

FINAL Minutes
Seattle Water Supply System Operating Board
February 3, 2022
1:00 PM to 3:00 PM

WEBEX VIDEO CONFERENCE MEETING

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>Utility Representatives</u>	<u>SPU Attendees</u>	<u>Other Attendees</u>
Ron Speer, Alt.	Mike Amburgey	Michael Brennan	Charlotte Haines
Diane Pottinger, Chair	Dave Barnes	Chad Buechler	Patty Hale
Shane Young	Boyd Benson	Regina Carpenter	Roxanne Heller
Alex Chen, V. Chair	Tony DePiano	Julie Crittenden	Pam Maloney
Paula Laschober	Pete Eberle	Kathy Curry	Darcey Peterson
Ron Little, 7 th Member	Steve Leniszewski	Maryam Mason	Ron Ricker
	Michael Martin	Jonelle Mogi	Robert Russell
	Al Nelson	Martha Neuman	Ron Straka
	Suzi O'Byrne	Maura Patterson	Max Woody
	Terry Olson	Debra Reed	
	Patrick Sorenson	Taryn Sass	

1. Welcome, Introductions & Announcements:

Kathy Curry, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Wholesale Water Contracts Manager, confirmed Board Member attendance, noting that there was a Quorum present at the outset of the meeting, with 4 Board Members present including Small Utility Category Board Member, Shane Young; Medium Utility Category Board Member and Outgoing Chair, Diane Pottinger; SPU Board Member, Alex Chen; and Independent Board Member, Ron Little.

Kathy asked for input on the upcoming 2022 Board Chair and Vice Chair nomination and vote from Large Category Utility Representatives attending the meeting in the absence of the Large Category Board Member or Alternate. Some of the Large Category Utility Representatives shared their thoughts. Kathy then asked for nominations for the 2022 Board Chair and Vice Chair.

Outgoing Operating Board (OB) Chair and Medium Utility Category Board Member, Diane Pottinger, nominated Alex Chen as the 2022 Chair, and Matt Everett as the 2022 Vice Chair. Shane Young, Small Utility Category Board Member seconded the nominations. **Board members present approved these nominations in a 3-0 vote.**

Outgoing Chair, Diane Pottinger, requested that the incoming Chair, Alex Chen, run the remainder of the meeting. Alex agreed to do so and then Alex and Kathy thanked Diane for her involvement as Operating Board Chair over the past year.

As Alex began to lead the meeting, two additional Board Members, including SPU Board Member, Paula Laschober, and the Large Utility Category Board Member Alternate, Ron Speer, joined the meeting.

Alex Chen then introduced Julie Crittenden as the new Out of Class Director of SPU's Planning and Program Management Division. Alex relayed that Julie Crittenden will also serve as an Alternate Board Member for Seattle in the coming year.

2. Agenda/Minutes

- a) The **December 2, 2021**, minutes were **approved 5-0**.
- b) The **February 3, 2022**, agenda was **approved 5-0**.

3. New Business

a) **SPU Customer Assistance Programs**

Maryam Mason, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) Utilities Discount Program Manager, provided an overview of SPU's customer assistance programs and shared information about SPU's approach to supporting customers in preparation for the eventual end of the moratorium on utility shut offs. Maryam relayed that SPU is currently holding off on returning to shut offs, which is allowing time to continue build support and operational infrastructure to better assist customers when shut offs do return.

Maryam described customer support and affordability options including information about SPU funded, Seattle funded, and federally funded programs comprised of existing, new or modified program options in response to COVID.

Some meeting participants shared information about what their organizations are doing, and a discussion ensued about the impact of door hangers and early notice with many noting that increased outreach leads to an increase in customer response. Meeting participants also relayed their experience with outreach to customers being time consuming and requiring more staff. SPU staff shared they have observed increased customer requests for financial support and pay plan options following increased outreach efforts. Others said they had reduced arrearages by about half following the issuance of shutoff notices, saying they have found that many customers seem to wait until they have been provided a shutoff notice before they will engage in making payments on past due bills.

b) **Dam Safety Program**

Taryn Sass, Dam Safety Program Supervisor, and Chad Buechler, Emergency Management Program Manager, jointly provided a presentation on SPU's Dam Safety Program and how it integrates with the region's emergency management programs and organizational structures.

The presentation described how SPU Dam Safety manages and maintains 14 dams, most of which are used for water storage and distribution in accordance with best practices and regulatory requirements. Taryn relayed that 9 of the dams are defined as high-hazard dams and then provided information about the South Fork Tolt Dam, Cedar Falls Masonry Dam, Cedar Falls Roller-Compacted Concrete (RCC) Dam, Cedar Moraine, and Lake Youngs Cascades Dam, Outlet Dam and Inlet Dam. An overview of Dam Safety requirements, inspection, operations, maintenance, monitoring, and planning efforts was also shared.

A discussion ensued around the potential for improvements to the South Fork Tolt Dam following Part 12D inspections, as well as about historical issues with SPU's South Fork Tolt dam infrastructure and how SPU manages those issues. A link to the South Fork Tolt dam public website was posted to the meeting chat.

c) **2022 Washington State Water Sector Tabletop Exercise**

Chad Buechler, SPU's Emergency Management Program Manager, shared information from coordination with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on planning a 2022 water sector tabletop exercise and asked for input on how to best align the exercise with Operating Board Member needs.

A discussion followed around the types of tabletop exercises that may occur, including seismic, risk-related and coordination-type exercises. Some suggestions from the Operating Board included: a Tolt pipeline failure, an intertie failure, and reservoir failure on the South side.

4. Executive Summaries & Other Business

- **Water Consumption from Watersheds vs. Rate Studies** – Alex Chen went over Att. 4a noting that, while early in the water year, things are looking good thus far.
- **Water Supply Update** – Alex Chen went over Att. 4b, noting good snow build.
- **Other Updates** – Kathy reminded the group that Annual Survey forms are due Friday, February 25, and the 2022 emergency contact lists are currently being updated.

Alex Chen also shared a news story on the North Fork Tolt watershed, relaying that Campbell Global publicly recently sold 12,000 acres of the watershed to the Snoqualmie Tribe. Alex described the property as adjacent to and north of the SPU-owned S. Fork Tolt Municipal Watershed. Alex went on to explain SPU's tie to the story, that SPU has a pending water right in the North Fork Tolt going back to 1936, and that the N. Fork Tolt water right is one of Seattle's future regional water supply alternatives. Alex shared reported information that the Snoqualmie Tribe intend to maintain the property as ancestral lands and continue sustainable forestry and maintaining a diversity of species. SPU welcomes a partnership with the Snoqualmie Tribe to co-manage our adjoining lands. The Operating Board requested a future update when ready.

5. Future Meetings & Workshops

Kathy Curry provided reminders for the following upcoming meetings:

- March 2, 2022 - contract negotiation workshop, 3-5pm
- March 3, 2022 - monthly Operating Board meeting
- March 31, 2022 - monthly Operating Board meeting, instead of April 7, 2022 to avoid a WASWD Spring Conference conflict
- May 5, 2022 – if safe to meet in person, will have all-day Operating Board meeting and field trip starting at the Cedar River Watershed Education Center.

6. Good of the Order

Board meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.

Approved by:



Alex Chen (Mar 4, 2022 16:00 PST)

Chair, Alex Chen
Seattle Water Supply System Operating Board

Date