



LOS ALAMOS

County of Los Alamos

Minutes

Board of Public Utilities

1000 Central Avenue
Los Alamos, NM 87544

*Cornell Wright, Chair; Steve Tobin, Vice-chair;
Stephen McLin, Eric Stromberg, and Carrie Walker, Members
Philo Shelton, Ex Officio Member
Steven Lynne, Ex Officio Member
Denise Derkacs, Council Liaison*

Wednesday, April 20, 2022

5:30 PM

Remote Meeting:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84205413318>

REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

There were none.

The regular meeting of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos Board of Public Utilities was held on Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom videoconferencing platform. Board Chair Cornell Wright called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present 7 - Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Board Member Shelton, Board Member Lynne, Board Member Wright, Board Member Walker and Board Member McLin

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Wright opened the floor for public comment on items on the Consent Agenda and for those not otherwise included on the agenda. There were no members of the public in attendance.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Member McLin moved that the agenda be approved as presented. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Board Member Wright, Board Member Walker and Board Member McLin

4. BOARD BUSINESS

4.A. Chair's Report

Chair Wright reported that he, Vice Chair Tobin, Mr. Shelton and Mr. Cummins met recently to discuss next steps after the IRP presentation.

4.B. Board Member Reports

There were none.

4.C. Utilities Manager's Report

Mr. Shelton reviewed his written report which is **attached** to the minutes. He provided summarized comments and responded to board member inquiries as appropriate.

4.D. County Manager's Report

Mr. Lynne reported that budget hearings have been underway. Two sessions have been completed and two more were scheduled for the following week. He also acknowledged DPU for coordination with the rest of the county departments and positive involvement in capital planning and integration on several levels. Mr. Lynne said that the relationship with DPU and the rest of the county is important and he commended staff for all of their work during the budget process.

4.E. Council Liaison's Report

Council Vice Chair Derkacs reported on the following items:

- 1). Budget sessions have been underway, two sessions have been completed and two are scheduled for the following week.
- 2). The DPU budget was approved by Council the previous evening in the amount of \$86,561,568.00
- 3). Five budget options were also approved for DPU with profit transfers.

There were no questions from board members.

4.F. Environmental Sustainability Board Liaison's Report

Ms. Emerson reported on the following:

- 1). The ESB is focusing on food waste prevention activities.
- 2). ESB will have a booth at PEEC on Saturday for Earth Day Activities. It will focus on Zero Waste and there will be a solar oven display and solar baked cookies for attendees.
- 3). The Green Restaurant Team has been reactivated and will focus on decreasing food waste and reducing the use of plastic. The team will also assist with Green Certification for restaurants.

There were no board member questions.

4.G. General Board Business

15825-22

Future BPU Meetings Format

Chair Wright asked the board to discuss the options for future meetings. The overall consensus was that hybrid meetings were preferred where the board members would meet in person and Zoom would continue to be used for public comments and board/staff members that were unable to meet in person. This was agreed upon for regular meetings. Chair Wright also asked Ms. Casados to research the availability of meeting rooms and hybrid format for work sessions.

4.H. Approval of Board Expenses

There were none.

4.I. Preview of Upcoming Agenda Items

15355-22

Tickler Report for May - July 2022

In addition to the items already listed in the tickler provided in the meeting packet, the following items were identified for upcoming meetings:

- 1). Mr. Stromberg stated that he would be out of town on May 4 and would need to reschedule his presentation.
- 2). Mr. Cummins stated that he would confirm that PNM would still be available to present on May 4 as scheduled.
- 3). Chair Wright stated that May 18 would begin with a one-hour closed session to discuss the Utilities Manager performance evaluation. The regular meeting would then begin at 6:30 pm.

5. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

5.A. OR0940-22a Incorporated County of Los Alamos Ordinance No. 714, An Ordinance Authorizing Execution of Drinking Water State Revolving Loan for Repainting Barranca Mesa Tank II

Mr. Alarid reported that this Drinking Water State Revolving Loan (DWSRL) will partially fund the repainting of Barranca Mesa Tank No. 2. Barranca Mesa Tank No. 2 is an elevated 200,000 gallon water tank located adjacent to Barranca Elementary School. The tank was last painted in 1975, and the coating is showing signs of failure and requires lead paint removal. A detailed tank inspection was performed by a third party last year and some additional work was identified. The project will include painting the interior and exterior of the water tank, installation of a new cathodic protection system, painting the interior piping, lighting/access safety improvements and some structural repairs. The project design will take place over the summer and the project will be bid in the fall/winter of 2022, with work onsite beginning in the spring 2023 when temperatures warm-up and meet the paint manufacturer's requirements. This DWSRL will be a 25 year loan in the amount of \$865,570 at an interest rate of 1.0%. If approved, the loan is scheduled to close on July 8, 2022. If the ordinance is not approved, staff will continue to pursue the project by reallocating capital funds.

Mr. Alarid also reported that on January 4, 2022 the County Council approved budget revision 2022-32 which designated \$1,128,660 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for this project. The total cost of the project is now estimated at \$1.5 million. This loan will supplement the ARPA funding. Note that this loan was applied for months before the ARPA funds existed, and we are proceeding with the loan amount of \$865,570 to preserve the 1% interest rate and maintain the project schedule. There is no penalty or consequence if the full loan amount is not spent. If the ordinance is approved by Council, the projected date to close on the loan is July 8, 2022.

Mr. Alarid responded to board member inquiries and provided clarifying information as appropriate. Member McLin requested that staff provide a spreadsheet of all active loans with future approval requests (for ease of clarification). There were no members of the public in attendance.

Member McLin moved that the Board of Public Utilities Approve Incorporated County of Los Alamos Ordinance No. 714, An Ordinance Authorizing Execution of Drinking Water State Revolving Loan 5637 in the amount of \$865,570.00 for the Barranca Mesa Tank No. 2 Repainting Project, and forward to the County Council for Approval.

Yes: 5 - Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Board Member Wright, Board Member McLin, and Board Member Walker

- 5.B. [OR0943-22a](#) Incorporated County of Los Alamos Ordinance No. 717, An Ordinance Authorizing Execution of Drinking Water State Revolving Loan (DWSRL) for the Replacement of Water Production Motor Controls and Associated Electrical and Mechanical Equipment.

Mr. Alarid presented that the water production system contains 12 wells and 18 booster stations. The majority of these facilities have been in service since the 1960s. In recent years an increasing number of failures have been experienced due to motor controls and a variety of electric issues. The DPU hired a consultant with experience in design, evaluation and trouble shooting electric gear in water production facilities to evaluate the condition and prioritize required improvements to maintain reliable operation of these facilities. Given the large number of facilities and associated upgrades, the DPU has planned a large project to address as many upgrades as possible funded through a DWSRL loan. Funding these improvements through a loan is advantageous since these facilities will serve the community for decades and interest rates are at an all time low in the DWSRL program. The loan will be for \$2,727,000, at an interest rate of 1%, for a term of 25 years. The project is schedule to bid for construction in the late summer of 2023 and be constructed over the winter and spring of 2023. If approved, the loan is scheduled to close on July 8, 2022. If the ordinance is not approved these improvements will be pursued as smaller projects budgeted in individual fiscal years. This project has been budgeted in fiscal year 2023 in an amount of \$2,727,000, contingent of securing a DWSRL loan.

Mr. Alarid and Mr. Richardson responded to board member inquiries and provided clarifying information as appropriate. Member Stromberg requested that the language in the staff report be clarified as "Motor Control Centers." There were no members of the public present.

Member Tobin moved that the Board of Public Utilities Approve Incorporated County of Los Alamos Ordinance No. 717, An Ordinance Authorizing Execution of Drinking Water State Revolving Loan 5638 in the amount of \$2,727,000.00 for the Replacement of Water Production Motor Controls and Associated Electrical and Mechanical Equipment Project, and forward to the County Council for Approval.

Yes: 5 - Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Board Member Wright, Board Member McLin, and Board Member Walker

6. CONSENT AGENDA

Member Tobin moved that the Board of Public Utilities approve the items on the Consent Agenda as presented and that the motions in the staff reports be included in the minutes for the record.

Yes: 5 - Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Board Member Wright, Board Member McLin, and Board Member Walker

- 6.A. [15353-22](#) Approval of Board of Public Utilities Meeting Minutes

I move that the Board of Public Utilities approve the meeting minutes as presented:

- 6.B. [15781-22](#) Approval of Task Order No. 1 to AGR22-67b with Souder Miller & Associates for Engineering Services to Paint Barranca Tank No. 2.

I move that the Board of Public Utilities Approve Task Order No. 1 to AGR22-67b with Souder Miller & Associates for Engineering Services to Paint Barranca Tank No. 2 in the Amount of \$234,985.36, which includes Gross Receipts Tax, and a Contingency in the amount of \$36,000, for a Total Project Budget of \$270,985.36, and forward to Council for approval.

- 6.C. [AGR0843-22a](#) Approval of Services Agreement No. AGR22-71 with Southwest Fire Defense, LLC in the amount of \$1,000,000.00, plus Applicable Gross Receipts Tax, for the Purpose of Electric Power Line Tree Trimming services near and around 15,000 volt energized power lines, as requested by the Department of Public Utilities.

I move that the Board of Public Utilities approve Services Agreement No. AGR22-71 with Southwest Fire Defense, LLC in the amount of \$1,000,000.00 plus applicable gross receipts tax, for the purpose of Electric Power Line Tree Trimming services near and around energized power lines, as requested by the Department of Public Utilities and forward to Council for approval.

7. BUSINESS

- 7.A. [15342-22](#) Approve the expenditure of \$220,000 plus applicable Gross Receipts Tax for the purchase, installation, and operation of two (2) DC Fast Chargers and approve Budget Revision 2022-41 in the Amount of \$135,600.

Mr. Cummins communicated to the board that Mr. Olbrich would present since he was the lead on the project. Mr. Olbrich provided some historical information regarding this request.

DPU is supporting the replacement of petroleum-fueled motor vehicles with all-electric vehicles by purchasing, installing, and operating two (2) DC Fast Chargers, one (1) each at the Municipal Building and White Rock Visitor Center parking lots, as illustrated in Attachment B. DPU is seeking approval of the following two expenditures for this project:

1. Task Order No. 5 with Allied 360, for the installation of two (2) DC Fast Chargers as described in Attachment B, in the amount of \$67,578 as detailed in Attachment C, and a contingency in the amount of \$17,038, for a total of \$84,616, plus applicable Gross Receipts Tax (GRT).

2. Purchase order with ChargePoint for two (2) Express 250 chargers, installation materials, shipping, and five (5) years of operations and maintenance support, in the amount of \$119,009 as detailed in Attachment D, and a contingency of \$2,975, for a total of \$121,984, plus applicable

DPU also seeks approval of Budget Revision 2022-41 in the amount of \$135,600 as detailed in Attachment A, to fund the purchase, installation, and operation of two (2) Direct Current (DC) fast chargers. This funding is required to pay for the upfront project

expenses that will later be reimbursed by a grant award from the Volkswagen Settlement Second Round Funding, in the amount of \$135,600 as detailed in Attachment E. There will be a cost for utility transformer and metering installation, in the amount of \$13,400, plus applicable GRT. Total project cost is \$220,000 plus applicable GRT. The use of the chargers will require a ChargePoint account. Users will be charged a fee of \$0.30/kWh which is the same fee established by the New Mexico General Services Department for several DC fast chargers in Santa Fe. Pricing can be adjusted as needed to achieve policy or financial goals and can be configured with different rates for County fleet use. DPU will gain access to utilization data for the two (2) charging stations; an example of the available data is detailed in Attachment F. These data will be valuable because it will allow DPU to keep ahead of EV charger demand in the County and more accurately forecast increased electric load from vehicle electrification. These will be the first level 3 DC fast chargers in Los Alamos and will help meet the growing electric vehicle charging needs of residents, commuters, and visitors.

DPU could pursue an alternative BPU-directed approach, or the EV charger project and grant funding may be abandoned. Detailed information regarding the fiscal impact was provided in the meeting packet. The staff impact would be included in normal duties.

Mr. Cummins and Mr. Olbrich responded to board member inquiries and provided clarifying information as appropriate. Mr. Cummins also responded to the board's brief discussion on DPU's role in a network of charging stations. He stated that this effort was to meet the FER adopted policy to support the replacement of petroleum fueled vehicles and that DPU needs to have a conversation about who should own the charging network going forward. It may make more sense for it to belong to Facilities and not DPU. Board members voiced their agreement.

Mr. Wright moved that the Board of Public Utilities approve the following:

- 1). The expenditure of \$67,578, with a contingency of \$17,038, for a total of \$84,616, plus applicable Gross Receipts Tax, for Task Order No. 5 with Allied 360 for the installation of DC Fast Chargers.**
- 2). The expenditure of \$119,009, with a contingency of \$2,975, for a total of \$121,984, plus applicable Gross Receipts Tax, for the purchase of DC Fast Chargers and services from ChargePoint Incorporated.**
- 3). Budget Revision 2022-41 in the amount of \$135,600 as summarized in Attachment A, and that Attachment A be made part of the minutes of this meeting.**

He further moved that these requests be forwarded to Council for final approval.

Yes: 4 - Board Members Stromberg, Tobin, Wright and Walker

No: 1 - Board Member McLin

7.B. [15217-21](#)

Conservation Initiatives Funded by the LA Green Program

Ms. D'Anna communicated that in April 2021 the BPU was presented with options for using LA Green funds and the BPU directed staff to use the funds for green power initiatives or conservation-type programs. Subsequent to that discussion, staff is presenting a list of items they desire to purchase for use in conservation programming. The current balance in the LA Green revenue account is \$19,894. Purchases are expected to use as much as \$18,228 of that balance. Conservation programming will require purchase of energy-saving, electric appliances for demonstration purposes. Placing these appliances strategically where customers can see, touch, and use them will encourage adoption of like items. Additionally, DPU's Conservation Coordinator will be able to use the appliances in programming that will include demonstrations, community gatherings where participants can bring their own lunch to cook on an induction stove top, portable appliance checkout program, and so forth.

Encouraging adoption of such energy-saving appliances is an important method for DPU to reach its long-term goal of carbon neutrality and elimination of natural gas. Additionally,

for a small investment, these expenditures will achieve some of the LARES goals -- GR-8, CP-3, NG-6, NG-7, and NG-8. As an alternatives to the options presented, the BPU may decide to keep LA Green funds unused and save them for a different initiative. There is no fiscal or staff impact at this time.

Ms. D'Anna and Mr. Shelton responded to board member inquiries and provided clarifying information as appropriate. There were no members of the public in attendance.

Member Walker moved that the Board of Public Utilities allow spending of LA Green funds on conservation programs

Yes: 4 - Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Board Member Wright and Board Member Walker

No: 1 - Board Member McLin

8. STATUS REPORTS

8.A. [15354-22](#) Status Reports for March 2022

The following informational status reports were provided to the Board in the agenda packet:

- 1). Electric Reliability Update
- 2). Accounts Receivables Report
- 3). Safety Report

8.B. [15802-22](#) Quarterly Transactional Survey Report

Ms. D'Anna reported that GreatBlue Research provided results of DPU's Transactional Survey for the first quarter. With reduced in-person operations from mid-January through most of February, we anticipated the response rate might be slim and it was. Across Customer Care, Gas Water Sewer crews, and Electric Distribution crews, we received 19 responses from January through March.

Crews and representatives have business cards asking customers to take a survey about their interactions. The cards have QR codes printed on them that take users straight to the survey. The survey was also promoted on social media and Customer Care Center representatives followed up on email interactions with the survey link. Because responses were light in spite of efforts, we have added a couple of new approaches.

1) We are sending the survey link to customers who called in to the Customer Care Center via text. The message says: "Hello from the Dept of Public Utilities. You recently interacted with our Customer Care Center. Would you please rate that interaction for us at the link below? Thank you from Los Alamos DPU (505) 662-8333. <https://ladpu.com/123>." An unsubscribe option is included at the end of the text. The first text broadcast took place on April 6 and went to 395 phone numbers. Of those 392 were delivered, 20 people opted out, and 20 people responded to the survey that evening.

2) Customer Care Center representatives are adding the survey link to their email signatures with a request for customers to rate their interactions. While we've added these steps to increase responses for the Customer Care Center, we are still brainstorming how to increase responses for field crews.

Highlights from the survey include:

- * Most Customer Care interactions were for business as usual (moves, payments, and billing questions)
- * Only one person had to make contact more than once to resolve an issue
- * Scores for a variety of customer service attributes were in the "good" range for 100% of customers across all categories *

Ms. D'Anna responded to board member inquiries and provided clarifying information as appropriate. There were no members of the public in attendance.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Wright opened the floor for public comment on any items. There were no members of the public in attendance.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

APPROVAL

Board of Public Utilities Chair Name

Board of Public Utilities Chair Signature

Date Approved by the Board