



Approved 4/27/22

MINUTES
City of Tacoma
Public Utility Board Study Session
April 13, 2022
3:00 p.m.

Chair Patterson called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 3:00 p.m. at the auditorium of the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: Mark Patterson, Christine Cooley, Holland Cohen, John O'Loughlin

Excused: Carlos Watson

Safety Culture Update

Laurie Hardie, Safety Director, reviewed 2021 safety data. This review included the recordable injury rates and key performance indicators for corrective actions and leadership engagement. In addition, in 2021, the team developed and distributed monthly safety training and communications; developed a Teams channel; contracted with Site Response for citywide safety training; and expanded the safety team. Ms. Hardie then reviewed an organizational chart illustrating the reporting structure. The goals and status for 2022 were then outlined: 1) mental and physical health of employees; 2) DOT compliance program; 3) creation of a city safety committee. Ms. Hardie concluded by reviewing SD12 (employee relations) elements. The team increased frontline operational safety report submittal by ten percent. In addition, the team created a safety training matrix for all job functions and classifications to inform annual training beginning in 2023.

Tacoma Power: Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) Preliminary Findings

Rachel Clark, Sr. Power Analyst, described the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) as a plan to ensure there are enough resources to meet customer needs for many years into the future. RCW 19.280 requires utilities to develop the IRP every four years; the next full plan is due September 2022. The governing body must approve the plan. Ms. Clark then reviewed Tacoma Power's portfolio, including the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) contract. IRP focus areas for 2022 were then summarized. The questions of BPA contract renewal and how climate change will affect resource positions will be included. Additions are the questions of how Power will ensure there are enough resources under accelerated vehicle and building electrification and how Power may supply a large electrofuel load. Preliminary findings were then shared. To maintain reliability, Power

will need to renew the BPA contract in 2028 or replace it with something else; the current BPA contract (slice/block) is still looking like a promising choice. The 2022 IRP analysis assumes post-2028 BPA contract will look similar to the contract today. Risks to the current portfolio were then reviewed. These include winter peaks, conditions of low water and high loads combined, and times when Power cannot rely on the wholesale market. Power has enough resource to meet customer needs with the current portfolio, but monitors conditions that create the most risk. Ms. Clark concluded by reviewing the schedule, which includes public workshops, another Board study session, and a request for approval in August 2022.

Budget Preparation Discussion: Staffing Levels/Full-Time Equivalent Employees

Director Flowers provided opening remarks. The purpose of these supplemental budget briefings is to walk with Board in budget development and ongoing analysis. It will provide the Board with additional insight during the budget and rate –making development and provides a transparent look at challenges being faced. The Director then outlined the Board’s role and Director’s role in budget and rates formation. Chris Robinson, Power Superintendent, provided background for this year’s staffing requests. The power industry has become more complex and has increased regulatory and technology requirements resulting in large bodies of work being added. Graphical representations of FTE staffing for the last 12 years were shared. Mr. Robinson detailed changes in programs and employee count since 2009 and how Power has absorbed the extra work. Initial proposed FTE adjustments for the next biennium and the programs the positions would support were reviewed. Water Superintendent, Scott Dewhirst, provided background for this year’s staffing requests. There has been growth and evolution in the Water industry with increased industry and regulatory impacts. Employee expectations are changing and there is an increased response to economic development to address. Mr. Dewhirst shared a graphical representation of FTEs for the last 18 years and then detailed the growth and evolution of the industry. Initial proposed FTE adjustments for the next biennium and the programs the position would support were reviewed.

Adjournment

The study session was adjourned at 5:49 p.m. until the April 27, 2022 for a study session beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Approved:



Mark Patterson, Chair



Carlos Watson, Secretary