



County of Los Alamos

1000 Central Avenue
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Minutes

Board of Public Utilities Work Session

*Robert Gibson, Chair; Eric Stromberg, Vice-chair
Matt Heavner, Charles Nakhleh and Jennifer Hollingsworth, Members
Philo Shelton, Ex Officio Member
Anne Laurent, Ex Officio Member
Suzie Havemann, Council Liaison*

Wednesday, March 5, 2025

5:30 PM

Municipal Building, Council Chambers

Public Participation: in person or <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84348385574>.

1. CALL TO ORDER

This work session of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos Board of Public Utilities was held on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 at 1000 Central Ave., Council Chambers. Board Chair Robert Gibson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Members of the public were notified of the ability to attend and provide public comment either in person or over Zoom. The following board members were in attendance:

Present: 4 - Members Gibson, Heavner, Hollingsworth, and Shelton

Absent: 2 - Members Stromberg and Nakhleh

Remote: 1 - Member Laurent

BPU Liaison / Council Vice Chair Suzie Havemann was absent and Councilor Beverly Neal-Clinton attended in her place. Deputy County Manager Juan Rael was also attending remotely via Zoom, along with several County Finance Department staff members.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Gibson provided an opportunity for public comment on any topic; there was none.

No action was taken on this item.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Gibson called for discussion or a motion on approval of the agenda. He announced that since Council Vice Chair Havemann was absent, the Strategic Leadership plan would be rescheduled for a later date.

Member Heavner moved and Member Hollingsworth seconded that the agenda be approved as amended.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Members Hollingsworth, Heavner and Gibson

Absent: 2 - Members Nakhleh and Stromberg

4. PRESENTATIONS

4.a. 19569-25 APWA Presentation of Accreditation

Mr. Philo Shelton, provided some background information on the accreditation process and selection of the American Public Works Association (APWA) method. He then introduced Ms. Kristina Ramirez, APWA Region VII Director. Ms. Ramirez addressed the board and read the accreditation letter for the record. A group photo was taken of the presentation of the accreditation award. (A copy of the press release is **attached** to the minutes.)

No action was taken on this item.

4.b. 19577-25 UAMPS Presentation by Mason Baker, CEO/General Manager; Shauna Sowles, Controller; and Jackie Combs, Managing Director of Member Relations

Mr. Shelton introduced Mr. Mason Baker, CEO & General Manager; Ms. Shauna Sowles, Controller; and Ms. Jackie Coombs, Managing Director of Customer & Member Relations from the Utah Associated Municipal Power Systems (UAMPS.) Ms. Sowles presented and a copy of the slides were included in the meeting packet. Chair Gibson provided an opportunity for comments/questions from the board. The following individuals spoke:

1. Mr. Shelton
2. Member Gibson
3. Member Hollingsworth
4. Ms. Kendall
5. Councilor Neal-Clinton

No action was taken on this item.

5. BUSINESS

5.a. 19869-25 Rate Design Presentation

Ms. Karen Kendall, Deputy Utility Manager - Finance & Administration presented. Her presentation slides were included in the meeting packet. Chair Gibson provided an opportunity for comments and questions from the board. The following individuals spoke:

1. Member Gibson
2. Member Hollingsworth
3. Mr. Shelton
4. Member Heavner

No action was taken on this item.

RECESS: 7:26 - 7:36 p.m.

5.b. 19831-25 Overview of County Council's 2025 Strategic Leadership Plan

Council Vice Chair Havemann was absent so this item was rescheduled. (A copy of the plan was included in the meeting packet.)

No action was taken on this item.

5.c. [19398-25](#) Annual Update on Water System

Mr. Clay Moseley, Deputy Utility Manager - Gas, Water, Sewer Services presented. His presentation slides were included in the meeting packet. Chair Gibson provided an opportunity for questions and comments from the board. The following individuals spoke:

1. Member Gibson
2. Member Hollingsworth
3. Member Heavner
4. Mr. Shelton

No action was taken on this item.

5.d. [19373-25](#) Semiannual Update: Transactional Survey Report for July through December of 2024

Ms. Catherine D'Anna, Public Relations Manager presented. A copy of the report was included in the meeting packet. Chair Gibson provided an opportunity for questions and comments from the board. There were none.

No action was taken on this item.

5.e. [19418-25](#) Review & Possible Action on Recommendations from the BPU Self-Evaluation Working Group

Chair Gibson posed a question to Mr. Thomas Wyman, Assistant County Attorney regarding whether action could be taken since a motion to suspend the work session was not included on the agenda. Mr. Wyman's response was that action could not be taken. Chair Gibson also noted that since Vice Chair Stromberg was absent and a member of this working group, action should be deferred to a meeting when he is in attendance. He suggested that Member Hollingsworth review her suggestions on the BPU Self-Assessment tool. A copy of her suggestions were included in the meeting packet. Mr. Shelton suggested that a clean copy including the suggested changes be included in the next agenda packet. Chair Gibson suggested that the survey tool be distributed about one month before the due date. Chair Gibson then provided an opportunity for questions and comments from the board. The following individuals spoke:

1. Member Gibson
2. Member Heavner
3. Mr. Shelton

No action was taken on this item.

5.f. [19399-25](#) BPU Member Participation at Farmers Market

Chair Gibson commented regarding last year's BPU involvement in Farmers Market. Member Heavner stated that he enjoyed his participation. Chair Gibson then asked Members Hollingsworth and Heavner whether there were any dates for which they would like to volunteer. These were their responses:

1. Member Heaver volunteered for July 24
2. Member Hollingsworth volunteered for May 22
3. Member Gibson volunteered for June 26

Chair Gibson closed by stating that Members Nakhleh and Stromberg would be polled for their availability at the next meeting.

No action was taken on this item.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Gibson provided an opportunity for public comment on any topic; there was none.

No action was taken on this item.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 pm

APPROVAL

Board of Public Utilities Chair

Date Approved by the Board

Minutes transcribed by: Kathy Casados, Executive Assistant

ATTACHMENTS

(in agenda order)

4.a. APWA Accreditation Press Release with Photos

4.a. APWA Accreditation Letter

4.a. APWA Accreditation Presentation Zoom Transcript

NEWS RELEASE

Catherine D'Anna
Public Relations Manager
Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities
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catherine.danna@lacnm.us



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Electric, Gas, Water, and Wastewater Services
1000 Central Avenue, Suite 130
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Date: March 6, 2025
Contact: Cathy D'Anna
505-662-8002 | catherine.danna@lacnm.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Utilities Department Earns Full Accreditation

Los Alamos, New Mexico—The Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities (DPU) was recognized Wednesday by the American Public Works Association (APWA) at the monthly Board of Public Utilities work session. The presentation formally recognized DPU's recent achievement of full accreditation from APWA, a process that verified and recognized that DPU is in full compliance with the recommended management practices set forth in APWA's *Public Works Management Practices Manual*.

Open to all governmental agencies with responsibilities for public works functions, initial accreditation from APWA is for a four-year period, during which time semi-annual updates will be required to demonstrate continuing compliance. After that time, there is a re-accreditation process that builds on the original accreditation, encouraging continuous improvement and compliance with newly identified practices.

The purpose of accreditation is to promote excellence in the operation and management of a public works agency, its programs, and its employees. Accreditation is designed to assist the agency in the continuous improvement of operations and management, and in providing a valid and objective evaluation of agency programs as a service to the public and the profession.

According to DPU's Charter, "at least every five years thereafter, the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) shall employ a qualified consultant to review, comment, and make recommendations as to the operation and condition of the County Utilities." In January 2021, BPU directed staff to seek APWA Accreditation as part of a peer review of department operations.

"We are proud to be recognized by the APWA," said DPU Utilities Manager Philo Shelton. "It reflects our team's hard work and commitment in reliably and efficiently delivering the highest quality of utility services to the Los Alamos and White Rock communities."

APWA's accreditation process includes five major steps:

- **Self-Assessment:** Using the Public Works Management Practices Manual, an internal review of an agency's practices combined with a comparison of the recommended practices contained in the manual;
- **Application:** Once the decision has been made to commit to the Accreditation Program, the agency submits a formal application;
- **Improvement:** After the agency has completed the self-assessment and identified areas needing improvement, the agency will work to bring all practices into an acceptable level of compliance with the recommended practices;
- **Evaluation:** Following the completion of the improvement phase, the agency will request a site visit. The site visit will consist of a review and evaluation of the agency to determine the level of compliance with all applicable practices.
- **Accreditation:** The Accreditation Council will review the site visit results and recommendations from the team, voting to award or deny accreditation.

DPU is the second agency in the state of New Mexico to be formally awarded the prestigious accreditation by APWA's Accreditation Council. In addition to Los Alamos County, the other accredited agency in New Mexico is the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

For more information about APWA Accreditation, please contact APWA Associate Director of Credentialing, Jeanette Klamm at jklamm@apwa.net, or (816) 595-5295.

About APWA

The American Public Works Association (www.apwa.net) is a not-for-profit, international organization with more than 30,000 members involved in the field of public works. APWA serves its members by promoting professional excellence and public awareness through education, advocacy, and the exchange of knowledge. APWA is headquartered in Kansas City, MO, has an office in Washington, DC, and 63 chapters in North America.

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Achieving accreditation took the help of staff throughout Los Alamos County. Among the dozens who contributed are the following pictured people: Kathy Casados (DPU), Abbey Hayward (DPU, accreditation lead), Charles Bear (Information Management), Cathy D'Anna (DPU), Philo Shelton (DPU), Richard Valerio (DPU), Sonya Ortiz (Human Resources), Tracey Alarid (DPU), James Alarid (DPU), Karen Kendall (DPU), Joann Gentry (DPU)



The accreditation was presented to DPU at the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) work session by Kristina Ramirez, APWA Region VII Director. Ramirez is pictured holding the award on the left with Philo Shelton, Utilities Manager, on the right. Also pictured from left to right are: Dennis Astley (DPU), Stephen Marez (DPU), Abbey Hayward (DPU), Joann Gentry (DPU), Beverly Neal-Clinton (County Council), Karen Kendall (DPU), Clay Moseley (DPU), Thomas Wyman (County Attorney's Office), Ben Olbrich (DPU), Cathy D'Anna (DPU), Robert Gibson (BPU), Kathy Casados (DPU), James Alarid (DPU), Matt Heavner (BPU), Jennifer Hollingsworth (BPU).



*Your Comprehensive
Public Works Resource*

www.apwa.org

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25 Massachusetts Ave NW
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AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

December 11, 2024

Philo Shelton, III
Utilities Manager
Department of Public Utilities
Incorporated County of Los Alamos
Los Alamos, NM 87544


Dear Philo,

I am pleased to notify you that the APWA Accreditation Council has reviewed the evaluation team's results and recommendation and has granted Accreditation to the Incorporated County of Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities. Your Accreditation is granted for a four-year period, which expires December 11, 2028.

Congratulations to the accreditation manager, each member of the agency, and you for earning your first accreditation. Your team's work to achieve accreditation demonstrates dedication and pride in the operation of your department and your community overall. We trust you have experienced the many benefits from working through the accreditation process and that your department recognizes the value of continually improving your processes.

Once again, congratulations on the job well done.

Sincerely,


Mike Skibbe, Chair
Accreditation Council

CC: Abbey Hayward, Accreditation Manager

PRESIDENT
Dominick A. Longobardi

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson, CAE

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

Department of Public Utilities - APWA Accreditation Presentation

March 5, 2025

Zoom Transcript

00:00:49.000 --> 00:00:59.000

Okay, it's 5.30. I will call to order this March 5th, 2025 meeting of the Board of Public Utilities.

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00:03:14.000 --> 00:03:28.000 (Chair Robert Gibson)

We move on now to presentations. And we'll start with an American Public Works Association presentation of accreditation. And I'll turn it over to Philo for that. Yes, Chair and members of the board.

00:03:28.000 --> 00:03:49.000 (Philo Shelton, Utilities Manager)

I wanted to Just quick introduction on the journey, how we got here back in 2019 when I first started, we were going through the Quality New Mexico process and we earned a road runner award and then we got a feedback report. And at the time we shared that with the board

00:03:49.000 --> 00:04:03.000

And the board said, is there a different program we could participate in Where we had more of a peer review that were like professionals the Q&M process.

00:04:03.000 --> 00:04:14.000

Ended up being a lot of different people from car dealerships to a couple were from other cities, but the reviewers were not necessarily within our industry.

00:04:14.000 --> 00:04:29.000

And the board back in January of 21 asset you know every five years we're supposed to have a peer review reviewing our operations that we pursue an accreditation.

00:04:29.000 --> 00:04:48.000

So we presented a couple different options at that time. And APWA came up on top and was recommend we pursue that. It takes a couple of years to actually get an accreditation. There's a handbook that we follow and and i might uh

00:04:48.000 --> 00:05:05.000

Ask Kristina Ramirez, our regional director. She came in from texas Through multiple flights, I found out driving down to Austin, then flying to Houston, and then getting a flight to Albuquerque and then finding a way to rent a car and come up here.

00:05:05.000 --> 00:05:22.000

And she needs to return to Santa Fe halfway to return home, but due to the wind storms. So a lot of flights were rerouted today so i really I'm happy to see you here this evening, given all the obstacles you had.

00:05:22.000 --> 00:05:37.000

So Kristina, if you're able to maybe present a little more about the program we participated in and And then I would, at the end, I would like to invite the board. We'd come up and do a picture with members of staff and members of staff

00:05:37.000 --> 00:06:00.000 (Kristina Ramirez, APWA)

Afterwards. Well, good evening, Chair Gibson and members of the board. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to recognize the professional accomplishments of one of your departments. Accreditation from the American Public Works Association. You may often hear it called APWA, is the mark of professionalism indicating public works agencies

00:06:00.000 --> 00:06:09.000

That have made the commitment to continuous improvements in the delivery of public works operations and services in the community in which they serve.

00:06:09.000 --> 00:06:15.000

Public Works operations and services are specific to the needs of each community and vary across the nation.

00:06:15.000 --> 00:06:37.000

Operating under the jurisdiction and control of the Board of Public Utilities, your Los Alamos County Department of Public Utilities is a customer service oriented municipal utility that provides, as you know, electric, gas, water, and sewer services for the county and businesses, as well as Los Alamos National Laboratory.

00:06:37.000 --> 00:06:43.000

The utilities department consists of the following divisions, as I'm sure you're aware, but for the record.

00:06:43.000 --> 00:06:52.000

Finance and administration, public relations. Gas, water, and sewer, engineering, electric production, and electric distribution.

00:06:52.000 --> 00:07:04.000

Compared to Texas, that is very different. I was speaking a little bit earlier. I have water, sewer transportation. We have fleet, and we have our animal control.

00:07:04.000 --> 00:07:23.000

So very different depending on where you're from. As Mr. Shelton indicated, accreditation recognizes an agency's policies, procedures, and practices which have been evaluated against nationally recognized management practices determined to be appropriate for that specific agency.

00:07:23.000 --> 00:07:40.000

A little bit about the numbers. There are 218 accredited agencies. These are typically departments within North America and 191 organizations. These are typically individual cities, counties, townships, et cetera.

00:07:40.000 --> 00:07:53.000

That have one or more accredited agencies So I said one or more. You have your public utilities now. I saw a couple other departments when I did the tour this afternoon. So just keep that in mind.

00:07:53.000 --> 00:08:04.000

Apwa evaluators are industry professionals from other accredited agencies that are selected based on their professional qualifications as well as the services to be evaluated.

00:08:04.000 --> 00:08:11.000

An evaluation team consisting of experienced public works professionals from Texas and Virginia.

00:08:11.000 --> 00:08:21.000

Reviewed 232 model practices here at your department to confirm your department's compliance with internationally recognized management practices.

00:08:21.000 --> 00:08:33.000

Applicable to your operations and responsibilities. I am proud to report that your Department of Public Utilities achieved 100% rating and is in full compliance with all applicable practices.

00:08:33.000 --> 00:08:48.000

However, you all went above and beyond. After the review of our officials of your facilities and team, it was found that there was one additional new model practice that was identified.

00:08:48.000 --> 00:08:58.000

The evaluators determined that DPU's human resource recruitment practices were outstanding and worthy to be used as examples for other applicants and accredited agencies.

00:08:58.000 --> 00:09:11.000

So you're setting the bar here. We have been around for a few years with our accreditation, but Each time we go out, we look for ways to do to do things a little bit better.

00:09:11.000 --> 00:09:33.000

And so highlights of what your human resources recruitment practices are include the different videos you have online, interviewing your staff of why they chose to come here, what it is they do, why they continue to stay here. And that goes a long way towards retention and providing quality services to your community.

00:09:33.000 --> 00:09:44.000

Following the evaluation team's recommendation, the Accreditation Council of APWA granted full accreditation to the incorporated county of Los Alamos Department of Public Utilities.

00:09:44.000 --> 00:09:57.000

Congratulations to the entire department. Of public utilities and nice work to your accreditation manager, Abby Hayward and Kathy Deanna, did I say that right?

00:09:57.000 --> 00:10:11.000

Sorry, sometimes my accent comes through. It's a little hard. As the current American Public Works Association board member representing Region 7, which includes the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and Texas.

00:10:11.000 --> 00:10:19.000

It is my honor to present this plaque to your director, Philo Shelton the third, in recognition of this achievement.

00:10:19.000 --> 00:10:34.000

As he and you all approach, I would also like to thank each of the board members the chair as well as your management team for your proactive approach and continued support of the public works profession in the community in which you serve.

00:10:34.000 --> 00:10:39.000

Thank you. Thank you.

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Group photo taken

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00:10:55.000 --> 00:11:00.000 (Philo Shelton, Utilities Manager)

The arm of the public works department across the hall there to join.

00:11:00.000 --> 00:11:30.000

Is good. Yeah.

00:11:45.000 --> 00:11:57.000

But they have to offer me. Oh, you cannot see in the back.

00:11:57.000 --> 00:12:04.000

You're too short. You cannot move back. Okay, ready?

00:12:04.000 --> 00:12:24.000

Congratulations. Appreciate you coming out here. Absolutely. Well, this is definitely well earned.

00:12:24.000 --> 00:12:43.000

Thank you. It was nice to meet you.

00:12:43.000 --> 00:12:55.000

Okay, thank you yeah so cool. Yeah, go Philo.

00:12:55.000 --> 00:12:59.000 (Philo Shelton, Utilities Manager)

Chair, I just wanted to say this was a team effort.

00:12:59.000 --> 00:13:15.000

Everyone contributed to this. When we did the reviews, it went all the way down to our supervisors and then developing procedures and getting agreement and completing the application.

00:13:15.000 --> 00:13:25.000

Really kudos to the whole team and uh We're going to display that in our hallway as you walk into the office. You'll see it on the left-hand side.

00:13:25.000 --> 00:13:42.000

And we hope that the Department of Public Works across the hall will participate in the accreditation because we have to do this once every four years. Now our cycle is five years but We'll try to pull them in in the next round.

00:13:42.000 --> 00:13:52.000 (Chair Robert Gibson)

We do appreciate the fact that it's it's a full department effort to do things in this variety.

00:13:52.000 --> 00:13:55.000

You folks do it every day, day in and day out.

00:13:55.000 --> 00:14:12.000

We just show up every once in a while and get our picture taken. And well deserved. We appreciate the support because it was a board decision to pursue this. So I feel like it's It's part of the whole DPU, BPU family.

00:14:12.000 --> 00:14:23.000 (Member Jennifer Hollingsworth)

Thank you. I'm curious, the videos that she referred to for your staff and so forth, is that a relatively new effort? Well, I think, Kathy, is that something we could share?

00:14:23.000 --> 00:14:35.000

With the board at a sure yeah or we can just do you want me to put it up right now or do you want her to say no i just i think we could just send it to the board after the meeting if you're okay with just sharing.

00:14:35.000 --> 00:14:41.000

Yeah, thanks. All right.