

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR
MEETING OF THE COMMISSION**

March 12, 2024

1. Call to Order | Pledge of Allegiance

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners of Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County was called to order at 8:18 a.m. by Commissioner Jaime Arnett. Said meeting was open to the public and notice thereof had been given as required by law. Those present included: Commissioner Atul Deshmane, Commissioner Christine Grant, Commissioner Jaime Arnett and Legal Counsel Jon Sitkin. Staff: Assistant General Manager Brian Walters; Andrew Entrikin, Broadband Program Manager; Ann Grimm, Executive Assistant; Rebecca Schlotterback, Manager of Contracts and Regulatory Compliance; Mike Macomber, IT/SCADA Technician; Aaron Peterson, IT/SCADA Technician; Paul Siegmund, Manager of Automation and Technology; Garrett Love-Smith, Project Manager; Kurt Wank, Director of Utility Operations; and Annette Smith, Director of Finance; and Stephanie Hooper, Accountant I.

Public attending:

Dave Olson
Jack Wellman, PSE

2. Approval of Agenda

No changes.

ACTION: Commissioner Grant made the motion to APPROVE THE AGENDA MARCH 12, 2024. Commissioner Deshmane second the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval of Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of Meeting Minutes of the Regular Meeting of February 27, 2024;
- b) Approval of the Claims of March 12, 2024:

VENDOR NAME	AMOUNT
ALUMICHEM CANADA INC	31,225.80
AT&T MOBILITY	1,801.51
BAY CITY SUPPLY	419.52
BELLINGHAM HERALD	322.48
CENTRAL WELDING SUPPLY	101.30
CONNER, ERIC	130.30
CORNERSTONE MANAGEMENT, INC.	445.00
CRINA HOYER CONSULTING	1,191.44
EASTERN OREGON COMMUNICATIONS, LLC	125.00
EDGE ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES	25.00
ENVIRO-TECH DIVING, INC.	3,150.98
EXPONENTIAL POWER INC	751.53
FERNDALE ACE HARDWARE	81.02
FERNDALE AUTO PARTS	13.90
FERNDALE CITY OF	268.43
GARY'S PLUMBING & HEATING LLC	1,012.09
GUARDIAN SECURITY SYSTEMS, INC	904.00
HACKER, RONALD G	473.62
HD FOWLER CO, INC	4,293.31
LOOMIS, CHRIS	500.00
MOTION AND FLOW CONTROL PRODUCTS INC	1,995.30
NELSON-REISNER	1,410.22
NORTHWEST CASCADE, INC.	128.50
NORTHWEST FIBER DBA ZIPLY FIBER	1,476.84
NP INFORMATION SYSTEMS (3-D CORP)	269.82
NW PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION	1,405.00
P&P EXCAVATING, LLC	1,867.92
PACIFIC POWER BATTERIES	99.01
PETERSON, AARON	250.23
PITNEY BOWES RESERVE ACCOUNT	500.00
PLATT ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO	150.23
PROSCAPES INC	565.76
PUGET SOUND ENERGY, INC	898.03
REGENCE BLUE SHIELD	43,005.82
S&P GLOBAL PLATTS	3,417.64
SOUND PUBLISHING	108.78
SSC - SANITARY SERVICE COMPANY	631.10

STAR RENTALS	538.00
TEAMSTER LOCAL #231	648.00
UNITED WAY OF WHATCOM COUNTY	707.00
UTILITIES UNDERGROUND LOCATION	21.12
WA ST DEPT OF L&I BOILER	418.60
WASHINGTON DENTAL SERVICE	2,828.05
WASHINGTON TEAMSTERS WELFARE	13,567.40
WESTERN REFINERY SERVICES	8,930.61
WHATCOM COUNTY TREASURER	646.09
WHATCOM JANITORIAL	1,430.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$135,151.30

ACTION: Commissioner Grant made the motion to APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 27, 2023. Commissioner Deshmane second the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comment – None made.

5. General Manager’s Report

The Assistant General Manager covered topics from Alcoa substation purchase, a greenhouse complex planned at Cherry Point, early requests for seasonal irrigation and more.

6. Old Business

a) Broadband Program Update

Entrikin provided an update on the District’s broadband program including the Point Roberts fiber project; BEAD changes to Whatcom County eligible locations, update on the Telecom Franchise, and more. The Commissioners requested staff to provide some dates and draft agenda for the study session.

b) Adjudication Update

Sitkin commented on two bills concerning adjudication are now awaiting the Governor’s approval; the local bar committee meets next week to discuss “E” (electronic) filing, and more.

c) Legislative Update

Discussed the support letter sent to Representative Ramel regarding the Climate Commitment Act. Commissioner Arnett suggested that they approve a Resolution in support of this.

d) Geothermal Update

Legislative update for ESSB 6039 regarding geothermal energy resources is now awaiting the Governor’s signature.

7. New Business

a) Award of Bid: Waeco Construction for BPA-Intalco Fiber Extension Project

During 2017, the District successfully completed a major expansion of the fiber optic cable backbone communications system by installing aerial and underground optic cable to link both Plant 1 and Grandview potable plant to high-speed communications system. In 2019, engineering design work was completed to connect Douglas Road vault to the vicinity of the Intalco Aluminum plant. Upon the completion of the design in 2020, the District was held up with permitting delays, due to wetland inside the proposed area of work. In 2023, the county along with the Army Corps of Engineers approved the permitting to proceed with the work. The improvements will facilitate higher speed communication and deployment of SCADA, benefitting both the electric and water system operations.

The bid opening for the BPA-Intalco Fiber Extension Project Contract was held on Friday, February 23, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. The District received and publicly read aloud three (3) bids submitted for this project. The Request for Bid Proposals were sent to six companies, whose qualifications were deemed to meet the requirements for work being performed. Three bid packages were received and were deemed responsive. Staff’s review of the Waeco Construction bid package determined that the Bid was responsive.

The results of the bids are as follows:

Low Bidder:

Waeco Construction\$297,934.00 (tax not included)

P&P Excavating.....\$316,300.00 (tax not included)

Cannon Construction\$349,583.91 (tax not included)

Staff recommends awarding the Contract for BPA-Intalco Fiber Extension Project to Waeco Construction. Fiscal Impact: Project has been budgeted for 2024 for \$300,00.00 under CIP IS-15.

ACTION: Commissioner Grant made the motion to AWARD THE BID FOR THE BPA-INTALCO FIBER EXTENSION PROJECT TO WAECO CONSTRUCTION AND AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER TO EXECUTE THE AGREEMENT. Commissioner Deshmane second the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

- b) **Approve Draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Public Consortium with NoaNet**
The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (B.E.A.D.) initiative, led by the U.S. Department of Commerce’s National Telecommunications and Information Administration, seeks to expand broadband access and digital equity. The Northwest Open Access Network (NoaNet) and other organizations seek to form a public consortium under a Memorandum of Understanding to pursue these opportunities collaboratively.

Staff seeks approval for Whatcom PUD to sign on to the BEAD Teaming MOU, enabling participation in a collaborative effort to improve broadband services. The MOU outlines a collaborative framework where parties commit to jointly developing work plans, participating in workshops, and forming teams focused on financial planning, open access, affordability, digital equity, fair labor practices, and operational capabilities.

The term of the MOU is effective March 15, 2024, until the completion of the tasks outlined or December 31, 2024, whichever occurs first. Joining the consortium does not require an upfront financial contribution. Future financial commitments, if any, will be agreed upon by the parties as needed to support the collaborative work.

ACTION: Commissioner Grant made the motion to APPROVE DRAFT BROADBAND EQUITY, ACCESS, AND DEPLOYMENT (B.E.A.D.) PUBLIC CONSORTIUM TEAMING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND AUTHORIZE THE GENERAL MANAGER OR HIS/HER DESIGNEE, TO EXECUTE THE FINAL AGREEMENT. Commissioner Deshmane second the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

8. Operations Report

Wank reported on conditions at Water Treatment Plant 1 with the variable frequency drives (VFD) pumps and other issues, rebuild plans for Plant 1, and more.

9. Commissioner Reports

Grant:

- The two meetings she had planned were cancelled.
- Plans to attend the WPUA Board of Director’s Meeting on Friday.

Deshmane:

- Asked for a per diem regarding a meeting he had yesterday;
- Plans to attend the WPUA committee meetings and Public Power Council meeting this month;

Arnett:

- In discussions with Crina Hoyer for the Commission Retreat. A call for the Special Commission Meeting will be at the next meeting, with the time and location announced.
- Will plan to attend the WPUA Committee meetings on Thursday.

10. Public Comment – None made.

11. Executive Session

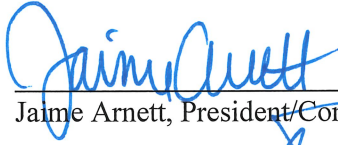
Commissioner Arnett requested an Executive Session pursuant to RCW 42.30.110(1)(g) To review the qualifications and/or performance of a public employee. Estimated time was 30 minutes; adjournment time for Executive Session at 10:00 a.m. No action is anticipated after Executive Session. After a short recess, the Commission adjourned to Executive Session at 9:31 a.m.

Executive Session Adjourn

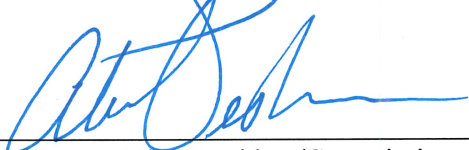
There being no further business for Executive Session, the Commission rejoined the Regular Commission Meeting at 9:59 a.m.

12. Adjourn

There being no further business for the regular meeting, Commissioner Arnett adjourned the regular meeting at 10:02 a.m.



Jaime Arnett, President/Commissioner



Atul Deshmane, Vice President/Commissioner



Christine Grant, Secretary/Commissioner

Commission Clerk Note:

Video recordings of the Whatcom PUD Commission Meetings are available online at the following link on the PUD's Website: <https://www.pudwhatcom.org/the-commission/2024-agenda-packets-meeting-minutes-recordings/>