

Portland Utility Board

January 7, 2020, 3:30 pm
1900 SW Fourth Avenue, 1900 Building, 2500C

Meeting #76

Attendees:

PUB Members:

- Ana Brophy, ex-officio
- Brian Laurent, ex-officio
- Dory Robinson, co-chair
- Heidi Bullock, co-chair
- Gabriela Saldaña-López (~3:50 arrival)
- Kaliska Day
- Karen Y. Spencer
- Karen Williams (~3:40 arrival)
- Mia Sabanovic
- Micah Meskel
- Robert Martineau
- Sara Petrocine, ex-officio
- Ted Labbe (~3:40 arrival)

Absent:

Staff:

- Amy Archer-Masters, Portland Utility Board Analyst, City Budget Office
- Angela Henderson, Equity Manager, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Asena Lawrence, Senior Policy Advisor, Commissioner Fish's Office
- Cecelia Huynh, Director of Finance and Support Services, Portland Water Bureau
- Cristina Nieves, Senior Policy Advisor, Commissioner Fritz's Office
- David Beller, Financial Analyst, City Budget Office
- Dawn Uchiyama, Deputy Director, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Eli Rosborough, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Eliza Lindsay, Portland Utility Board Coordinator, City Budget Office
- Erich Pacheco, Equity Manager, Portland Water Bureau
- Gabriel Solmer, Deputy Director, Portland Water Bureau
- Jeff Winner, Capital Improvement Program Planning Supervisor, Portland Water Bureau
- Jonas Biery, Business Services Manager, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Ken Bartocci, Financial Analyst, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Sherri Peterson, Revenue Programs Manager, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Steve Hansen, CIP Manager, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Shyvonne Williams, Equity Manager, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Yung Ouyang, Senior Financial Analyst, City Budget Office

Public:

Carol Cushman, League of Women Voters

Janice Thompson, Citizens Utility Board

Synopsis, Action Items, Decisions

In these notes the acronym, PUB, stands for the Portland Utility Board BES for the Bureau of Environmental Services, PWB for the Portland Water Bureau, and FTE for full time equivalent.

Documents providing background and/or discussed at the meeting can be found [here](#).

PUB did final preparation for the PUB-Council work session. Bureau Equity managers and PUB discussed integrating equity into the budget and program offers. Several draft program offers from BES and PWB, identified as high priority areas of focus by PUB, were also discussed.

ACTION ITEM PWB to share draft equity measures they are developing.

ACTION ITEM PUB staff to share the two bureaus' racial equity plans.

ACTION ITEM: PUB staff to provide last year's budget letters.

I. Call to Order

The co-chair called the meeting to order at approximately 3:35 p.m.

II. A moment of silence for Commissioner Fish in acknowledgement of his service to Portland

III. Disclosure of Communications

Heidi had the usual meetings with BES staff on Portland Harbor.

IV. Prior Meeting Minutes

The draft meeting minutes from December 3 circulated ahead of time were reviewed. The minutes were accepted with revisions.

PUB staff noted that a grammatical error in the November 5 meeting minutes had been overlooked during approval. Seeing no objection, PUB staff will make the correction – change 'concern than' to 'concern that' – and post the meeting minutes as final.

V. Announcements

January 16, 2020 meeting will be a full PUB meeting

It was clarified that at the December 3rd meeting, the decision had been to make both January 7, 2020 and January 16, 2020 full board, decision-making meetings. This means next Thursday from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. will also be a full board meeting, not a subcommittee meeting. A quorum will be needed to move forward on deliverables.

Agenda item suggestion

A PUB member suggested that PUB might consider submitting a recommendation for who should be interim Commissioner-in-Charge of BES. It was noted that in the past PUB has advocated for one Commissioner for both bureaus. Is that something PUB wants to advocate for?

Asena Lawrence with Commissioner Fish's office shared that, while they are still in talks with the Mayor's office, likely the Mayor will take BES. Commissioner Fish's office will stay open, continue to serve as liaison to BES, and work with PUB through to the swearing in of the new Commissioner. Asena will keep PUB posted.

Reminder to watch for meeting location changes

PUB staff reminded folks to watch for meeting room location changes.

Board recruitment: qualifications and board composition

PUB staff mentioned that at the September 2019 subcommittee meeting there was general interest in developing a list of qualifications the board is looking for in new voting and ex officio members for this year's recruitment. PUB staff asked if there was anyone interested in assisting PUB staff in preparing a structure for a subsequent board conversation around qualifications and board composition. Ana volunteered.

VI. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

VII. Final preparation for PUB-Council work session

PUB members reviewed the draft talking points developed from the conversation at the December 19th PUB subcommittee meeting. Several additions were suggested:

- Add acknowledgement of Commissioner Fish in the introduction and maybe in the closing as well. PUB was created in aftermath of Anderson lawsuit. PUB was largely his vision. For most of its life PUB has been under Commissioner Fish.
- Share with Council concern with the filtration projects' impacts on rates as well as on other bureau work and major capital projects. Also, worth noting how general fund decisions in other areas influence the two bureaus.
- Emphasize the board is attempting to reflect community views. This could be an accomplishment since the board is now much more community-based.
- Emphasize PUB's focus on ensuring positive community impacts.

The talking points with additions were adopted.

Karen YS, Karen W, and Rob will join the co-chairs in participating in the work session. The co-chair said she hoped others would consider joining them. This represents the horizontal and egalitarian approach the co-chairs and the board are now taking in board work.

Several participants expressed interest in practicing the agreed upon talking points as a group prior to the work session. This will be coordinated after the meeting.

The basics of the work session were described. It is informal and conversational. The Commissioners and PUB members sit around a table. The work session is open to the public. However, the audience will not be invited to give comment. It will be recorded and posted on YouTube as per all Council meetings.

VIII. Low-income assistance program evaluation – expansion of the financial assistance program

The presentation can be viewed [here](#).

Corbett White, Financial Assistance Program Manager with PWB, presented results from the expansion of the low-income assistance program. Discussed were: the five major goals of the program expansion and how they were met; additional accomplishments; and identified program improvements.

Question and answer

A member of the public reminded folks that though the water bureau runs the program it involves both BES and PWB.

Is Portland in the lead in launching assistance to multi-family housing?

A PUB member thought they remembered that Portland was one of the first cities to launch assistance to folks in multi-family housing and wondered if other cities are reaching out to learn from Portland's experience. PWB staff shared they do get lots of inquiries from other jurisdictions and though there is always room for improvement, Portland is leading the way.

Concerns about accessibility of the program

Several PUB members shared concerns about accessibility. One PUB member had heard from various community members that it was difficult to access the program. They tried for themselves. It took many steps and significant time to get information via the website and to work through 211. The PUB member wondered if there was a way to make the website and process simpler.

Another PUB member shared that there are many elderly community members for whom English is a second language. The PUB member had a direct experience in a multi-family unit where an elderly grandmother was using dishwater to flush the toilet. For her, the program was not accessible. The technology, the language, the process, all off it was inaccessible and with all the steps she was lost. The PUB member suggested additional administrative help and some sort of visual with very little text to explain the steps of the process.

Conversation about 211, Home Forward, and STRA agencies capacity

PWB staff shared that though they fund the assistance to renters in multi-family properties program, it is not their program. It is run through Home Forward's STRA program. Because the assistance program serves people who receive support/case management service through STRA, callers are directed to 211 in order to find which STRA agencies might have availability to assist.

Unfortunately, it is the everyday reality of STRA agencies and Home Forward that not everyone who needs help can get it because there aren't enough resources to help everyone.

Another PWB staff noted that it is a hard question to figure out how best to route people. Would being directed to PWB customer service and then having them tell you to call 211 be equally frustrating? The City is going through a website overhaul and hopefully that will make some things easier and more accessible.

A PUB member wondered, if there was a staffing/capacity issue at STRA or Home Forward agencies, would it be possible to earmark funds for staff?

PWB staff said they are in a partnership relationship and don't think they can tell Home Forward and STRA agencies what to do. Additionally, PWB wanted to make sure all the disbursed monies went to those in need. It is an open question whether the program would be better served if some funds could be used for administration. There would also be the legal question of whether that would need to be general fund monies.

What does the program need to succeed?

A PUB member mentioned that a lot of PUB wants to see the program succeed. Besides what has already been mentioned, are there other things the program is struggling with? What additional resources could help?

PWB staff said that there is a lot of administrative work in processing applications. Staff plates are already full, so at some point there might be a need a for additional staffing.

It was mentioned that quarterly billing is still very difficult for customers, especially low-income customers, so anything that can be done to change this is great. Various automations might help.

Help getting the word out about the program would be great.

IX. Report back from December 19th meeting discussion of program offer prioritization

The [synthesis of the individual prioritization of program offers](#) was referenced.

A brief summary of the discussion at the December 19, 2019 subcommittee meeting was given. At the December 19 meeting the results of the individual prioritization of program offers for PUB's focus were discussed. It was decided that the bureaus would bring draft program offers for the top 5 to the January, 7 meeting for discussion. Emerging themes and areas of focus were noted and discussed.

There was a brief discussion and clarification about whether a formal vote should be taken to focus on the 5-7 program offers that rose to the top as a result of the individual selection. PUB members who had not been able to participate in the meeting on the 19th were specifically asked how they felt about focusing on the top program offers. A PUB member mentioned that they agreed with an earlier comment that the BES Asset Management and Information Management program offers might make sense to look at together. There was general agreement that the individual selection showed a consensus of where to focus attention and that in the interest of time they are a great place to start.

A reminder was shared that there is only this meeting and the January 16 meeting to get the initial budget letter done. It is due at the time of budget submission, January 29, 2020.

Once the budgets are formally submitted, PUB will receive information on all the program offers. Selecting priority program offers for focus was a way to get the conversation started earlier and identify areas of interest for deeper investigation.

No formal vote was taken.

X. Break

XI. Integration of Equity into program offers and budget

BES Budgeting for equity presentation can be found [here](#).

BES Budgeting for equity rubric can be found [here](#).

BES Equity Managers provided a brief overview of BES's strategy for incorporating equity into budgeting. They feel equity is something that should be owned by the bureau staff, so they are letting the bureau staff take the lead on the equity impact statements in program offers and then lending assistance and giving feedback as needed. This work will be done on an annual basis. They want to capture both what is working and what isn't.

PWB Equity Manager shared PWB's approach to incorporating equity into budgeting. Because the strategic plan was launched in August 2019, they had the opportunity to embed equity into the strategic plan. PWB assembled multi-workgroup, 20-person task forces with the job to use OEHR's recommended Racial Equity-Centered Results-based Accountability (RBA) methodology and apply it to each strategy that has opportunity to impact equity and from there develop equity specific tasks and outcome measures. PWB started this process in September and wrapped up on December 12. This laid the foundation. Now PWB is looking ahead and recognizing that they may not be able to accomplish proposed targets with existing resources. PWB just made an offer on a limited duration strategic data analyst position to help scoping teams determine how it will be implemented. PWB is also trying to make sure all the plans, equity, strategic, etc. work together.

The three equity managers from BES and PWB meet regularly to collaborate, especially on employee recruitment and retention.

Discussion

The PWB Equity Manager shared that in addition to the high-level equity related performance measures entered into the budget software, PWB is also developing some equity measures for internal use. PUB asked if they could see them. PWB said they are currently in very draft format but would be happy to share.

ACTION ITEM PWB to share draft equity measures they are developing.

PWB shared the idea of thinking about performance measures in a pyramid model. The lower level feeds the top general level. This summer they worked on the top tier performance measures and now hope to work more on the lower level tiers. There is an ongoing discussion about what is the right level of generality for performance measures, what belongs at the top, should some of the lower level ones be pulled up, etc.?

A PUB member asked where does equity belong, at the top or lower levels?

PWB staffed answered this probably depends on the objectives of the program. For instance, with the Bureau Support program offer equity is a direct objective whereas with the Conduits/Transmission Mains program offer, while equity is in an important consideration, it is not a direct objective of the program.

The PUB member shared that if you want equity to be part of the bureau's culture then they felt equity should be identified at a programmatic level.

A PUB member mentioned that for the performance measure work there is a need for integrated software across the two bureaus.

PWB staff shared that there is a need across the City for shared software and tools; otherwise everyone may do performance measures differently which will make comparisons difficult.

A PUB member shared that early comments resonated. It is important to document not just what you are doing well, but also what might be areas for improvement.

A PUB member mentioned that internal focused equity may be where we need to be for now and they are just as interested in external equity/impacts on community. For example, with a sewer upgrade what are the impacts on say, displacement?

The BES Equity Manager said they were in complete agreement. What PUB is looking at are draft equity impact statements. BES Equity Managers are now in the process of the reviewing them and to your

point we have identified places where the equity impact statements can be more explicit about how the program can contribute to community stabilization and thus contribute to anti-displacement.

ACTION ITEM PUB staff to share the two bureaus' racial equity plans.

XII. BES draft program offers discussion

BES introduced the topic by noting any input or questions PUB has are welcome. They provide an opportunity to fine tune the program offers.

Many of BES program offers are not as siloed as might appear. For example, the Communications program offer touches on many other program offers.

Capital program management and controls program offer

This is the largest program offer. It has two components: the capital improvement plan and the project management office which manages the capital improvement projects. As BES transitions more projects to the project management office, there will be an increase in FTE. A lot of this won't be new FTE, but rather shifting people within the bureau who already do the work. The increase in 2 FTE this year is not new people, rather it is converting temporarily assigned FTE. This program offer touches on almost every strategic initiative. Equity components include: specific goals around service delivery, contracting, increased utilization and support of COBID firms; opportunity to expand recruitment efforts to further diversify staff; the need to be intentional about equity goals in planning, designing, and delivery of projects.

A PUB member mentioned that historically it has been difficult to see investments in green infrastructure. It would be great to see performance measures that help see if we're on target. Will the BES reorganization help?

BES staff shared that it would be great to work together on this and that the reorganization should help make things visible.

There was some discussion about how to measure if the project management office is effective if all metrics are tied to construction costs.

A PUB member also suggested that performance measures should be tied to asset management/risk analysis. BES staff shared that part of the issue is that there are multiple program offers that touch on this so which program offer does it belong in?

BES staff noted that general conversations about data gaps and the highest value performance measures are great ones to continue outside of the immediate budget work.

Communications program offer

This program offer touches every communication piece BES does and touches many program offers. The three main pieces:(a) external communications, media relations, social media, and community outreach/education; (b) public involvement typically related to capital improvement projects but also any large projects; and (c) internal communications. There is one requested FTE to focus on being more connected and collaborative in communications. Managing contracted-out translation projects are included within this program offer. Communications is identified in the strategic plan. Equity components include: What communities are we reaching? Which communities are asking us for services? BES has started tracking numbers of requests, e.g., what ADA requests are coming in, in order to gather baseline data. BES is also in the process of testing a data tracking tool. Public

involvement staff are really good at reaching communities of color, whom perhaps historically BES had not reached.

A PUB member mentioned that the measure should be something more than just how many people are reached by an educational program. Others agreed.

BES staff said agreed. The performance measure should be broken down, so we are capturing *who* it is we are providing these educational programs too, e.g., which schools. It was also noted that in terms of equity the educational programs are also an opportunity to engage early with youth.

XIII. PWB draft program offers discussion

PWB staff provided a brief introduction. The program offers are very much drafts. The program budget section still needs to be updated as does the FTE section. Anything in red is information that needs to be updated. The PUB lenses section was added for PUB and will not be in the final submitted program offer.

Input PWB would like to hear from PUB include: (a) Is the information the right amount? (b) Are the goals the right ones? (c) Feedback on performance measures.

Treatment program offer

This program offer involves all work done to treat water: the work done at headworks, Lusted Hill, and at the groundwater station. The budget includes both ongoing operating costs and capital improvement, e.g., the Bull Run filtration projects and the corrosion control project. A lot of the changing costs will be on the capital side. The hope is that in addition to rates, bond proceeds, and capital revenue (system development charges), there will also be funding through a Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan.

The goal is to be in compliance with state and federal regulations. The performance measure is the number of regulatory violations. There are a lot of smaller performance measures, e.g., required pH balance for lead copper rule (LCR) that inform the high-level performance measure of number of violations.

Equity impacts includes: Compliance with the lead copper rule. Rate implications from building the filtration plant. PWB is already having conversations about how to avoid inequitable disparate impacts, e.g., how/can rates be structured differently; how/can the financial assistance program be expanded.

There was some discussion about fluoridated water and whether it fit into the budget process and performance measures, since it has equity impacts.

PWB staff responded that fluoride is a health not a water quality issue. PWB has been repeatedly told not to put fluoride in the water, so PWB remains neutral and focused on water quality. Program offers are meant to describe what PWB does.

The PWB Deputy Director added that this is less a question about performance measures and more a question about goals. PUB has a role to play in thinking about what are the right goals for the program and for PWB. So, these are good questions for PUB to have even if they are outside the immediate budget and performance measures.

XIV. Next meeting topics

Thursday, January 16, 2020

January 16, 2020, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., 1900 SW Fourth, 1900 Building, Room #2500C

Topics Draft budget letter and continued discussion of draft FY 20-21 program offers

ACTION ITEM: PUB staff to provide last year's budget letters.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:30 p.m.