

Portland Utility Board

Thursday October 19, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

Virtual meeting using Zoom platform

Meeting #161

Attendees:

*PUB Members:*Alexis Rife

Bob Sallinger

Christopher Richard

Heather Day-Melgar

Karen Williams

Lorraine Wilson (arrived approximately 11:14am)

Robin Castro, Chair

Joanne Johnson, Ex-Officio

Joe Spada, Ex-Officio (arrived approximately 11:40am)

Absent: Julia DeGraw*

*Notice of absence provided prior to meeting

Staff: Amy Archer-Masters, Portland Utility Board Analyst, City Budget Office
Brandon Zero, Portland Water Bureau

Public: Carol Cushman, League of Women Voters
Kate Gasner
One unidentified attendee

Items Discussed, Action Items, Decisions

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

The [video](#) of the meeting as well as supporting documents can be found here:

<https://www.portland.gov/pub/events/2023/10/19/portland-utility-board-meeting>

In the below notes the **blue timestamp** indicates the approximate place in the video where a particular topic begins as well as providing a link to that portion of the video. For example, **3:45** indicates that this topic begins at approximately 3 minutes and 45 seconds into the video. Closed captioning is available by clicking on the CC symbol in the lower right side of the video tool bar.

The Board discussed the PUB Budget and Policy Values and The Board discussed the PUB Budget and Policy Values and two members volunteered to draft a document for Board

consideration. The Board also discussed a plan for Recruitment and established a subcommittee to proceed.

I. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 11:04am.

II. Disclosure of communications [~3:35](#)

There were no disclosures from the Board.

III. Public Comment [~4:00](#)

There was no public comment.

IV. Review of Minutes [~4:29](#)

The August 17, 2023, September 5, 2023, September 21, 2023, September 27, 2023 and October 3, 2023 minutes were accepted as submitted.

V. Brief Items and Announcements [~6:09](#)

PUB Staff/Amy shared that the Council Hearings for the BES Rate Study and the City Organizational Chart Update have been rescheduled for November 1st. PUB staff drafted a brief support letter capturing what was discussed at the prior meeting and documenting prior conversations with the Board and circulated for Board review. Since the hearing was delayed, additional edits could be incorporated. Submit feedback to PUB staff and they will finalize the letter by the following week (October 26th). With the delay in the hearing, it also provides a new opportunity for PUB to testify if a member is available or staff could testify on their behalf if desired. The Board had discussed at the prior meeting the value of providing testimony in support since opposition testimony was anticipated. Karen volunteered to testify based on tentative availability, Robin also offered to testify by reading from the letter if desired.

The Chair shared that BES has identified Roslyn Gray as their new ex-officio and welcomed them and their expertise to the board.

VI. PUB Budget and Policy Values [~11:55](#)

PUB Staff reminded that at the August 17th meeting the PUB had brainstormed initial ideas and staff then drafted a summary based on that conversation, using some components in the annual report that the Board finalized in September. The goal was to develop a document for reference by PUB and bureaus that captures some specifics about the Board's values and priorities so that as budget is developed it could be considered. Staff shared the draft on screen

for discussion. That document and the notes during the discussion are included at the end of these minutes. Some key discussion points included:

- Transparency and inclusive public engagement is important, especially during this time of government restructuring. Agreement to move this topic up to the first section since it is particularly relevant this year.
- Navigating tradeoffs and the impacts on labor.
- The top priority items being the focus in current year. Suggestion to have an introduction clarifying why it is relevant now, noting that over the year's PUB has advised on budget that we realize comments are submitted too late to be actionable. Goal this year is to get input at the beginning of the process in hopes that they can be considered and incorporated as developed.
- Clarification regarding "Sustainability of Infrastructure" (ongoing maintenance) and "Improvement of Infrastructure" (bettering/constructing new things). Agreement to change language to clarify priority of maintenance to address backlog and remove improvement from the list of values since it is implied in other values (such as regulatory).
- Engagement of PUB regarding advisory boards during the time of governmental transition.
- Assistance to low-income residents versus using language regarding renters. Agreement to remain with language originally proposed to capture unique circumstances of subset of community for multifamily residential renters since they are indirect customers.
- Suggested closing with what happens next with the bureaus such as return to PUB meeting, preliminary presentations on budget development, etc. Look forward to a meeting to work together on these issues, possible engagement of interested and available PUB members where discussion and decision making happening.

Staff suggested a step to finalize a document soon to provide the value desired of giving feedback early enough to have impact and potential for it to be the PUB's Requested Budget Letter, which is typically values based. Robin and Karen volunteered to help draft a letter to discuss at the first November meeting. A PUB member noted that they would like more discussion of the specifics of tradeoffs.

VII. Board Internal Items [~53:40](#)

Recruitment

PUB Staff shared that there are 3 vacancies with no planned additional vacancies in 2024 and typical makeup of recruitment subcommittee. They provided an overview of basic time commitment for subcommittee volunteers of approximately 9-12 hours with 3-4 meetings as well as offline work for review of materials. Typical timeline is 5 months but may be impacted by selected start date and holidays but would leave announcement open for a month ideally. There was discussion regarding decisions and timeline.

- A PUB member that served on committee previously confirmed the time commitment noted but that it was fun. It was suggested that if opens soon, there may be value in fewer but longer meetings to avoid holiday conflicts.
- PUB staff noted that there have been several members of public that have reached out inquiring about membership so there is some interest already. They also noted that Board member outreach is very valuable in the process. Staff noted some questions for either the board or subcommittee including virtual/in-person interviews, outreach and key skills and experience desired.
- A PUB member noted that identifying gaps in skills and experience for the current focus and priorities is valuable, to seek knowledge areas that are not as represented currently.
- Some of the timing challenges were discussed including holiday, budget, member schedules, etc. A member of the public shared concern getting qualified applicants with so much involvement in the government transition committees through end of year. They suggested posting towards the end of December. Staff also noted that in past sometimes they have extended the recruitment if applications were low.

Robin volunteered to review the application and make suggestions since she has participated in past, but not as full subcommittee member. Heather, Alexis, Karen and Robin volunteered for the recruitment subcommittee. One volunteer noted that Mondays and evenings work best given work constraints, another noted they will be gone for a lot of December so that may impact how or when they could participate. A PUB member noted there is no perfect time and suggested that the subcommittee start soon and make the decision about when to open recruitment and publicize. The subcommittee could work on a plan in November and then open either in December or January.

VIII. Announcements and Next Meeting [~1:17:12](#)

Tryon Creek tour is scheduled for next Wednesday October 25th, 10:30-12:30pm. Meetup is at Foothills Park and then will be shuttled to facility. Those interested in carpool can coordinate with PUB Staff.

Staff noted that event pages are not working currently due to some website issues so refer to email for meeting details until it is back up. Volunteers are still needed for December 2023 and February-June 2024 Administrative Review Committees. Staff also shared that the City's yard tree giveaway with public events on October 28th and November 4th, information at www.portland.gov/free-yard-trees.

Next regularly scheduled meeting is Tuesday, November 7, 2023 at 3:30pm.

Potential future topics – budget and policy values, recruitment, ecoroof requirements and other priorities to be determined.

The meeting adjourned at approximately ~12:26 p.m.