

**EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD**  
**REGULAR SESSION**  
**March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024**  
**5:30 pm**

**Commissioners Present:** Matt McRae, President; John Barofsky, Vice President; Mindy Schlossberg, John Brown, and Sonya Carlson Commissioners

**Others Present:** Frank Lawson, EWEB General Manager, Rod Price, Assistant General Manager; Jason Heuser, Public Policy and Government Affairs Program Manager; Deborah Hart, Assistant General Manager/Chief Financial Officer; Mike Masters, Water Operations Manager; Susan Fricke, Water Resource and Quality Assurance Supervisor; Megan Capper, Energy Resources Manager; Ben Ulrich, Energy Resource Analyst – Lead; Brian Booth, Chief Energy Resources Officer; Karen Kelley, Chief Operations Officer; Lisa Krentz, Generation Manager; Laura Farthing, Water Engineer; Jennifer Connors, Communications and Marketing Supervisor; Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer; Travis Knabe, Chief Information Officer; Jonathan Hart, Power Planning Supervisor

**CALL TO ORDER**

President McRae called the meeting to order at 5:31 PM.

**Agenda Check**

There were no changes to the agenda.

**Items from Board Members and General Manager [0:6:50]**

Commissioner Carlson said she had a meeting with the Airport Rotary.

Commissioner Brown said the Northeast Neighborhood Association meeting is tonight and he thanked staff who took over for him.

Vice President Barofsky attended the McKenzie Watershed Council Meeting last week. He said work continued on the Quartz Creek restoration, the bridge is built and put in, it will be similar to Finn Rock.

General Manager Lawson said he met with one of the journalism students who attended the last meeting and enjoyed his conversation with them. He stated he enjoyed having the journalism class present at the meeting.

Commissioner Brown mentioned the McKenzie River tour and asked people to think about who will join them.

General Manager Lawson said priorities are county commissioners, state representatives who have supported them, City of Springfield, City of Eugene potentially if there is room on the boats, and potential local partners.

**Public Input [0:13:00]**

The following testimony was provided to the EWEB Commissioners: The Board neither

endorses nor opposes or is responsible for the accuracy of the content of testimony, including any links or references provided.

**Sabrina Seigel of Eugene, OR**, warned EWEB to not implement smart meters as the US had no safety measures in place for it. She reiterated that electronic waves proved a danger to the public and the radiation could cause issues in long term exposure.

**Sabrina Siegel of Eugene, OR, spoke on behalf of Eva of Eugene, Or**, who could not attend the meeting. Eva's letter stated she was sensitive to electromagnetic fields and that this was medically documented. She said she had to live away from anything that emitted these fields and felt that people did not recognize the health risks caused by smart meters to children.

**Kathy Ging of Eugene OR**, said smart meters were dangerous and was concerned about the potential lawsuits that may be brought against EWEB regarding the meters. She stated rate payers received threatening letters regarding smart meters that said their utilities would be shut off. She referenced a 140 page report from medical professionals that stated the health issues from the meters were too high.

**Alan Gormezano of Eugene OR, Ward 1**, said he received an ultimatum regarding the smart meters and that his electricity would be turned off. He believed that EWEB is doing nothing to help people who do not want the smart meters. He stated he had been a longtime customer and was upset about the added fees. He said he was concerned about the direction of the company and thought EWEB needed to do better.

**Cindy Allen of Eugene, OR, Ward 2**, named states and other cities that had large utility programs that successfully had opt-out for smart meters. She mentioned studies, documentaries, and people who had documented health issues from RF radiation. She added commentary about the risk of cyber security and the centralization of the network. She said she didn't have confidence that EWEB would honor the 2013 decision that gave customer-owners a choice.

**President McRae** thanked the public commentors and reiterated his desire to meet with the community regarding their concerns. He said they have had a lot of discussion regarding smart meters and added there was a non-transmit for smart meters they can implement.

**Commissioner Carlson** said the opt-out policy had not changed and the reason people received new notices was due to EWEB having the meters in stock to be distributed.

## **BOARD ACTION AND GENERAL BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **Approval of Consent Calendar – A, Minutes and Routine Contracts [0:31:15]**

#### **MINUTES**

1. a) February 6, 2024 Executive Session
- b) February 6, 2024 Regular Session

## **CONTRACTS**

2. **Historical Research Associates, Inc** - for Cultural Resource Studies and Technical Support for Carmen-Smith Hydroelectric Project. \$400,000 (over 5 years.)
3. **RiverBend Construction, Inc** - for the construction of Phase 1 of the ROC Expansion/Bertelsen Annex Project. \$2,836,000.

Commissioner Brown pulled item number 2, Historical Research Associates, Inc.

### **MOTION: Commissioner Carlson moved to approve consent calendar A minus Contract 2.**

The motion passed unanimously 5:0.

### **Item removed from Consent Calendar**

Commissioner Brown wanted to know what changed in the contract for Historical Research Associates, Inc. and why they needed another \$400,000 for a smaller geographic area.

Chief Operations Officer Kelley and Generation Manager Krentz responded to questions from Commissioner Brown, primary remarks included the following.

Ms. Krentz explained the scope of the project had changed drastically since they signed the initial contract in 2018. Additional areas needed to be surveyed and they needed archeologists on site should something be found during excavation and construction.

Commissioner Brown wanted to know when the target would stop moving, as they had spent close to 1 million dollars on this project.

Ms. Krentz replied that the changes to the project were related to dam safety and site issues that couldn't have been foreseen. The scope on the new transmission line also changed, so the original agreement could not apply. She said she recognized the concern over cost, but site conditions needed to be investigated as they arose.

Commissioner Brown said the company appeared to be from Montana and wondered about the logistics. He asked if a cheaper option existed.

Chief Operations Officer Kelley said they used the same firm for another location, and they had local employees.

### **MOTION: Commissioner Brown moved to approve contract 2.**

The motion passed unanimously 5:0.

### **Approval of Consent Calendar – B, Nonroutine Contracts and Other Consent Items**

## **CONTRACTS**

4. Scelzi Enterprises, Inc - For as-needed purchases for specialized/custom truck service bodies. \$800,000

**MOTION: Commissioner Brown moved to approve the contract.**

The motion passed unanimously 5:0.

**Correspondence [0:41:38]**

Mr. Lawson, Mr. Price, and Mr. Heuser talked about the different pieces of correspondence; EWEB/City of Eugene Joint Initiatives Agenda, the EWEB participation in Equity Community Consortium, and the State Legislative Update.

Commissioner Brown asked Mr. Heuser if things would change with their ability to serve new areas, and about the jurisdictional issues with other utilities such as Lane Electric.

Mr. Heuser said he didn't have an answer in front of him, but that the electric sector was trying to parse through the housing package to identify implications to utilities.

Mr. Brown wanted to know more about how expanding the urban growth boundary impacted EWEB.

Commissioner Carlson asked about Recreational Immunity.

Mr. Heuser said the deal that was struck restored recreational immunity with a sunset date to ensure public entities/private owners can allow the public to use their property for recreation without losing their recreational immunity. In 2025 there would be new legislature regarding recreational use to protect owners and communities.

**E. 40<sup>th</sup> Commissioning Update [0:47:37]**

General Manager Lawson said they have water in their new storage tanks at E. 40<sup>th</sup> and he thanked staff members. He had three awards to give out. He said the project required incredible amounts of communication and outreach and transparency and thanked Marketing and Communications Supervisor Jennifer Connors and presented her an Extraordinary Effort award.

General Manager Lawson presented the General Manager's Integrity in Achievement Award to Water Engineer Laura Farthing for her effort to ensure clean drinking water for the community. He stated the project was unlike any other that EWEB had completed before. He said Farthing assumed ownership of the project and understood how important safe drinking water for the community was.

**State of the Watershed Annual Report [0:55:50]**

Karen Kelly, Chief Operations Officer; Mike Masters, Water Operations Manager, and Susan Fricke, Water Resources & Quality Assurance Supervisor provided the State of the Watershed Report via PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from the Board.

Chief Operations Officer Kelley spoke about the water source protection efforts and the investment into the watershed.

Mike Masters, Water Operations Manager and Susan Fricke Water Resources & Quality Assurance Supervisor shared highlights of the Watershed report and answered questions from the Board. Foremost topics included water source protection goals, partnerships, benefits to water treatment, the health of the watershed, and actions being taken to protect the community's drinking water source.

Commissioner Brown thanked them for the report, and he said their biggest concern was the last two miles of the river above EWEB's intake. He believed SUB needed to take stewardship of the watershed since they also benefit.

Ms. Fricke said they work with SUB and others in the Urban Waters Program; they have been involved and work well together. She added that partners would have the opportunity to invest.

Vice President Barofsky said other communities have weighed in on the water quality issues related to the drawdown of dams. He asked if EWEB should weigh in regarding sediment. He stated he knew the drawdown was court ordered but he had concerns.

General Manager Lawson replied they had weighed in on the Willamette regarding power generation but not on water quality impacts from the drawdowns. He noted this could be done most effectively through the court process with an amicus brief and support from other partners.

President McRae thanked Supervisor Fricke for the work on the wildfire recovery efforts. He said recovery didn't just end and there was a lot of potential to continue to invest in the long-term restoration of the Willamette and McKenzie Rivers. He said he would be supportive of extending the funding for restoration.

General Manager Lawson said that this fee was created to pivot to source recovery, if commissioners want to look at how to expand the budget to invest in continued restoration, there are options. He said they are two years away from the end of the current funding source.

Commissioner Brown asked if there were restoration funds available from property taxes.

Vice President Barofsky said there were.

Supervisor Fricke elaborated on the new partnerships that helped with funding.

President McRae said he appreciated the pivot to recovery and felt it might be good to find a new way to fund it.

Mr. Lawson said he would get with staff regarding the timing on the research for this idea.

### **State of the Utility Address & Prior Year-end Operational & Strategic Goals Report [1:52:36]**

Frank Lawson, General Manager; Rod Price, Assistant General Manager, and Deborah Hart, Assistant General Manager/CFO provided the Year-end Operational & Strategic Report via PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from the Board.

Mr. Lawson said he was proud of EWEB for how it operates according to its morals. He thanked the commissioners for their guidance and oversight. He noted the Utility was strong as it made prudent investments on behalf of the community and customers. He highlighted accomplishments of 2023 including 57 continuous improvement projects, progress on EWEB Enterprise Solutions, organizational goals, and advancing resiliency of the environment and as a utility. He highlighted the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and thanked the communications department and commented on how their outreach reached new levels. He thanked all the employees of EWEB for their contributions and commitment to serving their community.

Assistant General Manager Price presented information regarding the operational results, values and mission of EWEB. He highlighted organizational goals, including physical and mental safety in EWEB offices and in the field, and their 2023 successes. He mentioned work on cyber security, reliability of EWEB services, and noted how they met their goals with water, electricity, customer service, and fleet service.

Assistant General Manager/CFO Hart spoke on the preliminary financial results. She mentioned noteworthy events within the community, the culture within EWEB, and highlighted customer assistance from grants and loans.

General Manager Lawson spoke about the status of the organization's 2023 goals and how they are created to build a foundation for further endeavors. He thanks the board for the DEI policy enacted by the board. He acknowledged the important role of the Board in providing guidance and direction for the policies and procedures of EWEB and thanked them for their service in 2023. He believed 2023 was a successful year for EWEB.

Vice President Barofsky asked if there was anything else needed from the board to help them reach for or maintain the goals in the presentation.

Mr. Lawson said he looked at where they did and didn't make progress and that was simply the tradeoff for focusing on one project over another. He noted if there was a conflict between trade-offs on values, they may come to the board for guidance on how to balance those goals after research and finding ideas to solve the issues.

### **2025 Integrated Resource Plan & Energy Resource Study Kickoff, Scope & Analytical Plan [2:46:26]**

Brian Booth, Chief Energy Resources Officer; Megan Capper, Energy Resources Manager; Ben Ulrich, Energy Resource Analyst shared updates via PowerPoint presentation and answered questions from the Board.

Chief Energy Resources Officer Brian Booth introduced the 2025 study and action plan. He said the Energy Resource Study (ERS) would be kicked off and completed in early 2025 and the action plan will produce the standard Integrated Resource Plan.

Energy Resources Manager Capper gave context on the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Product Decisions study. She introduced concepts behind the BPA decisions and how it worked

within their post 2028 energy plan. She said she hoped they would have a decision by December of 2025.

Energy Resource Analyst Ulrich touched on the 2023 deep dive into supply and demand for resources. He talked about modeling improvements and detailed their analysis of the BPA product choice. He introduced the idea of the Community Table that involves a focus group representing diverse interests and showed the timeline and process of approval for the BPA decision.

Commissioners Carlson, Brown and Schlossberg asked questions that clarified the relationship between BPA and EWEB.

President McRae thought the focus group was a good idea, but he believed they should pay people to participate. He mentioned it would be valuable to understand how much generation or resources EWEB had control over compared to essential function.

Mr. Lawson said in general EWEB's top load under emergency conditions at the essential level was around 20 megawatts. He noted the state allowed utility companies to procure resources for emergency purposes.

The EWEB Staff said they sensed board support on the direction of the 2025 Energy Resource Study, analytical plan and stakeholder engagement plan so they would move forward.

#### **City of Eugene Liaison Update [3:27:37]**

Vice President Barofsky said the recent meeting with the City of Eugene was successful. They talked about EWEB's storm response. He said the City elected leaders wanted to have more communication from EWEB on projects like College Hill so they can share with their constituents. He mentioned the City was interested in electrification, and the Mayor had interest in the Climate Guidebook.

Mr. Lawson said he asked for support from the City for changes to the Public Facility Services Plan related to the alternative drinking water facility and they were receptive. He said the City volunteered to look at their franchise agreements and the possibility of adding requirements for improved vegetation management for telecom companies.

Commissioner Brown suggested EWEB staff attend some of the City's round table meetings around building electrification. He also expressed concern about the capacity of EWEB to meet Council's goals.

Vice President Barofsky said the City was looking for ways to reach their environmental goals and staff was wondering how electrification in the building community could play a part in City goals.

Mr. Lawson said they would investigate.

President McRae asked Mr. Lawson to keep them in the loop and they could put that on the next quarterly agenda.

President McRae said they should invite City Councilors to learn about the College Hill project.

**Future Board Agendas [3:40:46]**

President McRae noted there were no changes to future agendas.

**Board Wrap Up [3:40:51]**

**Adjourn**

President McRae Adjourned the Regular Session at 9:05.

*Recorded by Lydia Harvey, LCOG*

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Assistant Secretary

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President