

# Board Meeting Minutes—224th Meeting: Regional Board Meeting in Hood River and Strategic Planning Workshop

May 13, 2024

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**Board members present:** Janine Benner (ODOE Special Advisor, ex officio), Melissa Cribbins, Thelma Fleming, Eric Hayes, Ellsworth Lang, Henry Lorenzen, Jane Peters, Roland Risser, Silvia Tanner, Letha Tawney (OPUC ex-officio), Peter Therkelsen, Ellen Zuckerman

**Board members absent:** Anne Haworth Root, Bill Tovey

**Staff attending:** Caryn Appler, Kathleen Belkhat, Sarah Castor, Amber Cole, Michael Colegrove, Hannah Cruz, Elaine Dado, Chris Dunning, Sue Fletcher, Jeni Hall, Chris Lyons, Debbie Menashe, Spencer Moersfelder, Alicia Moore, Alex Polley, Elaine Prause, Danielle Rhodes, Amanda Sales, Tracy Scott, Jess Siegel, Abby Spegman, Greg Stokes,

**Others attending:** Ashnie Butler (Inner Work, Outer Play), Sarah Hall (OPUC), Kari Greer (PacificCorp), Randy Hastings (DThree), Latisha Hill (Avista), Peter Kernan, (OPUC), Lauren Kraemer (Oregon State University Extension Service), Steve Lacey, Lindsay McClure (Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, Hood River Energy Council), Lisa McGarity (Avista), Mary Moerlins (NW Natural), Laney Ralph (NW Natural), Cory Scott (PacificCorp), Benedikt Springer (OPUC), Holly Valkama (1961 Consulting), Robert Wallace (Wy'east Resource Conversation and Development), Ezell Watson (OPUC), Jake Wise (PGE)

## Opening

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President Henry Lorenzen called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and explained the structure and process of the hybrid meeting. Henry also noted that there would be opportunity for public comment later in the meeting. Henry then introduced Elaine Prause, Senior Manager of Regulatory and Funder Relations to introduce our Utility Representative Panel.

## Utility Representative Panel

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The utility representative panel consisted of Mary Moerlins, Director of Environmental Policy & Corporate Responsibility, NW Natural; Cory Scott, Vice President of Customer and Community Solutions, Pacific Power; and Latisha Hill, Vice President of Community Affairs & Chief Customer Officer, Avista. Elaine Prause, Senior Manager of Utility and Funder Relations moderated the panel. Each of the panelists introduced themselves and discussed their utilities strategic focus areas during the period of Energy Trust's strategic plan.

Mary Moerlins introduced herself and described NW Natural. NW Natural is focused on conservation and the products they develop for customers, including renewable natural gas and the role of the pipeline system for hydrogen. Using less is the first step and for this the company is looking to find deep energy efficiency with Energy Trust.

Cory Scott then introduced himself and noted that there is a wealth of topics and discussion on the connection with Energy Trust and there is a lot going on in the energy space, mentioning the great work that has happened over the years. Cory noted that Pacific Power's connection to Energy Trust is as strong as ever and he and the company look forward to the future together. Cory noted that Pacific Power territory is across hundreds of communities across the state and not contiguous. Because of this, Pacific Power is hyper focused on community connections, and Cory recognizes Energy Trust is also prioritizing this focus.

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Cory pointed to some of the programming goals for efficiency, especially in harder to reach service areas to ensure that investments are for all customers and all customers have access to program offerings, and engaging the entirety of the community is a core focus of Pacific Power.

Latisha Hill pointed to Avista's three state service areas of fully integrated electric and natural gas: Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. In Oregon, Avista works closely with Energy Trust, pointing out its solid trend toward growth in budget and services here. The impact and outcomes of Energy Trust's programs have mattered to customers, and energy efficiency is the best way to impact affordability and deliver that to customers at a bill level.

Latisha addressed Avista's work with Energy Trust in greenhouse gas reduction and congratulated Energy Trust for its ability to maintain a multi-fuel and multi-utility focus that allows utilities to learn from one another and make an impact.

Elaine Prause moderated a discussion among panelists, asking them to identify their thoughts on areas of focus for Energy Trust looking forward to 2030. Mary said that it is to maintain a focus on conservation, deliver that to customers, and stewardship of the public purpose charges to deliver on the most aggressive achievable goals.

Cory agreed that making sure customers are aware of programs is key. To do that, Energy Trust and utilities must coordinate their efforts to build that awareness and program delivery. Cory noted that there are more innovative opportunities for clean energy that are emerging across Pacific Power territory with demand response, electric vehicles, and voluntary renewables. Energy Trust and the utilities must collaborate to communicate clearly and efficiently with customers to reduce confusion.

Latisha offered two basic areas of focus: relevance and accessibility. Energy Trust has demonstrated its relevance through the outcomes it has achieved. On accessibility, Energy Trust and utilities must focus on working with equity advisory groups and building trusted partnerships to increase accessibility with communities.

Board members and panelists then engaged in a robust discussion on changes in energy efficiency, particularly considering carbon reduction goals and value not just in energy delivery, but because of impact to the environment. Additional topics included the ongoing need to reach all customers given significant carbon reduction goals, with focus on low-to-moderate income customers, the importance of addressing peak energy needs, localized energy solutions, reliability of demand management savings, resilience, changing demographics and technologies, co-benefits of energy efficiency, and coordinated distribution system planning.

The board thanked the utility panel for a very good discussion, their comments and time presenting to the board.

## **Adjourn Public Meeting and Meet in Executive Session**

Henry adjourned the public meeting and reconvened in executive session. Ashnie Butler, board DEI consultant, led a discussion about applying a DEI lens to the strategic planning work and documentation thus far.

## **Recess for Lunch**

The board recessed at 12:35 p.m.

## **Call to Order and Invitation for Public Comment**

President Henry Lorenzen called the meeting back to order at 1:34 pm. There was no public comment.

**Community Representatives Panel**

The community representative panel consisted of Robert Wallace, Executive Director, Wy'east Resource Conversation and Development, Commissioner for the Port of The Dalles, Dufur School Board Member; Lindsay McClure, Program Manager, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and Hood River Energy Council; and Lauren Kraemer, Associate Professor, Family and Community Health, Board members Oregon State University Extension Service. Caryn Appler, Senior Outreach Manager for Eastern Oregon, moderated the panel.

Each one of the panelists introduced themselves and explained their work. The panelists touched on electrification of transportation, climate change mitigation strategies (including decarbonization), community-based organizations work in delivering Energy Trust programs to rural areas, and resiliency considerations for communities, particularly to plan and prepare for wildfire and earthquake disasters.

The board thanked the panel for their time and perspectives and asked the panelists for their perspectives on Energy Trust's work in the future. Panel members suggested continued focus on communities, renewable energy support, and the nexus between energy and health and resilience.

President Henry Lorenzen thanked the panel for their time and informing the board about things happening in the communities.

**Break**

The board recessed for a break at 2:35 p.m. and reconvened at 2:45 p.m.

**Strategic Planning: Vision, Purpose, Unique Role of Value**

The board reconvened for a discussion, facilitated by Rob Fenty, about the Vision, Purpose, and Unique Role of Value Statements that are elements of the strategic plan. Purpose statement must have who we served, what do we do, and to what end. Rob asked board members to focus on the vision and purpose, and if they create an effective north star for the organization.

General Counsel Debbie Menashe expressed some concern for the use of the work "partner" in the vision statement, and then the board discussed all three aspirational statements. Based on feedback from this discussion, the ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee will finalize the precise words for presentation at the June meeting. Tomorrow, the board will use these initial aspirational statements to outline the areas of focus of work in the strategic plan.

**Closing**

Henry thanked the board for their attention and work today. Henry then mentioned the community event to follow and adjourned the meeting until tomorrow.

**Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 3:33.

**The next regular meeting of the Energy Trust of Oregon Board of Directors** will be held June 12, 2024, hybrid on Zoom and at the Energy Trust of Oregon, 421 SW Oak St., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204.

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Signed: Eric Hayes

6/17/2024 /  
Date