



APPROVED 8/14/24

MINUTES
City of Tacoma
Public Utility Board Study Session
July 24, 2024
3:00 p.m.

Chair O'Loughlin called the Public Utility Board study session to order at 3:00 p.m. in the third-floor conference room (LT1) of the Public Utilities Administration Building.

Present: John O'Loughlin, Carlos Watson, Anita Gallagher, William Bridges (arrived 3:05), Elly Claus-McGahan

Tacoma Power: Cowlitz River Fisheries Update

Matt Bleich, Natural Resources Manager, began by providing a map of the Cowlitz River and overview of the Cowlitz License fisheries obligations. The emphasis of the agreement is ecosystem integrity and the restoration and recovery of wild, indigenous salmonid runs, including ESA-listed and unlisted stocks to harvestable levels. The fisheries roles and responsibilities, including where the overlaps exist, of Tacoma Power; Federal [NOAA and USFWS]; and co-managers [WDFW, Tribes] were detailed. Measurement of downstream and upstream passage for Cowlitz Falls and Mayfield was detailed. Cowlitz fish production, habitat, adult abundance, harvest and predation management were discussed. Next on staff's work horizon is the implementation of the fisheries and hatchery management plan; construction of life cycle models with the identification of limiting factors; science and research to inform management decisions; and relicensing.

Tacoma Water: Water Grant/Loan Program Update

Tyler Cummings, Sustainability Analyst, provided background on this service line and grant loan program. AML mass deployment commenced in 2021 and the risk of old and potentially degraded service lines breaking due to the disruption caused by the meter replacement was the basis. Long service lines are expensive and an unexpected cost for customers. The solution implemented is a water service line grant and loan program which provides financial assistance for replacing an aged or leaking water service line. It is a zero-interest loan and grant for income-qualified customers. Program requirements, equity-informed program design, and conservation support were detailed. To date 54 total repairs have been funded. Funding for the continuation of this program will be requested in the next biennium budget.

Tacoma Water: GIS Contracts

Aldo Avina, Business Services Manager, explained that GIS is the Geographic Information System that is used for management of spatial assets by providing a visual representation of systems. Water uses GIS to map services and for data capture and correction. The current system is at end-of-life and is being retired in March 2026, so a replacement platform is needed. Mr. Avina provided an overview of Water's migration effort and project approach. Staff will bring a formal request for a contract at a future meeting for Board consideration.

Guiding Principle Nine (GP9, Economic Development) Update

Michael Catsi, Business and Economic Development Manager, reviewed the purpose of GP9 and a definition of economic development: Economic development is the intentional practice of improving a community's economic well being and quality of life. It includes a broad range of activities to attract, create, and retain jobs and to foster a resilient, pro-growth tax base and an inclusive economy. The practice of economic development comprises of a collaborative effort involving industry, government, and community stakeholders. Site selection criteria for businesses was then discussed. Accomplishments for 2023, the focus of 2024, and status of GP9 measurements for each of the operating divisions were summarized.

General Board Comments/Discussion and Director's Reports

Director Flowers provided an update on the power outage at the University of Washington Tacoma (UWT). All surrounding businesses are now open. UWT contractors picked up equipment from Tacoma Power today. The Director made positive remarks about the work of staff to work with UWT to help them during this time. UWT is working on their master plan and redundant feeds so that they can build resiliency into their substation.

Board Member Claus-McGahan made remarks about the interesting content at the Northwest Public Power Association Women in Public Power conference being held in Tacoma.

Adjournment

The study session was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Approved:



John O'Loughlin
Chair



Elly Claus-McGahan
Secretary