

Conservation Advisory Council Meeting Notes

February 14, 2024

Attending from the council:

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, Building Potential
Becky Walker, NEEA
Jeff Bissonnette, Northwest Energy
Coalition
Corinne Olson, Alliance for Western Energy
Consumers
Noemi Ortiz, Cascade Natural Gas

Attending from Energy Trust:

Hannah Cruz
Elizabeth Fox
Tom Beverly
Elaine Dado
Sue Fletcher
Alex Novie
Tracy Scott
Janelle St. Pierre
Jeni Hall
Fred Gordon
Cody Kleinsmith
Maddie Norman
Alicia Li
Abby Spegman
Cory Hertog
Any Coles
Spencer Moersfelder
Dan Peterson

Alyson McKay
Elaine Prause
Amanda Thompson
Andi Nix
Chris Dunning
Ryan Crews
Maddy Otto
Thad Roth
Shelly Carlton
Themba Mutepfa
Juliette Poff
Melanie Bissonnette
Marshall Johnson

Others attending:

John Molnar, Rogers Machinery
Brooke Landon, CLEAResult
Chad Ihrig, Google
Jane Peters, Energy Trust board

Andrew Croy, Strategic Energy Group
Alex Couch, Alliant Systems
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/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/CAC-Packet-February-2024.pdf

Hannah mentioned the board workshop on March 13. The board is inviting advisory council members to the in-person meeting so they can provide input during the session for the development of the 2025-2030 strategic plan. Hannah will send more information in a follow-up email.

The October 10 council meeting is now set from 1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

2. Council operations

Topic summary

Hannah Cruz reviewed council operating principles, which were originally established in the council charter. Details are available in the [meeting packet](#) and presentation slides. Community agreements were added in 2023 to establish member expectations for communications, conflict resolution, engagement and support. Hannah also asked council members for topics and areas of interest for future meetings.

Discussion

Members indicated that no changes are needed in the operating principles or community agreements. Members are interested in hearing updates about Oregon's commercial Building Performance Standard rulemaking and Energy Trust's role in implementing new standards (Kerry Meade). Oregon Department of Energy is leading the rulemaking and Energy Trust is following the process closely as well as will be a rulemaking advisory committee representative. ODOE is willing to bring in Blake Shelide to give an update. Council members also indicated an interest in workforce development efforts, including mentorship and after-school programs (Andy Cameron).

Next steps

Hannah will add the suggested topics to future meeting agendas.

3. 2023 preliminary annual results

Topic summary

Tracy Scott, director of energy programs, presented preliminary results for 2023. Preliminary results are released each January and shared with the OPUC. Expenditures are not yet available. The annual report to the OPUC on April 15 will contain full, final data.

Preliminary results are some of our best, in spite of market challenges. Energy Trust exceeded goals for all utilities. Energy Trust reached 118% of electric savings goals, 108% of gas savings goals and 124% of renewable generation goals.

Discussion

Member stated the results are great (Lisa McGarity) and had no additional questions or comments.

Next steps

None.

4. Multiyear planning and 2025 budgeting changes

Topic summary

Chris Dunning, chief financial officer, provided an overview of Energy Trust's transition to a new multiyear planning framework in place of an annual cycle of budgeting and action planning. Full details are available in the [meeting packet](#). The framework is under development and will seek to allow more flexibility in planning, with plans going beyond one-year goals. It will include a five-year business plan, staffing plan and financial plan, along with a rolling budget for plan management. The council will be engaged for feedback on the draft process, most likely in June. Staff is developing the process now for the multiyear plan and will pause work this summer to give staff bandwidth to develop a 2025 budget. The 2025 budget process will be compressed into the second half of 2024, and staff is being directed to continue many of the existing action plan projects. Development of the 2026-2030 multiyear plan will start in early 2025.

Discussion

Members supported the shift and agreed with the flexibility of multiyear planning but added that check-ins may help avoid problems (Becky Walker). Members also stated that summaries of market intelligence and direct customer feedback are helpful for strategic planning, since they show what

people are thinking as they complete projects (Lisa McGarity). Members also asked for clarification about what would be considered in a rolling budget (Lisa McGarity) and advised staff to add a check point on extending the 2024 action plans into 2025 to ensure they are still on track (Becky Walker).

Staff noted Energy Trust will work on rolling budgets as plan management is fleshed out. That is one aspect of plan management and should be reported in sync with progress on goals and any corrections being made to reach goals. Staff explained Energy Trust's cost structure is roughly 50% incentives, 30% delivery and 20% organizational costs. A rolling budget and reporting on it would include checking back on the financial plan to ensure we stay within plan parameters. Incentives vary from month to month, and staff need to review and react to any changes, adding that market and customer changes are drivers of participation rates.

Next steps

The next engagement for members will be at the March 13 board workshop where on strategic planning discussion with the 2025 budget in mind. Staff plans to re-engage with the council in June for additional feedback on the multi-year planning and 2025 budget changes.

5. Member roundtable

Topic summary

Council members were asked to share recent achievements and upcoming plans from their organizations.

Discussion

Kerry Meade, Building Potential: After 30 years, NEEC recently changed its name to Building Potential. This reflects a shift in focus and thinking to achieve more of the Northwest's goals with buildings beyond energy efficiency.

Andy Cameron, Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE): Last year ODOE put in a request for a GIS position, which has now been filled. If anyone has a GIS or geospatial plan, ODOE is interested in learning about it. There will be some new visualizations and data representations coming up.

Lisa McGarity, Avista: Avista will stand up an equity advisory group for low-income programs this year. This group will focus on Oregon operations. Another group already exists for Washington.

Becky Walker, NEEA: The new standards coming through are the end goals of what NEEA does. Big changes in standards are being proposed, which will save the country a lot of energy, including with water heaters and electric motors. NEEA has a newly approved five-year strategic plan, and the financial plan should be approved in March. A two-year load flexibility and grid flexibility project is getting started and may become a long-term part of NEEA's portfolio. Ten utilities are working together on that, including Portland General Electric. We have continued exciting program work. Federal funding and nationwide goals have led to coalition building nationally and in North America. That will increase NEEA's leverage and impact.

Jonathon Belmont, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA): BPA saw success last year and continuing into this year with direct funding demonstrations that help rural areas and consumer-owned utilities who haven't focused on energy efficiency before. A batch of applications is in review for a new round of funding. For next year, we're looking to add several new measures and programs. These are going through a new process. We're expanding in low-income and multifamily, along with those experiencing equity issues. This is region wide.

Noemi Ortiz, Cascade Natural Gas: Cascade Natural Gas has started an equity advisory group in Washington. One thing that came out of that was redoing the website translations to be more conversational. The package Cascade Natural Gas purchased includes 13 languages.

Next Steps

None.

6. Public comment

There was no additional public comment.

7. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3 p.m. The next meeting will be held April 10, 2024.