



LOS ALAMOS

County of Los Alamos

Minutes

Board of Public Utilities

1000 Central Avenue
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Carrie Walker, Chair; Stephen McLin, Vice-chair; Eric Stromberg, Steve Tobin and Cornell Wright Members
Philo Shelton, Ex Officio Member
Harry Burgess, Ex Officio Member
Randall Rytli, Council Liaison

Friday, October 9, 2020

12:00 PM

Due to COVID-19 concerns, meeting will be conducted remotely. Public can view proceedings at <http://losalamos.legistar.com/calendar.aspx> or attend via Zoom.

SPECIAL SESSION - REMOTE ZOOM MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Incorporated County of Los Alamos Board of Public Utilities was held on Friday, October 9th at 12:00 p.m. at 1000 Central Ave., Council Chambers. Board Chair Carrie Walker called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.

The meeting was held remotely and BPU members, staff and the public participated through an online video conferencing platform. This social distancing was to comply with the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Members of the public were able to live-stream the meeting online and submit public comment during the meeting.

Present 6 - Vice Chair McLin, Board Member Stromberg, Board Member Tobin, Chair Walker, Board Member Wright and Board Member Shelton

Absent 1 - Board Member Burgess

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Walker opened the floor for public comment on items not otherwise included on the agenda. There were no comments.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

4. BUSINESS

4.A [13254-20](#)

Define Conservation Objectives and Strategic Planning for the Department of Public Utilities

Presenters: Philo Shelton

The Utilities Manager is expected to annually develop strategic objectives and long-term goals and present them to the Board for approval. The Utilities Manager has scheduled a meeting on October 23rd for staff to begin strategic planning for fiscal year 2022. Staff plans to return to the Board at the October 21st regular meeting to present and request approval of any proposed revisions to the Mission, Vision, Values (MVV), strategic objectives, and long-term goals. Prior to that, staff would like Board input to incorporate into planning efforts to ensure alignment of focus areas, strategic objectives and goals with Board and County priorities.

A consultant from Human Strategies, LLC, Dawn Reed was present to facilitate the meeting and gather feedback. The exercises also included the development of new electric, water and gas conservation objectives, using input from the Conservation Committee, and a discussion about lessons learned from the Management Team's experiences with implementing the Baldrige model for performance excellence.

Changes to the MVVs and strategic objectives suggested by members were tentatively agreed upon by general consensus prior to the exercise to prioritize the objectives. These are noted in the attached document along with the results of the prioritization exercise.

Ms. Walker called for a recess at 1:54 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 2:00 p.m.

Ms. Walker opened the floor for public comment before the Board conducted their strategic objective prioritization exercise. Members of the public gave the following summarized comments:

- 1) Robert Gibson - Mr. Gibson provided a written report, which is included in the minutes as an attachment.
- 2) Councilor Ryti - Councilor Ryti emphasized that the County also has overarching sustainability and communication goals, which were topics the Board discussed at this meeting. With regards to rooftop solar, Councilor Ryti believed that many factors determine whether or not that is the best financial decision for individuals, but it boils down to a personal decision. With regards to gathering public input about Board objectives, he feels it is important to make sure that the complex issues discussed today are shared with the public in a way that helps the Board collect feedback to understand what the public wants in terms of the objectives. Councilor Ryti's opinion is that people have been elected to represent the community on policy decisions, and the public has the right to give information to help those people make informed decisions.

The Board conducted a plus/delta exercise to note what they liked and what they would change about the meeting. That is also included in the minutes as an attachment.

In addition to new objectives suggested by the Board, the following actions were identified for follow-up:

- 1) The revised MVVs and strategic objectives will be brought to the Board at their October 21st regular meeting for approval.

- 2) At this meeting, staff had intended to discuss possible alternatives to the Baldrige method for performance excellence, but due to time constraints, this was removed from the schedule of exercises. Staff will return to the Board at a later date to discuss this topic and receive Board input.
- 3) The Board would like a future presentation on the historical depletion and recharge rate of the regional aquifer that supports Los Alamos, along with future projections.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Walker opened the floor for public comment on any items. Members of the public gave the following summarized comments:

1) Mr. Robert Gibson, 1465 Camino Redondo - Mr. Gibson noted that goal setting is one of the most important things bodies such as this do. He has participated in many such exercises over the years. He felt that this was one of the most organized, substantive and effective discussions he has observed or been involved in. He felt it was very productive and enlightening.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

APPROVAL

Board of Public Utilities Chair Name

Board of Public Utilities Chair Signature

Date Approved by the Board

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
MISSION/VISION/VALUES STATEMENTS
Proposed Revisions for Board of Public Utilities
FOR APPROVAL – October 21st, 2020**

MISSION

Provide safe and reliable utility services in an economically and environmentally sustainable fashion.

VISION

Be a high-performing utility matched to our community, contributing to its future with diversified and innovative utility solutions.

VALUES

We value our:

- CUSTOMERS by being service oriented and fiscally responsible;
- EMPLOYEES AND PARTNERSHIPS by being a safe, ethical and professional organization that encourages continuous learning;
- ~~ENVIRONMENT~~ ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES through innovative ~~and progressive~~ solutions;
- COMMUNITY by being communicative, organized and transparent.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
FY2022 STRATEGIC GOALS & OBJECTIVES
WITH BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES SUGGESTED CHANGES & PRIORITIZATION
For Board Approval – October 21, 2020**

- Priority indicated by number of “dots” allotted by each member (8 dots per member - nominal group technique).
- 2 members allotted 1 dot equally between 5 objectives.

FOCUS AREA - OPERATIONS & PERFORMANCE

GOAL - 1.0 Provide safe and reliable utility services.

--	.4	1.1 OBJECTIVE - WATER (WP/NP/DW) - Efficiently deliver safe and reliable water utility services.
--	.4	1.2 OBJECTIVE - GAS - Efficiently deliver safe and reliable gas utility services.
--	.4	1.3 OBJECTIVE - SEWER (WC & WT) - Efficiently deliver safe and reliable sewer utility services.
--	.4	1.4 OBJECTIVE - ELECTRIC (EP) - Efficiently deliver safe and reliable electric production utility services.
--	.4	1.5 OBJECTIVE - ELECTRIC (ED) - Efficiently deliver safe and reliable electric distribution utility services.
● ●	2	1.6 OBJECTIVE - BUSINESS SYSTEMS - Efficiently implement and maintain secure and reliable business systems.
	0	1.7 OBJECTIVE - Utility control and mapping systems and processes are accurate, safe and secure.
●	1	1.8 OBJECTIVE - Develop a culture of continuous improvement.

FOCUS AREA - FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

GOAL - 2.0 Achieve and maintain excellence in financial performance.

● ● ● ●	4	2.1 OBJECTIVE - Utilize revenues to provide a high level of service while keeping rates competitive with similar utilities.
●	1	2.2 OBJECTIVE - Conduct cost of service studies for each utility at least every 5 years.
	0	2.3 OBJECTIVE - Meet financial plan targets by 2025, water by 2028.
●	1	2.4 OBJECTIVE – Achieve workplans while operating within budget.

FOCUS AREA - CUSTOMERS & COMMUNITY

GOAL - 3.0 Be a customer service-oriented organization that is communicative, efficient, and transparent.

● ●	2	3.1 OBJECTIVE - Customer service processes and systems are efficient, secure and user-friendly.
●	1	3.2 OBJECTIVE - Stakeholders are engaged in and informed about Utilities operations affecting the community.
● ●	2	3.2.1 OBJECTIVE – Conduct a community survey of the new conservation objectives.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
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FOCUS AREA - WORKFORCE

GOAL - 4.0 Sustain a capable, satisfied, engaged, ethical and safe workforce focused on customer service.

●	1	4.1 OBJECTIVE - Leaders invest in employee training and professional development.
●●	2	4.2 OBJECTIVE - Employees promote a culture of safe, and ethical and customer focused behavior.
●	1	4.3 OBJECTIVE - Employees are engaged, satisfied and fairly compensated.

FOCUS AREA - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

GOAL - 5.0 Achieve environmental sustainability.

●●●●●●●	7	5.1 OBJECTIVE - ELECTRIC (EP & ED) Be a carbon neutral electric provider by 2040.
●●●●	4	5.2 OBJECTIVE - Electric efficiency is promoted through targeted electric conservation programs. Increase local solar peak production to 6 MW by 2040. (This is 30% of local solar produced based on LAC peak load of 18 MW)
●	1	5.3 OBJECTIVE - WATER (DW) – Reduce potable water use by 12% per capita per day by 2030 using a 2020 calendar year-end baseline.
●●●●●	5	5.4 OBJECTIVE - GAS – Reduce natural gas usage by 5% per capita per heating degree day by 2030 using a 2020 calendar year-end baseline and support elimination of natural gas usage by 2070.
●●	2	5.5 OBJECTIVE - SEWER (WT) – Provide C class 1A effluent water in LAC. is provided in White Rock.

FOCUS AREA - PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL - 6.0 Develop and strengthen partnerships with stakeholders.

●	1	6.1 OBJECTIVE - Communicate with stakeholders to strengthen existing partnerships and identify new potential mutually beneficial partnering opportunities.
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Board of Public Utilities
Strategic Planning Meeting
October 19, 2020
Plus/Delta

+ What Did You Like About the Meeting?	Δ What Would you Change?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perhaps do not allow split votes (“dots”) in the nominal group technique prioritization exercise.• Would like a chance for free, less scripted discussion on open topics if there is a way to work it into the schedule, particularly to discuss what we need to change and where we can do better.

ATTACHMENT WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS

People who give public comment at a meeting may submit a written copy before, during or after the meeting to be included in the minutes.

Comments on Conservation Committee Recommended Goals

To Board of Public Utilities

Meeting of 9 Oct 20

Robert Gibson, 1465 Camino Redondo, Los Alamos

Madam Chair & Board,

I would like to comment on two of the Conservation Committee's recommended goals.

First and most importantly, the recommended goal to "eliminate use of natural gas" is most laudable. The Committee is to be commended for putting it forward. Natural gas use by the citizens of Los Alamos County is responsible for around 62,000 metric tonnes per year of Carbon dioxide or equivalent emissions, three-fourths as much as the typically 84,000 tonnes per year associated with electric power generation. We cannot continue to ignore it.

I would like to suggest a different phrasing of the goal more in parallel to the Board's goal, "to be a carbon neutral electric provider by 2040." Please consider phrasing the gas goal something like, "to phase out natural gas distribution by 2070." While it says the same thing as the Committee's recommended goal, hopefully, it sounds more deliberate and less draconian while also establishing a challenging but realistic target date.

The goal date is arbitrary. It could be replaced with another or "no later than the end of this century." The important thing is to so formally recognize the existence of a problem by setting a goal to mitigate it. Plans and interim milestones can then be developed toward reaching that goal. As with the electric goal, they will take thought and time to develop initially and then will evolve.

Unlike the electricity goal, this one is not largely within the purview of Utilities. But someone needs to lead. Utilities can do that by adopting a natural gas goal, regardless of how it is stated. The likely next step would be for the Board, in its advisory capacity, to recommend to Council that it join in this goal.

Unless someone figures out how to replace natural gas with hydrogen, the obvious substitute is direct solar space and water heating. That requires changes to siting plans and building codes which, of course, are in Council's purview.

It is unfortunate that Council has been unwilling to consider this matter before the current round of construction. Those buildings will be with us most of this century. Retrofit is not as straightforward as building for solar heat in the first place. But we have to start some time; it may as well be now.

I would also like to comment briefly on the Committee's recommendation to "accommodate a massive increase in residential and local solar." It appears the Committee's recommendation is intended to guide development of a two-way "smart grid" distribution system to absorb and distribute power generated by distributed sources, e.g., "rooftops."

Rooftop solar is much more expensive than utility-scale solar. "Massive" amounts would require the revamped distribution system this goal appears to direct.

Is there real indication of a "massive increase" in distributed solar or the community's appetite for the large capital investment by DPU (i.e., ratepayers) to facilitate it?

In any case, this goal should be clarified.

Thank you.