

## Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Notes

November 15, 2023

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### Attending from the council:

Jeff Bissonnette, NW Energy Coalition  
Jonathon Belmont (for Margaret Lewis),  
Bonneville Power Administration  
Andy Cameron, Oregon Department of  
Energy  
Kari Greer, Pacific Power  
Lisa McGarity, Avista  
Laney Ralph, NW Natural

Jake Wise, Portland General Electric  
Kerry Meade, Northwest Energy Efficiency  
Council  
Becky Walker, NEEA  
Charity Fain, Community Energy Project  
Corinne Olson, Alliance for Western Energy  
Consumers

### Attending from Energy Trust:

Hannah Cruz  
Elizabeth Fox  
Alex Novie  
Sue Fletcher  
Tom Beverly  
Tracy Scott  
Fred Gordon  
Jay Robinson  
Laura Schaefer  
Maddie Norman  
Lori Lull  
Cory Hertog  
Themba Mutepfa  
Jackie Goss  
Alyson McKay  
Michael Hoch  
Natalia Ojeda  
Janelle St. Pierre  
Kirstin Pinit  
Kenji Spielman

Spencer Moersfelder  
Ryan Crews  
Debbie Menashe  
Andi Nix  
Marshall Johnson  
Julianne Thacher  
Melanie Bissonnette  
Adam Bartini  
Tiffany Hatteberg  
Kathleen Belkhat  
Eric Braddock  
Amanda Potter  
Mark Wyman  
Maddy Otto  
Greg Stokes  
Elaine Prause

### Others attending:

John Molnar, Rogers Machinery  
Brooke Landon, CLEAResult

Chad Ihrig  
Brian Lynch, AESC

## 1. Welcome and Announcements

Hannah Cruz, senior stakeholder relations and policy manager, convened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. The agenda, notes and presentation materials are available at [www.energytrust.org/about/how-we-operate/public-meetings/conservation-advisory-council-meetings/](http://www.energytrust.org/about/how-we-operate/public-meetings/conservation-advisory-council-meetings/).

## 2. Community agreements

### *Topic Summary*

Hannah Cruz summarized the community agreements for council members and meeting attendees. Agreements are:

- Stay engaged
- Share the stage
- Listen to each other to learn and understand
- Assume best intent and attend to impact
- Address actions that marginalize or harm another person or group of people

*Discussion*

None

*Next Steps*

None

**3. Remembering Conservation Advisory Council Member and Friend Tina Jayaweera**

Hannah Cruz announced that friend and colleague Dr. Tina Jayaweera passed away in October. Council members took a few moments to remember her at the beginning of the meeting. The Power Council recently shared this message about Tina on their website at [www.nwcouncil.org/news/2023/10/31/council-remembers-tina-jayaweera/](http://www.nwcouncil.org/news/2023/10/31/council-remembers-tina-jayaweera/).

**4. 2024 Draft Budget Update**

Tracy Scott, director of energy programs, provided an overview of notable changes being made to the Draft 2024 Budget and 2024-2025 Action Plan. These changes will be reflected in the Final Proposed 2024 Budget and 2024-2025 Action Plan presented to the board in December. Approximate changes include a 6.6 million kWh decrease in electric savings, 247,000 therm decrease in gas savings and \$0.6 million decrease in expenditures. See meeting packet for budget presentation with specific changes by program.

*Discussion*

None

*Next Steps*

Changes will be incorporated into the budget, and it will be presented to the board on December 15, 2023.

**5. Program Changes: Addition of Services for Avista and NW Natural**

*Topic summary*

Adam Bartini, industry and agriculture senior program manager, presented service updates for Avista and NW Natural customers. In coordination with Avista, Energy Trust added service for the utility's interruptible and transport customers in 2023. In addition, services for NW Natural's transport customers will be added in 2024. These customer types often have large facilities that use high volumes of natural gas in their processes. To serve these customers, Energy Trust executed individual funding contracts with each utility separate from the traditional ratepayer funding that has been in place since 2003 (NW Natural) and 2016 (Avista). These customer sites offer great potential for savings, and Energy Trust will offer Strategic Energy Management (SEM) and custom incentives. Energy-efficiency actions taken will support the customer as well as the utilities' greenhouse gas reduction goals.

*Discussion*

Council members asked whether anything will change on the SEM side, since this is connected to the goals of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's Climate Protection Program (Becky Walker) and whether Energy Trust will coordinate with the Climate Protection Program's (CPP) Community Climate Investment administrator to coordinate funding (Jeff Bissonnette). Staff responded that the scope will stay the same - looking for any savings. If a company has carbon reduction or other sustainability goals, Energy Trust work with them on a customer-by-

customer basis. It will be business as usual for SEM delivery. The organization isn't involved in the compliance side of the CPP. Staff added that there hasn't been thinking of that in light of the largest gas customers yet. It is a conversation regarding residential and retail commercial customers. Energy Trust is in early coordination discussions with Seeding Justice, the Community Climates Investments administrator who is going through the contracting process with Department of Environmental Quality that must be complete before they begin working on their implementation plan.

#### *Next Steps*

Council members asked for periodic updates on these new customer services, including understanding how efficiency program offers differ or are the same as for retail customers.

## **6. Innovation and Development Team Overview and Focus Areas**

### *Topic Summary*

Mark Wyman, senior manager Innovation & Development Services, provided an overview of Energy Trust's Innovation and Development (InnDev) team.

InnDev is tasked with helping Energy Trust reach more customers, serve them in more ways and leverage more funding to achieve the organization's core purpose of clean, affordable energy for all. The team helps address bigger, broader problems than Energy Trust has tried to solve in the past.

### *Discussion*

A council member expressed concern that Energy Trust is going too far in this role by directly competing with community-based organizations (CBOs) for grants. Healthy Homes, for example, is a smaller grant, and Energy Trust shouldn't apply. Instead, it should try to support others applying for these grants. There are customer needs and there may be a role in some places, but Energy Trust should put thought into scaling back to play a supporting role (Charity Fain). Staff responded that Energy Trust doesn't want to compete with CBOs in Healthy Homes, and are engaged both as a supporting resource to CBO-lead applications as well as contemplating an Energy Trust lead application in a community where there is no CBO lead application. Through Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and Energy Trust's work, it has found that there are no CBOs in some areas of the state with the interest or ability to be a grantee under Healthy Homes or similar opportunities. OHA has indicated it is interested in how this plays out in Northeast and Southeast Oregon. Energy Trust may be able to position itself where there's a gap. This would not be in concert with other groups and the sponsoring legislation permits a range of entities to apply. Oregon Department of Energy's (ODOE) Community Heat Pump Program sought proposals from organizations throughout Oregon. Energy Trust declined to apply and many areas of the state did not receive any applications. Energy Trust stepped back in the first round to avoid competing with CBOs and is now focused on a second round.

A council member added that the ODOE Community Heat Pump program has some problems that may make it impossible for some organizations to administer it. There are some design flaws with the legislatively designed program (Charity Fain). Staff answered that there is a balance and the organization is looking at where it fits to avoiding competing with CBOs. With Healthy Homes, we're also in dialogue to help other organizations become involved.

Council members stated that collectively there is a lot of money coming in and a five-to-ten-year window to spend it. There's a concern about what to do with the new staff after the funding period ends. Community action agencies, during the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, hired people, ramped up, then laid people off when the funding ended. This should be kept in mind as discussions continue (Lisa McGarity). Staff responded that the current hiring levels in the budget, other than the Community Solar Program, are mostly to support growth on the ratepayer-funded side. Staff haven't onboarded many non-ratepayer-funded positions yet.

Staff are also looking at places where cost-effective incentives may not reach many customers, so we're looking at how we put funding together to help more customers.

Council members also stated when in a position of potential conflict, a step back should be taken, and asked if the organization is planning any more proactive approaches (Jonathan Belmont)? Staff answered that there are a few criteria being provided. One is providing a valuable service or solving problems customers have. Second is around the organization's capacity to do it. Third is about stepping into new roles that change relationships with our partners and asking if the organizations are ready to work with each other in new ways. There hasn't been a decision made on the opportunities presented today and staff are still considering it from several viewpoints. For developing new capabilities, staff ask if this is something that will benefit the rest of the organization's work. Energy Trust is not in the position of chasing revenue – it's based on impact and where investments will be additive. There is not a prescriptive formula for these decisions, they are influenced by dialog with partners.

#### *Next Steps*

Council members requested regular updates on the InnDev team going forward. Staff will connect with council members for continued conversation.

### **7. 2024 Meeting Dates and Strategic Planning**

#### *Topic Summary*

Hannah Cruz previewed the meeting schedule for 2024. The first meeting will be January 10 and will include the Diversity Advisory Council and the Renewable Energy Advisory Council. Meeting holds will come out in December.

Greg Stokes discussed strategic planning and how it may change the way the council is engaged. The next plan will be developed in 2024 for the 2025-2030. The six-year timeframe is different from Energy Trust's previous five-year plans and will allow the organization to align its strategic focus with utility planning efforts and requirements. Energy Trust will also move into multi-year planning, rather than the annual planning cycle currently used. The groundwork will be laid in 2024 for shifting to multi-year planning, and the first multi-year plan is expected to be developed in 2024.

#### *Discussion*

For the January 10 meeting, the council requested to receive questions and input requests ahead of time in order to gather input from others in their organizations (Becky Walker). Additional time for any pre-reading, including sending the existing strategic plan in advance, was requested as well (Lisa McGarity).

#### *Next Steps*

None

### **8. Member Announcements**

Becky Walker from Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance stated that the [Leadership in Energy Efficiency Awards](#) will be held December 4. The last day to reserve a spot is November 17. Energy Trust Director of Planning Fred Gordon will receive an award and the council and staff are encouraged to attend.

### **9. Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

### **10. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:32 p.m. The next meeting will be a hybrid joint session with RAC and DAC to discuss strategic planning on Thursday, January 10.