then reviewed utility industry technology trends and TPU business drivers (legacy utility operations, increasing customer expectations, evolving workforce). Andrew Braeger, Power Engineer, reviewed UTS strategic objectives for 2018-2022 which includes AMI readiness and deployment, customer engagement and digital services, operational analytics, and cybersecurity program maturity. A roadmap for the next four years was reviewed by Mr. Braeger.

Adjournment

The study session was adjourned at 5:51 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled study session on Wednesday, July 25, 2018 at 3:00 p.m.

Approved:

Approved:

Woodrow E. Jones, Jr., Chair

Bryan Flint, Secretary