



APPROVED 1-22-2020

MINUTES  
City of Tacoma  
Public Utility Board Study Session  
January 8, 2020  
3:00 p.m.

Board Chair Larkin called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 3:01 p.m. at the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: Bryan Flint, Chrissy Cooley, Carlos Watson, Karen Larkin, Mark Patterson

**Low-Income Assistance Program Update**

Francine Artis, Assistant Customer Services Manager, provided a summary of low-income assistance activities in 2019. New households enrolled in programs have increased by 86 percent; community events and presentations increased by 90 percent; pledges from outside agencies processed has decreased by six percent; and 62 households have completed the financial education program. In 2018 there were 6,879 (\$3,191,415) households participating in discount rates, bill payment credit programs, or emergency assistance; in 2019 there were 7,666 (\$3,665,047). Ms. Artis then summarized the different activities and community outreach events in which Customer Solutions staff participated in 2019. Board Members outlined their program expectations. Staff should work on the evaluation of changing eligibility levels in time for the next rate cycle and evaluate how many additional families and in what areas will be served and include demographics. Staff should perform outreach to customers who are just above the current eligibility threshold so they know to check back in when new eligibility levels have been evaluated. Staff should provide quarterly updates in 2020 going to twice yearly in 2021.

**Tacoma Power/Integrated Resource Plan/Pump Storage**

Mike Hill, Sr. Power Analyst, described pump storage hydro (PSH) as a type of hydroelectric energy storage used by electric power systems for balancing load. The method stores energy in the form of gravitational potential energy of water, pumped from a lower elevation reservoir to a higher elevation. Mr. Hill then shared illustrations to further described closed loop and open loop PSH. The existing PSH fleet was constructed in the mid-to-late 1970s and is used for load shaping and peak shaving. New PSH interests include increased penetration of variable renewable energy resources, electricity market designs (energy, capacity, and ancillary services), and new technology (variable speed pumps/generators). PSH at the Cowlitz Hydroelectric Project was addressed. There are opportunities for the existing reservoirs or opening a third pump generator bay at

Mossyrock. Challenges at Mossyrock include environmental impacts, additional upper reservoir, re-opening of FERC licensing process, and transmission being located near a critical flow gate. In summary, PSH is part of a well-integrated grid in the future. Benefits: complements renewable energy resources; very flexible resource; improves flexibility; and longevity. Challenges: long-term economics; development costs; construction time; scale; and market design. Discussion with the Board ensued with more work by staff to be done to evaluate smaller generation and use of existing reservoirs. This work will be ongoing during the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) work. Rachel, Clark, Sr. Power Analyst, shared with the Board the IRP stakeholder process and the initial stakeholder list. Discussion ensued with Board Members requesting additions to the stakeholder list such as Citizens for a Healthy Bay, someone or an agency knowledgeable about poverty, Northwest Energy Coalition, and perhaps involving a neighborhood Council. Board Members also requested a robust web presence on the IRP.

### **Miscellaneous**

Chair Larkin reported that Cathy Journey in HR has reformatted the Director's goals to align with the Board's Strategic Directives (SD). In addition, there will be a new draft of the evaluation document, process, and timeline discussed at the next Board study session.

### **Discussion of Board Policies**

The Board discussed the draft SD on Reliability and Resiliency. Board Member Patterson will prepare a redraft based on the discussion and bring the document back to the next Board study session.

### **Executive Session**

Board Member Patterson moved to convene an executive session at 5:30 p.m. for 30 minutes for the purpose of discussing pending and potential litigation per RCW 42.30.110(1)(i); seconded by Board Member Flint and approved by the Board. At 6:00, the executive session was extended by 15 minutes. The executive session was adjourned at 6:15 p.m. Attorneys present were Martha Lantz, Deputy City Attorney and Stephen Tan of Cascadia Law Group (via phone).

### **Adjournment**

The study session was adjourned at 6:15 p.m. until the next regularly scheduled study session on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 3:00 p.m. followed by a regular meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Approved:

Approved:

---

Karen Larkin, Chair

---

Mark Patterson, Secretary