

Portland Utility Board
July 12, 2016, 4:00 – 6:30pm
Room B, Portland Building
Meeting # 13 Minutes

Attendees:

PUB Members: Allan Warman
Janet Hawkins
Kendra Smith
Meredith Connolly (by phone)
Robert Martineau
Colleen Johnson

Absent:
Lee Moore*
Gwynn Johnson*
Julia Person*

*Notice of absence provided prior to meeting

Staff: Mike Stuhr (Director, Portland Water Bureau)
Jonas Biery (Business Services Manager, BES)
Megan Callahan (Communications Director, BES)
Gabe Solmer (Communications Director, Water)
Kristen Acock (Senior Engineer, Stormwater System Division, BES)
Sherri Peterson (Program Specialist, BES)
Dawn Uchiyama (Sustainable Stormwater Division Manager, BES)
Annie Von Burg (Senior Program Manager, BES)
Claudio Campuzano (Principal Analyst, City Budget Office)
Melissa Merrell (Principal Analyst, City Budget Office)
Jeff Leighton (Senior Engineer, Asset Management, Water)
Jessica Letteney, (Senior Management Analyst, Water)
Jeff Winner (CIP Planning Supervisor, Water)
Marci Rees (Senior Management Analyst, Water)
Jim Blackwood (Commissioner Fish's Staff Representative)
Cindy Dietz (Senior Program Manager, Water)

Public: Janice Thompson (Citizen Utility Board)
Carol Cushman (League of Women Voters)

I. Call to Order, Introduction of Any Audience Members

Kendra and Allan will be meeting with Commissioner Fish for a check-in. Carol Cushman from the audience asked why no ex-officio members were present. Melissa explained that all PUB member terms expired at end of June and the ex officio members were not included in reappointments. The code language indicates that they are only included during the budget process. When that starts is a question to be determined and will be part of the conversation between the PUB chairs and the commissioner. Rob said he met with Mike Stuhr and also met with Nick Fish as part of his every three months check-in. Colleen went to public forum at the University of Portland about the Portland Harbor.

Meredith talked with Janice Thompson (CUB) about the last low income discount subcommittee meeting and the biogas project at BES.

II. Approval of June Meeting Minutes

Prior to today's meeting, Melissa received comments and edits from Janice Thompson, which Melissa tracked and updated in a "track change" document provided to members in their packets.

Rob moved to approve minutes as presented. Meredith seconded. Approved unanimously by voice vote with abstention from Colleen.

III. Board Procedures

The Board is required by their bylaws to adopt their procedures at the beginning of each fiscal year. Rob moved to readopt the current procedures which were recently adopted by the board. Janet seconded. By voice vote, they were unanimously readopted.

IV. Stormwater System Plan

Kristen Acock provided an [overview](#) of the stormwater system planning effort, introduced the concept of stormwater asset management, and updated on status of the current planning effort.

Kristen noted that besides doing system planning for BES, it affects other bureaus including PBOT and others. She provided a brief history of stormwater system planning and the stormwater planning process.

There are three basic stormwater areas in the City: one served by the combined system, one served by the separated system, and one served by the sump system (i.e. Underground Injection Control or 'UIC').

Unlike the sanitary system, the stormwater system relies heavily on privately and publicly-owned facilities that are both constructed and natural. The combined and sanitary plans were very targeted to deal with capacity and condition and done at a Citywide scale. Stormwater is done at a watershed level to address a wide array of services and benefits. The results of the planning process are not necessarily engineered capital projects; for example, they could include outreach or private partnerships or other operating projects. The results of the process have

multiple benefits: water quality/sediment, conveyance, hydrology, erosion/landslides, flooding, habitat, and sanitary overflows.

Currently the program is working on citywide risk screen to identify risk hot spots, identified priority areas, and possible citywide policy recommendations. From there, the project is expected to move into basin and district plans, then to site design.

Kendra asked how the hot spots will be identified and Kristen responded that they will be identified based on risk assessment across eight service categories.

In response to a question from Allan, Kristen noted that there are some gaps in the best available data. For example, knowing the assets can be a challenge since they are not always City-owned nor constructed facilities (i.e. some are natural).

Kendra asked about climate change projections and whether BES has considered integrating 2050/2100 scenarios into planning. Kristen noted that Jennifer Belknap-Williamson is leading climate resiliency effort. The Stormwater System Plan is in a rapid risk assessment phase.

Kendra's second question was about whether they are looking at nested strategies – i.e. looking at systems separately before considering them together. Kristen noted that they are currently not looking at solutions, just risks. Kendra's question pertains more to solutions. Kristen noted that when it does come to solutions, there are service categories of stormwater management that can be at odds (e.g. habitat and hydrology with conveyance and flooding).

Rob asked how an equity lens is applied to the system. Kristen said that it is applied by looking at risks within each of the service categories and looking at them through some of the GIS layers related to equity as created by OEHR.

Janet made the comment that we are not at the point of 'preservation of equity' as mentioned in slide 7; she noted that the City and BES are still in the process of achieving equity.

Colleen asked what the model for equity is. Is it income-based? Related to race/ethnicity? Kristen explained that they aren't that far along in thinking about how to operationalize, but the GIS layers should facilitate the approach.

V. Clean River Rewards Program

Sherri Peterson presented [information](#) on the Clean River Rewards Program.

In reference to the slide that breaks the source of stormwater resources, she highlighted that non-residential customers pay more as a percent of total user fees because it is based on impermeable areas of which they have more. She provided a history of stormwater charges and discounts.

She noted steep slopes on west side present challenges. On the east side, flatter topography and permeable soils allow for infiltration.

The discount is up to 35% of onsite charge based on effectiveness and extent of onsite controls. Non-residential discounts are based on pollution reduction, flow/runoff rate reduction, and volume reduction - 33% of the discount relates to each reduction type. There is a calculator online to assist in determining if retrofits are net beneficial to the property owner.

The program is scheduled to sunset – although it is a ‘soft sunset’ because the ordinance is not precise on the matter. BES expects to recommend an extension for two additional years.

Rob noted that rental properties may not have the incentive to do retrofits since the benefit doesn’t accrue to them in some cases. Jonas noted that this type of discussion can help inform the final recommendation to Council regarding the reauthorization.

VI. Portland Harbor Superfund

Annie Von Burg gave an [update](#) on the proposed plan for the Portland Harbor Superfund site.

On June 8, the proposed plan was released by EPA, opening 60 day comment period that was subsequently increased to 90 days and now closes on September 6.

The preferred alternative – known as alternative ‘I’ – is estimated to cost \$746M (or \$811M if disposal is only done at an off-site disposal location).

The legal and technical team is currently reviewing the plan closely in order to prepare the City’s comments. BES is coordinating with several bureaus and work groups as well as engaging with the public. Annie noted that feedback from the public is critical to the City’s response. They are working with PSU National Policy Consensus Center and awarding grants to reach out to underrepresented communities.

After the comment period, EPA ‘goes dark’ and drafts a responsiveness summary and issues a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will kick off the allocation process when it is determined how the costs will be shared with the responsible parties.

Colleen noted that the tenor of the comments at the EPA forum were not supportive and wanted to know if that was what BES was seeing. Annie noted that that is really going to be a function of the stakeholder groups involved, but for the most part they’ve been seeing a lot of similar comments.

Melissa asked about the end-of-2016 timeline that is generally understood to be the timeline for the ROD that the EPA is aiming for. Annie said that it is quick but that they are committed and BES is very supportive of the quick schedule.

Kendra asked about the thinking of sea-level changes due to climate change. Annie noted that these things have been considered – as well as seismic issues as the site is on three faults.

Allan asked about the level of cooperation of partners in the past and going forward. Annie noted that the City has many roles, which means that the definition of our ‘partners’ is also

broad. The City is eager to play a leadership role. Lower Willamette Group has played a big part and has been an important partnership getting us to this point.

In response to Colleen's statement about people not supporting the plan, Kendra noted that 'if everyone hates it, you've probably hit the sweet spot'.

VII. Key Service Levels Discussion

Jessica Letteney gave a quick update on the recent customer survey. The bureau wanted to ask about key service levels that were both important to the Water Bureau and that were easily understandable to customers. The focus of the survey was therefore on customer service, water quality perceptions, overall satisfaction, and it also included some seismic questions. The survey is being offered online with the option to have it mailed. It is open until Friday, July 15. The goal was 384 survey responses. They have collected 751 so far. This will reduce the margin of error from 5% to about 3.5%. A total of 5,800 surveys were sent out.

Of 125 paper surveys returned, 68% were from residents 65 years of age and older and 40% had a reported income up to \$25,000 (so lower income). Only about 25% of paper surveys were renters. Not many non-english surveys were returned. She noted that they were trying to reach traditionally unrepresented groups and also apartment dwellers who don't pay bills directly.

There was an open-ended comment section where they received some positive comments and, so far, no comments about lead.

Once the data is analyzed, they will look to refine and revise key service levels. They are working with Elizabeth Hilt in the finance group to do an environmental scan of water systems across the country with similar characteristics or systems that represent best practices. Other inputs include the library of asset management plans which have sections on key service levels. They also did informal survey of employees that may yield some information. And finally, they will be using the updated strategic plan.

Kendra asked if there are any staff incentives tied to key service levels. Jessica said they are not tied to incentives. But they do use them to identify areas where they want to improve.

Rob stated that he felt that this is an area worth diving into deeper and potentially making recommendations.

Allan noted that some service levels are mandatory and some are about making the bureau better. He believes that focusing on those that are more about improvement are the ones the PUB should focus on.

There was a general discussion about how the PUB could engage in this conversation. Jeff gave an example of the issue of water quality complaints; setting the level, in the context of an unfiltered system, is important since levels are set at typically more stringent goals for other systems. But Jeff wondered if such a stringent goal would move the bureau toward filtration – an expensive and potentially undesirable alternative.

Janet suggested a deeper dive could be appropriate for a subcommittee.

Rob suggested that it is important for the board to understand and align with the public's sense of priority with regard to service levels.

VIII. Public Comment

Janice spoke on Clean River Rewards, highlighting that when she has brought it up, she has brought it up in conjunction with stormwater system plan. She noted that she would circle back on whether CUB thinks it should be reauthorized for one or two years.

She noted that it is good that PUB has asked for suggestions on agenda items from bureaus; they know these issues well. She suggested that the September/October timeline might accommodate an end-of-fiscal year discussion. The rate stabilization fund might also be a valuable discussion. A conversation with the City's debt manager might be valuable as there are many reasons to have a rate stabilization fund, for example, these funds can improve bond ratings. Finally, she suggested that a presentation from and discussion with OEHR with regard to workforce planning and equity would be beneficial.

IX. Next meeting agenda

Melissa reminded the PUB of the requirement to provide Council with a workplan. Some members have been interested in a look back/look forward discussion. There were also suggestions about having a values discussion. BES is working with Water to advance their timeline to ensure the right touchpoints with PUB in time to get input for the next budget cycle. Jonas noted that the tradeoff of 4-6 weeks means that information is less well-developed, which might be a good thing if aiming to engage the process in a more robust way.

Jim Blackwood noted that the Commissioner's Office is getting a time certain spot on the council agenda at end of September for the PUB annual report and to potentially tweak the code.

Kendra thanked the bureaus for bringing forward the workplan items. Melissa clarified that the PUB wished the items on the potential meeting topics for August be included for that agenda. There was general consensus. Some future meetings will be at the treatment plan or at the Pollution Control Lab.

Rob asked about open meeting rules and the on-site visit that the PUB is planning. Melissa confirmed that she talked with the City Attorney's office and onsite inspections are allowed, though no decision-making or pre-decisional work should be done during the on-site inspections.

Allan made a motion to adjourn. Meredith seconded.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.