

Board Learning Session Minutes—190th Meeting

July 20, 2021

Board members present: Alan Meyer, Elee Jen, Eric Hayes, Ernesto Fonseca, Henry Lorenzen, Lindsey Hardy, Mark Kendall, Melissa Cribbins, Roland Risser, Susan Brodahl, Janine Benner (Oregon Department of Energy special advisor), Letha Tawney (Oregon Public Utility Commission ex officio)

Board members absent: Alexia Kelly, Anne Root, Erik Andersson

Staff attending: Amber Cole, Amanda Thompson, Betsy Kauffman, Cheryle Easton, Dan Rubado, David Moldal, Debbie Menashe, Elaine Dado, Elizabeth Fox, Emma Clark, Fred Gordon, Greg Stokes, Hannah Cruz, Justin Buttles, Karl Whinnery, Marshall Johnson, Melanie Bissonnette, Michael Colgrove, Pati Presnail, Quinn Cherf, Shelly Carlton, Steve Lacey, Thad Roth, Tracy Scott

Others attending: Anna Kim (Oregon Public Utility Commission), Brooke Landon (CLEAResult), Jenny Sorich (CLEAResult), Misti Nelmes (CLEAResult), Susan Badger Jones (Diversity Advisory Council)

Melissa Cribbins called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

2022 Organizational Goals Discussion

Continuing the discussion that was not fully completed at the last board meeting, Executive Director Michael Colgrove provided information on the development of the four annual organization goals for 2022. Annual organizational goals are derived from the focus areas of the Strategic Plan and serve as the foundations for business planning for the coming year. Mike explained that the goals are higher level and directional. They are intended to help shape the organization's work and do not delineate every planned activity.

Mike described the process for developing the goals, noting that this is only the third year of developing organizational goals through this process and that this was the first year in which we were able to hold a board workshop. Board members expressed some concern about the sufficiency of board involvement, and staff will work closely with the board to continue to improve the process.

Mike then described the substance of four annual organizational goals for 2022. Board members asked clarifying questions about the language and content of the goals. Goals two and three, which focus on more intentional and focused community collaboration and on advancing an organization development function are significant goals. Areas discussed during the session were the focus on energy burden, community based organizations and community collaboration, and how new matters can be covered by the goals if they come up after the goals are adopted. Board members discussed how the goals do reflect many of the key messages around energy burden and community-led initiatives that have emerged out of all of the energy legislation in 2021. Board members also offered suggestions on language related to the goal around development and the fourth goal on operations and operational efficiency.

Budgeting to a Plan: The process and levers Energy Trust uses to develop the budget

Mike and the budget team presented information on the tools Energy Trust uses in any given year for budget development. Debbie Menashe described the policy underpinnings of the budget development. Pati Presnail explained the typical schedule and timeline of the budget development process. Fred Gordon, Tracy Scott and Steve Lacey described the tools used by our programs to build our budget: forecasting the resource, measure incentive levels and program design tools, and utility funding negotiations. Mike used a bridge analogy to illustrate this topic and also described how Energy Trust builds its annual budget to support what is possible and achievable in cost-effective efficiency and renewable energy. That is different than budgeting to a fixed budget. Board members asked clarifying questions, including regarding the board's role on allocating the budget among sectors and understanding what is possible and achievable. Board members also requested that staff provide the board with the specific policy questions as well as alternatives and analyses. With this type of information, board members can assist staff in policy questions and make informed decisions on the annual budget.

The Board expressed appreciation for the explanation of the budgeting process and the presentation by staff.

President Melissa Cribbins suspended the meeting at 3:50 p.m. for a brief break, and the board reconvened at approximately 4:00 p.m.

Customer Insight Study

Dan Rubado, Senior Project Manager, Planning and Evaluation, presented information on the 2020 Customer Insights Study. The survey had a large sample size to give us a better understanding of how we serve customers, customer awareness of Energy Trust, and what barriers exist to participation in Energy Trust programs. Additionally, the survey was used to validate the census-tract based approach we have been using to evaluate the equity of our program reach, the approach we have used since 2018.

Overall, the study found that approximately 37% of eligible households had been served in Energy Trust territory from 2013-2019. The study went deeper to uncover differences in participation rates among households by different dimensions: race, income, type of housing (rental or owner-occupied), fuel, geography. Asian Americans had the highest participation rates and Black and Latinx households had the lowest. Higher income households reflected higher participation rates than lower income households, and the patterns on income persists among racial groups examined. Renters in small multifamily buildings have the lowest participation rates.

Forty percent surveyed had some knowledge of Energy Trust. This rate is consistent with prior surveys. Staff will use information about how different customer types become aware of Energy Trust to improve and tailor information dissemination. For instance, utility bill inserts and direct mail appear to be the most effective ways to build awareness in lower income households.

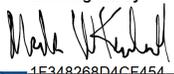
Energy Trust received useful information from the survey on how to address barriers to participation to program offerings and the interests of customers in energy issues and energy use.

Board members asked clarifying questions, particularly about the disaggregated information on customer groups in the survey results. This information provides guidance for more specific and intentional program design for different customer groups. Board members acknowledged how the Customer Insight Study provides more granular and helpful information than the previous Census tract-based study conducted on program equity. Board members expressed appreciation for the Evaluation group's follow up in reviewing the Census tract-based analysis methods and investigating the limitations of that study.

Adjourn

President Melissa Cribbins adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Energy Trust Board of Directors will be held Wednesday October 13, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. held virtually on Zoom.

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Signed: Mark Kendall, Secretary

10/4/2021 /
Date