



Board of Directors April 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Under the umbrella of a worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, the PNUCC Board of Directors met on April 3, 2020 via conference call. 23 Board members and PNUCC staff joined the call. The list of attendees is attached.

*The next PNUCC Board meeting will be a Virtual Webinar on **May 8th**.*

Corporate Business

Chair **Scott Bolton**, PacifiCorp, opened by welcoming everyone adding, “the last time the Board was together on March 6th seemed so very long ago.” He asked the Board to review and acknowledge the PNUCC Antitrust Compliance Statement. **Shauna McReynolds**, Executive Director, led role call.

Bolton entertained a motion to approve the March 6, 2020 meeting minutes. They were unanimously approved. He reminded the Board that he wanted to respect their time and ensure PNUCC meetings are high quality and meaningful. With that said, he encouraged the Board and members to reach out to the PNUCC staff with top of mind issues and ideas that work well in a Virtual Meeting format.

A Fast-Paced Focus on “Emerging Issues”

MAINTAINING CRITICAL BUSINESS CONTINUITY WITH ATTENTION ON COVID-19 DIRECTIVES

With an abbreviated meeting, Bolton moved right to sharing real-time learnings and observations of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic given the social distancing guidelines and business closures throughout the Northwest. He offered a few possible areas of interest to feed the discussion – workforce availability, continuity of work, prioritization of work, and operational work flow. He asked, “Are most utilities operating under a business-as-usual constrained work flow or have you retrenched to more of an emergency outage work flow?”

Sarah Edmonds, Portland General Electric, shared PGE’s line crews continue to do traditional work that can be accomplished practicing social distancing and following personal protective equipment guidelines. Adding, they are highly constrained but functioning.

Through the lens of Northwest utilities in the epicenter of western Washington, **Debra Smith**, Seattle City Light, and **Paul Wetherbee**, Puget Sound Energy, shared how their utilities rapidly moved from

implementation of remote work policies, to fine-tuning procedures for essential employees, continuity of operations and prioritization of work – all while ensuring the health and safety of employees and customers.

Smith said City Light had their first suspected case in the workforce and people who had close contact were identified and notified – while maintaining HIPPA confidentiality. She said there was a lot of secondary exposure and self-isolation as a result and understandably people are nervous and worried. Wetherbee added, utilities are doubling down to make sure the same hygiene and preventative procedures implemented in March remain top-of-mind into April, or as long as this continues.

Discussion continued on how utilities are tracking/handling secondary exposures and what impact self-isolation is having on workers and their family. Concerns over lack of testing capability was raised and is frustrating efforts to mitigate exposure. Wetherbee said while testing is critical, their policy is geared to employee self-reporting and removing themselves from the workforce to self-quarantine. They are following additional recommendations, including notification of contact exposure, use of secondary sites and deep cleaning of workspaces. Challenges continue as utilities grapple with protecting their workforce given the importance of limiting spread and indications that people can carry COVID-19 without showing symptoms.

Leadership continues to monitor safety and security guidance from state and federal authorities, with utilities working feverishly to understand and implement recommendations from the CDC or state authorities as it comes in. And most said they are actively engaged and constantly reviewing/refining plans – in some cases one shift/one day at a time – to ensure health and safety remains paramount while continuing to provide critical services and maintaining the needed level of operations.

Suzanne Cooper, Bonneville Power Administration, gave a shout out to the team at Bonneville. She said they successfully had 3,700 working remotely with stable connectivity. Real time functions are being tested off-shift remotely to ensure Bonneville can maintain mission essential functions should the current environment shift again.

Avista's **Jason Thackston** said while they are not in the epicenter, Avista is working at their highest level under a pandemic – only emergency work is being done and all other work is being evaluated under a business matrix to establish priority after considering the level of exposure to customers and workers. For example, he said their meter swap out project would continue for now because it involves a single person changing a meter on the outside of a building where social distancing can be maintained. And some projects that require multiple people working together will move forward if appropriate social distancing space can be maintained and there is a high business impact. He added, a matrix process can be frustrating when everyone has their own lens on what is important.

A lot of questions were raised. The ideas and thoughts that were shared are summarized here:

- **Critical 24/7 operations**
 - Controlled access limited to essential personnel
 - Activation of second operations center
 - Temperature screening for building entry
 - Maintaining strict hygiene coming and going
 - Physical separation for social distancing
 - Assignment of rest rooms
 - Materials in place for “sheltering”
 - Food assistance/delivery
- **Staggered start times** to allow greater social distancing at the beginning of the shifts
- **Rotation** of essential staffing and crews with 1/3 working at a time to maintain adequate workforce
- **Sequestration planning** underway, although no one has pulled the trigger yet, efforts to avoid material impact to workforce are high priority
 - What is the “trigger” for base camp sequestration – working on that
 - On-site/campus set-up of mobile trailer units – some are already under contract, companies are beginning to ask for decisions as they are in high demand
 - Food delivery – at home and other options considered
 - Hotel options have been explored
- **Workforce accommodations**
 - Allowing those in **high risk categories**, or those with high risk family at home, to take themselves out of the workforce
 - Offering paid status for **self-quarantining** at home to maintain health of workforce
 - How deep to extend self-quarantining/**self-isolation** due to exposure was discussed
 - Offering **remote opportunities** when possible that include meaningful work and/or training when in self-isolation (not sick)
 - **Re-deploying resources** to support functions for **high impact areas** of work force
- **Limiting field response** for crews depended on location with a variety of responses
 - Priority remains safety, continued support of critical infrastructure, or essential work
 - Clear definition of work priorities is being established by management – 4 to 5 priority levels
 - Falling off some places for now includes:
 - Limited capital construction
 - Limited, if any, new connects
 - Some utilities have moved crews to a “stand-by” emergency response only status
 - Most are finding there is little tolerance for “outages” due to construction work at this time – unless related to essential infrastructure – healthcare, etc.
- **Virtual meetings** have become the new norm
- **Constant communication** with staff and customers is critical

Kevin Nordt, Grant PUD shared how they worked with employees to communicate why they were backing down from emergency actions taken immediately upon notice of an early exposure at an out-of-state conference. He said it was important to share “the risk level had been reduced” because the test results came back negative and they were able to safely change a few operational protocols.

As Bolton left to join an internal call on COVID-19, he said with all the interest in the topic the Board will continue to share learnings and have a lot more conversation. McReynolds agreed to make sure this topic is on the Agenda for the May meeting. She inquired about the recent 6.5 earthquake in Idaho. Utilities reported they had done a full inspection of their hydro and natural gas projects, finding little damage.

Executive Director’s Report

Out of respect for time, McReynolds pointed to the Executive Director’s Report – attached. She said staff remains focused on the publication of the *2020 Northwest Regional Forecast* along with a number of other projects, including the Load Forecasting webinar hosted by the System Planning Committee on April 8th at 9 AM to discuss load forecasting in light of COVID-19.

She also reminded the Board that the next System Planning Committee would be via webinar on April 17th and encouraged members to make sure new employees are included in the distribution of System Planning Committee notes. With that, the meeting was adjourned.

April 3, 2020

PNUCC BOARD MEETING

Scott Bolton	PacifiCorp
Frank Lawson	Eugene Water & Electric Board
Jason Thackston	Avista Corp
Kelcey Brown	PacifiCorp
Scott Coe	Emerald PUD
Greg Cullen	Energy Northwest
Sarah Edmonds	Portland General Electric
Mike Goodenough	PowerEx
Roger Gray	PNGC Power
Mark Johnson	Flathead Electric Coop
Scott Kinney	Avista Corp
Kevin Nordt	Grant PUD
Bear Prairie	Idaho Falls Power

Adam Richins	Idaho Power
Nidhi Thakar	Portland General Electric
Debra Smith	Seattle City Light
Todd Simmons	Tillamook PUD
Paul Wetherbee	Puget Sound Energy
Lena Wittler	Clark Public Utilities
Frank Afranji	Northwest Power Pool
Suzanne Cooper	Bonneville Power Administration
Stefan Brown	Portland General Electric, SPC V. Chair
James Gall	Avista, SPC Chair
Shauna McReynolds	PNUCC
Tomas Morrissey	PNUCC
Valarie Koss	PNUCC



Executive Director Report

April 3, 2020

BUSINESS

It is with sincere gratitude that we extend our appreciation to our members for all you are doing to make sure the power continues to flow while ensuring public safety during this health emergency. The PNUCC team is committed to doing our part as well, and will continue to host all of our meetings via webinar until it is safe to travel. We are staying focused as we work remotely for the time being. Please reach out to us via e-mail or cell with any questions.

Next Board of Directors Meeting – May 8 (location/format to be determined)

SYSTEM PLANNING

System Planning Committee March 20th Webinar Highlights

With more than 30 participants logged on, the group shared updates of their companies' actions to address the COVID-19 emergency. Emergency preparedness plans were implemented and continued to evolve as conditions changed. For example, most utilities had implemented their remote work plans for non-essential staff. Others shared observations of changing load patterns with people staying home and businesses being closed. Brad Bouillon, CAISO, noted that they've observed about a 10% reduction in load as of March 20, including a flattening of peak demand. He said that ISOs in the east are reporting similar impacts. We will continue this conversation at the next meeting.

The Committee reviewed the final highlights of the *2020 PNUCC Northwest Regional Forecast*, the Northwest sum-of-utilities loads and resources 10-year projections. They echoed what we heard from the Board earlier – the emphasis should be the growing need for power as coal units retire and loads grow. And they appreciated having context around planned resources regarding their contribution to meeting peak loads. PNUCC staff is finalizing the report, following a final review by a few Committee members. The report will be available on the PNUCC website in early April.

A few developing projects are highlighted below:

- There is interest in having a discussion on integrated resource planning departments and the approach utilities take to organize their teams to support their planning functions. A short survey will be circulated in April and the information will inform a conversation at a future meeting. The goal is to learn from each other and discuss strategies used to navigate changes in workflow to better align organizational structures and gain insights from utilities who have recently changed their internal structure.

- Recent discussion on market price signals resulted in a suggestion to examine the difference between day-ahead and real-time power market prices to see if those differences tend to be largest on Mondays given the weekend gap.
- Another small group is being pulled together to explore what can be gleaned from examining correlations in load/temperature data from around the region. The goal is to gain insight on how correlated loads and temperatures are across different utilities in the Northwest.
- Utility staff are also looking at changes to load as the economic impacts from CV-19 take hold. PNUCC will host a conference call on this topic on April 8 to provide forecasters an opportunity to discuss strategies with their peers regarding the latest data and approaches they are taking to update forecasts. Have your load forecasters reach out if interested.

Load Forecasting Webinar – April 8 (webinar)

Next System Planning Committee Meeting – April 17 (webinar)

COLUMBIA RIVER TREATY

The ninth round of negotiations between the United States and Canada to modernize the Treaty concluded in Washington DC on March 12. There is little to report from this session at this time with the US and Canada turning their attention to the CV-19 immediate issues.

The CRT Power Group (PG) met via conference call on March 26. They continue to explore the value of updating modeling of alternative hydropower management outcomes from possible CRT negotiations. This modeling will simulate the Northwest and broader western markets under alternative policy and technology futures. This effort will inform the value of the federal and non-federal hydro projects under a range of alternative futures. A proposal from E3 is being considered for this updated work and all CRT PG funders have been asked to fund this effort through a special supplement assessment.

2021 POWER PLAN

Council staff continues to march toward pencils down as they wrap up a series of meetings on the modeling for the *2021 Power Plan*. The timeframe is likely pushed back a few weeks to accommodate remote meeting and work practices. Staff remain engaged in a number of NWPCC Committees and will keep members apprised of developments as specific elements of the *Power Plan* unfold.

NORTHWEST POWER POOL – RESOURCE ADEQUACY AND RELIABILITY

PNUCC continues to work closely with Frank Afranji to stay plugged in to this work effort. We are formally engaging through the RA Stakeholder Advisory Committee and Modeling groups.