



APPROVED 3/26/25

MINUTES  
City of Tacoma  
Public Utility Board Study Session  
March 12, 2025  
4:00 p.m.

Chair O'Loughlin called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 4:00 p.m. in the third-floor conference room (LT1) of the Public Utilities Administration Building.

**Present:** John O'Loughlin, Elly Claus-McGahan, Anita Gallagher

**Excused:** Carlos Watson, William Bridges

**Tacoma Water: Warehouse and Shops Project Update**

Carol Powers, Professional Engineer, made introductory remarks and introduced Blaine Wolfe and Doug Wiser of Absher Construction. As background, the new warehouse and shops building was built in 1937 and is seismically deficient. The shops facilities are undersized and lack proper adjacency, are inadequate, and are overflowing. Project goals of the new warehouse and shops are to build resiliency, operational effectiveness, and future growth. The planning and validation phase began in October 2024 and should be complete in March 2025. The design phase is planned for April 2025 through March 2026, with the construction phase scheduled for July 2026 through August 2027. The estimated project cost is \$40M. The contracts will come before the Board for consideration at a future meeting. Terry Forslund, Water Engineering Division Asst. Manager, expanded on the phasing and validation process and explained how the master planning effort contributed to the 20- year buildout that allows for flexibility. Focus is on warehouse and shops now and focus will move to future phases at a later time.

**Safety Update**

Laurie Hardie, Safety Director, outlined the structure of Tacoma Safety and how the RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed) format was created and is used. The Safety Management System (SMS) is a systemic approach to managing safety risks in operations (safety policy/objectives; safety promotion; risk management; safety assurance). The safety roadmap (incident response; hazard identification and mitigation; safety procedures; performance metrics; safety culture) was then summarized. Safety trainings in 2024, 2024 division safety accomplishments, and 2020-2024 year-end stats (comparison and costs for on-the-job injuries) were detailed. 2025 programs include soft tissue injury program; process improvement review; SharePoint site redesign; and return to work training.

### **Employee Satisfaction Survey Results**

Dan Drennan, Market Research and Development Manager, and Holly Lucht, Market Research and Development Sr. Analyst, presented the information in this presentation. The layout of the report information and how to best interpret it was summarized. TPU had a 74 percent response rate to this year's employee survey. The most favorable, least favorable, most improved items, and key drivers of employee engagement were detailed. Managers will hold feedback meetings and core conversations, which will lead to action planning in April.

### **Board/Director Comments/Updates**

Board Member Gallagher inquired about budget cuts to the Bonneville Power Administration by the Department of Energy. Discussion ensued; staff will continue to monitor impacts of federal administration policies and their impacts on TPU industries.

Director Flowers announced that Mr. Devin Hampton will soon be confirmed by the City Council as interim Board Member to cover while Board Member Watson is on leave. Mr. Hampton's background and qualifications were summarized.

Engel Lee, Chief Deputy City Attorney, informed the Board that the City Council will utilize study sessions and joint study sessions as informational briefings only. Separate committee-of-the-whole meetings will be scheduled for policy discussions.

Board Member Claus-McGahan made positive remarks about the Habitat for Humanity luncheon she attended.

### **Adjournment**

The study session was adjourned at 5:42 p.m.

Approved:



John O'Loughlin  
Chair



Elly Claus-McGahan  
Secretary