



APPROVED 4-8-20

MINUTES  
City of Tacoma  
Public Utility Board Study Session  
March 11, 2020  
3:00 p.m.

Acting Chair Flint called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 3:02 p.m. at the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: Bryan Flint, Chrissy Cooley, Carlos Watson, Karen Larkin (via phone), Mark Patterson

**Reporting on Stakeholder Engagement Strategic Directive (SD4)**

LaTasha Wortham, Regional Relations Manager, summarized that this presentation is the first check-in with the Board on their strategic directive on stakeholder engagement (SD4). The directive states that TPU is committed to proactive engagement and open dialogue with customers and other stakeholders to understand their needs and improve service that informs decision-making. Staff is to report as needed, but not less than biannually to the Board and executive leadership team on activity pertaining to this directive. John Gaines, Community Relations Manager, shared that a total of 303 reported engagements were carried out in 2019. Types of engagements undertaken, TPU divisions involved in outreach and summary of stakeholder groups engaged were detailed by Mr. Gaines. Main messages shared and received were related to the Advanced Meter Project, Environmental Action Plan, Low-Income/Bill Assistance Program, and the Cushman/Adams Substations. Staff continues to focus on constant evolution and improvement in the quality of engagement. Staff will continue to increase collaborative engagement and include new groups.

**Strategic Communication Plan**

The scheduled presentation on TPU's strategic communication plan was postponed for a briefing on the Covid19 situation. TPU Emergency Manager, Courtney Rose, provided an update on Covid19. All work to plan, communicate, respond, and mitigate the situation are being done in coordination with General Government. Daily coordination calls to discuss developments and prioritize actions are being conducted. Management is looking at essential functions and how to protect staff and the public from exposure. Some staff with critical roles and limited back-up staff have been isolated. Pierce County Emergency Management has moved to a unified command. General Government communications is the lead on all communications.

**Tacoma Power: Renewable Fuels**

Cam LeHouillier, Assistant Power Section Manager, described electrofuels as renewable electricity used through electrolysis process to create a synthetic liquid fuel without photosynthesis. It is carbon neutral and may use carbon as a vehicle. It stores renewable electricity in chemical bonds. It is not a biodiesel and there is no waste collection or burden on agriculture. Mr. LeHouillier provided examples of electrofuels for decarbonized transportation such as cars, planes, and container ships. Production is highly flexible, can dynamically follow load, intermittent generation (wind, solar) and can be interrupted to provide demand response. Electrofuels provide a way to store and transport renewable energy without batteries or transmission wires. Tacoma Power’s current efforts were outlined. This includes Tacoma Power’s joining the Renewable Hydrogen Alliance. Benefits to Tacoma Power and barriers to electrofuel projects were summarized. Staff will continue to work in coordination with partners to realize any possible benefits for Tacoma.

**Discussion of Board Policies**

Strategic Directive 8 (SD8) on Telecom was put in the queue for Board consideration. Board Member Cooley reviewed the latest version of Strategic Directive 9 (SD9) on Economic Development. Final drafting will be conducted by staff and this SD will be put in the queue for Board consideration. Board Member Flint reviewed the first draft of Strategic Directive 10 (SD10) on Government Relations. Based on the discussion, Mr. Flint will incorporate comments and provide the second draft for discussion at a future Board study session.

**Executive and Closed Sessions**

Board Member Patterson moved to convene an executive session at 5:25 p.m. for the purpose of discussing pending and potential litigation per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i); and a closed session to discuss labor per RCW42.30.140(4)(b) for ten minutes each topic; seconded by Board Member Cooley and approved by the Board. The executive/closed session was adjourned at 5:35 p.m. Attorney present was Tom Morrill, Chief Deputy City Attorney.

**Adjournment**

The study session was adjourned at 5:35 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled study session on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Approved:



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Karen Larkin, Chair

Approved:



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Mark Patterson, Secretary