

# Portland Utility Board

October 19, 2017 11:30am – 1pm

Lovejoy Room, City Hall

Meeting #34

*PUB Members:*

- Allan Warman
- Ana Brophy, ex officio
- Colleen Johnson
- Hilda Stevens
- Micah Meskel
- Mike Weedall
- Robert Martineau
- Ted Labbe
- Van Le, ex officio

*Absent:*

- \* Lee Moore
- \* Meredith Connolly
- \* Dan Peterson
- \* Scott Robinson
- \* Alice Brawley-Chesworth, ex officio

\*Notice of absence provided prior to meeting

*Staff:*

- Gabe Solmer (Deputy Director, Portland Water Bureau)
- Cecelia Huynh (Director of Finance and Support Services, Portland Water Bureau)
- Liam Frost (Management Analyst, Portland Water Bureau)
- Todd Lofgren (Senior Policy Advisor, Commissioner Fish)
  
- Shannon Fairchild (Financial Analyst, City Budget Office)
- Melissa Merrell (Principal Analyst, City Budget Office)

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

The board considered the minutes for the October 10, 2017 meeting. Ted proposed additions related to the Eastbank Crescent project to acknowledge that it was an outcome of the Central City 2030 Plan Draft and not at 11<sup>th</sup> hour project. It results from external forces but BES staff have been engaged. The Central City 2030 Plan Draft has had many opportunities for public comment. With that addition, Mike moved to approved the minutes; Allan seconded. All members voted in favor.

**III. Disclosure of Communications**

Colleen went to the City Council worksession and summed up the economic outlook for the city as presented by the City Economist. Generally, housing prices are going up 9% this year, second to Seattle, there is low unemployment. It looks like there will need to be \$5 million to \$25 million cuts for General Fund programs to fund council obligations and priorities. The first hour was devoted to an

overview of the budget and the second hour to the Fall BMP request. There was only one comment on non-general fund requests which underscores the points she and Scott had last meeting that most of the attention is focused on the General Fund.

Mike W. was contacted by a public utility about hydroelectric power.

Ted meets regularly with BES staff for his work but hasn't had any conversations related to PUB business.

Rob also meets regularly with bureau and commissioner staff.

#### IV. **Boardmember Update: Water Bureau Neighborhood Coalition Meetings**

Ted started by summarizing the meeting he attended. He said Nicole did a great job and he really thinks it's important and helpful to have a PUB member at these meetings. He has history with SE, particularly with Mt. Tabor and living in the neighborhood gave him a unique perspective. He reiterated a point he made over the summer, he thinks that the PUB is the starting point to do outreach but the bureaus need to be proactively making contacts with residents. Ted noted there had been many changes to the SE community board and he thinks they are now more sympathetic to the Water Bureau.

Hilda asked if Nicole had reached out to business associations. She hadn't heard anything. Micah said that the NE coalition is focused on business associations but it differs across the city.

Gabe commented that the bureau had done the initial outreach based on the PUBs recommendations from this summer and were going to continue it. The plan is for the bureaus to meet together monthly on a rotating basis with the associations. The commissioner supports this outreach and they should get to each group at least once a year. Ted voiced support for that idea.

Colleen went to the North Portland association. She noted there was some antagonism towards the bureau and the presentation ran longer than planned. She really recommended the bureau target messages to the time allowed.

Allan went to two meetings: NE and downtown. NE was primarily residential and there was concern about how the water would taste. There was some conversation about rates, but not as much as expected. Allan noted that there were comments that filtration was a done deal by the time the bureau was talking to the community. They wished the bureau had come to them earlier.

Gabe told the PUB about changes in communication group. Nicole is no longer with the bureau. They expect a 6-month recruitment and are changing the position a bit to align with PUB's feedback. Edward Campbell will be managing communications until the position is filled.

Allan asked if the bureau would be talking with BES and other groups. Gabe said the communications groups from BES and Water meet monthly.

Colleen requested an update to PUB on the position and team once they figure out what position is going to look like.

#### V. **Board Discussion: Identification of Topics for Engagement**

The board then discussed the possible topics for engagement over the next year. Melissa had sent a [ranking tool](#). Based on the feedback received so far, the following are the first tier and second tier priorities.

### First Tier Priority

Equity - Low Income Discount Program

Equity - Equity Plan Implementation

Public and Community Engagement – Communications, Customer Relations, and Public Outreach for Filtration

Regulatory Compliance – Portland Harbor

Strategic Planning – Strategic Plan Updates

Strategic Planning – Measuring Performance

Green Infrastructure – Implementation plans for Comp Plan, Central City Plan, Climate Action Plan

### Second Tier Priority

Equity - Principles of Rate Making

Equity - Base Charge vs Volumetric Charge

Regulatory Compliance – CBWTP and TCWTP Facilities Updates

Green Infrastructure – Neighborhood to the River

Green Infrastructure – Watershed & green infrastructure tours

Green Infrastructure - Crystal Springs – restoration of an urban watershed

Operational Efficiencies – Unsewered Areas and Party Sewers

Operational Efficiencies – CIP PREP Updates

Operational Efficiencies – Biogas

Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness - Earthquake Resiliency

Interbureau Coordination – BES PBOT IA

Hilda added public outreach for the filtration facility and Allan suggested it could be part of the community engagement topic.

Colleen suggested the first five(ish) as priority; the other ones with one vote would be second tier. Ted and Hilda agreed. Mike W. asked which topics the bureaus thought were most important. Melissa responded that the bureau had provided feedback on their highest priorities and they were listed at the top of each category. Mike W. also suggested that it would be helpful if the bureaus put together dashboards related to the strategic plans and measuring efforts. Mike feels it diminishes the value of our feedback with so much on the table. He suggests narrowing it down to key items with a dashboard component.

Colleen asked Melissa to work with the bureaus to plug in the first and second tier items over the next year.

Van said while she's only been on the board three months, six more items seems like a lot of work when there is already a lot of work. She expressed concern about the six items and impact on quality of the board's work.

Colleen said she'd like the board to be more proactively involved and less reactive. She also reminded the members that the Commissioner is very focused on the low-income program.

## **VI. Board Discussion and Approval of Annual Report**

Board members discussed their annual report. There were no additional changes to the draft. Colleen thanked Melissa for drafting the report and marshalling the members comments and perspectives. There was no public comment on the report. Mike W. motioned to approved the report and Hilda seconded. All members voted aye; no members voted against or abstained.

## VII. Board Discussion: Rules and Procedures

Colleen started the conversation and drew the members' attention to a [memo](#) Van provided with her thoughts. She asked if there were other issues that people want to raise and Hilda raised the issue of quorum for voting. Colleen pointed to state law – 6 members constitute a quorum for the board and is the minimum number of members that must vote in favor of a motion for it to pass.

Melissa provided an alternative for accepting minutes: The chair says, "Are there any corrections to the minutes?" Members may offer corrections, and when there are no further corrections forthcoming, the chair says, "If there are no further corrections to the minutes, they stand approved as corrected... the next item of business is..." or if no corrections are offered, "If there are no corrections to the minutes, they stand approved as submitted... the next item of business is..."

Melissa will put all of the changes discussed together for board consideration. Rob said that it's within the authority of the co-chairs to move forward with the changes related to the prior meeting minutes.

Ted brought up public comment and when during meetings would be the right time for public comment.

Van talked to the other members about her memo. She thinks it's important that the board document how it does things. She thinks the board has a fairly light load because it doesn't have to budget, fundraise, etc. The stronger the procedures, the better the board. Documenting the procedures now will prevent less competent chairs from authorizing work that isn't required of the board. Van said that over the next six months, the board's agendas and minutes should reflect low-income as it is a priority for the Commissioner. She supports the chair's opening meetings with the purpose of the board. She also thinks there are some things for which the board must offer council recommendations: BMP, budget, annual reports. Van advocated for a check list for inclusion in recommendation letters: Precedence, timeline for requested action, reflection of principles, caveats, split opinions, aspirations, and what the bureaus did to help us on the issue. Finally, Van supports the procedures being reviewed annually and the board checking its performance. This could include interview exiting members in terms of what procedures to remove or amended.

Colleen raised the question of using Robert's Rules rather than the rules spelled out in the procedures. She specifically is opposed to the procedure stating the chairs will remain neutral. She, and she thinks others, wanted to be on the board to have an opinion and to voice it. The restriction seems anti-democratic to muzzle the chairs. Ted asked if that was the intent of #9; it's not clear. Van stated that's what's in the current procedures document. Mike W. agreed with Colleen.

Melissa reminded the board that there was a lot of discussion the first year about the pros and cons of using Robert's Rules. One of the main concerns was fear that it would limit discussion for those who aren't as familiar with the rules. Rob concurred with Melissa's description of the past conversation, adding that the city's attorney who helped with the initial creation of the board recommended against the formality of Robert's Rules. Rob also said that under Robert's Rules, chairs don't vote on motions unless there is a tie. He is comfortable with moving toward some other version. Colleen said that some organizations use Robert's Rules that way but when she was mayor in La Grande, they followed Robert's rules but the mayor did vote. She doesn't believe there is a prohibition on voting in the rules. Ted added that having the chairs not vote doesn't seem practical. Rob said most votes were voice votes so it would only happen in the event of a tie. Melissa raised an administrative issue that if the board were to consider voting like that, it would practically raise the required quorum from 6 to 8. Mike proposed Robert's Rules that allows the chairs to vote.

Ted offered support for Van's suggestion that board recommendations include points where there was disagreement and showed more explanation of the diversity of thoughts.

Allan added another procedures issue and suggested that all meeting notices be sent to neighborhood coalitions and asked the bureaus to adopt a more proactive community outreach approach given the feedback he heard when he went to the community meetings on filtration. Micah suggested doing something similar to another community group's approach of posting its upcoming monthly meeting agendas.

Colleen suggested time on the next meeting agenda to hash this out. Micah offered that it could be done through the communications subcommittee and then a full package presented to the board. A member of the public made a point of how Robert's Rules can shut down discussion if one knows the rules well. Ana motion for the items to be considered in subcommittee; Ted seconded and Melissa was asked to coordinate a meeting.

**VIII. Board Discussion: BES Strategic Plan**

There was agreement to submit a statement of support for the bureau's strategic plan. Colleen said she thought it was a good piece of work. She is curious to see the metrics they come up with to measure progress. She is interested in engaging in the development and seeing how the strategic plan is implemented. Ted said the board has been engaged in the plans development; the metrics is the unfinished business part of it. Ana expressed interest in knowing when the metrics would be identified and incorporated. Melissa will put together a discussion document for Nov. 7th meeting.

**IX. Board Discussion: PUB BMP Submission to Council**

Colleen opened a conversation about the recommendations regarding the bureaus' budget adjustment requests for council consideration. Ted commented that he really appreciated the draft Melissa wrote. Colleen said the principles they laid out were good and would like to translate them to expectations so the board and the bureaus don't have the same conversation again and again. She'd like the board to articulate the principles as PUB expectations, recognizing that it wouldn't be city policy but would give value to PUB. Micah asked if other advisory committees were doing similar work? Colleen suggested the board should have its own guidelines. Such expectations wouldn't handicap the bureaus as the City Council has the authority to make the final decisions. Ted agreed; the board should be independent.

**X. Public Comment**

Lorie MacFarlane talked to the board about lead levels in Portland's water. She noted that Pittsburgh is second to Portland in lead levels. She implored the board to endorse giving free filters to the city's most vulnerable to control for lead.

**XI. Discuss next Meeting Agenda**

Melissa told the members that the scheduled Biogas topic may need to be delayed, giving more time to bureaus to give overviews of their budgets. There will also be a tour prior to the November 7 meeting at the Water Bureau's Interstate Facility.

November 7, 2017 Location: Water Bureau Interstate Facility

3pm: Onsite Visit to the operations at the Interstate Facility

4pm: Board Meeting

Biogas—

City Budget Outlook and Guidance

Big Picture – bureau budgets

November 21, 2017

Location: City Hall Pettygrove Room

10am: Budget 101 training/refresher

11am: Board Meeting

CIP

Board Discussion

**XII. Meeting adjourned at 1pm.**