

Seattle Public Utilities Customer Review Panel

Monday, November 2, 2020, 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Virtual Meeting held via WebEx

Panel Members			
Suzie Burke		Noel Miller	X
Bobby Coleman	X	Thy Pham	
Dave Layton	X	Rodney Schauf	X
Laura Lippman	X	Puja Shaw	X
Maria McDaniel	X		
Staff and Others			
Keri Burchard-Juarez	x	Andrew Lee	X
Kathleen Baca		Natasha Papsoueva	X
Alex Chen	X	Ellen Pepin-Cato	
Jeff Fowler	X	Dani Purnell	X
Brian Goodnight		Karen Reed	X
Mami Hara	X	Karen Sherry	X
Akshay Iyengar	X	Karl Stickel	X
Paula Laschober	X	Jonathan Swift	X

Underlined text indicates action items. ***Bold Italicized text*** indicates follow up items.

Meeting Summary

Welcome: Karen Reed opened the meeting with a roll call of the Panel members and reviewed the virtual meeting protocols. Dave will join the meeting late. Suzie and Bobby are not able to participate.

Mami Hara, General Manager/CEO of Seattle Public Utilities (SPU), welcomed the Panel and thanked them for their time. She then reviewed the meeting agenda. Mami announced that Jonathan Swift, SPU Strategic Advisor and Strategic Business Plan/Customer Review Panel lead, will be leaving SPU in early November. Mami thanked Jonathan for his hard work as did others on the Panel. Dani Purnell, Corporate Policy Division Director, will assume Jonathan’s role with the Panel until a permanent replacement is named.

Standing Items: Karen asked for any corrections or additions to the meeting summary from the September 14, 2020 meeting. No corrections or additions were made and the meeting summary for September 14, 2020 was approved.

Karl Stickle, Finance Director, provided a 2021 budget update. Not much has changed since the previous update. SPU’s finances are in good shape. Seven full time employees (FTEs) from Seattle IT will be moved to SPU. The Mayor announced that non-represented employees in management and executive pay bands will forgo scheduled 2021 salary increases. SPU’s rate path has not changed and the Council did not ask to be briefed on the SPU budget. The City Council needs to approve the King County pass through charge and we assume that will happen.

Q: What is the FTE assumption for the next 6 years? A: Seven positions from Seattle IT will be moved to

SPU. SPU is not assuming any large increases in total FTE count over the next few years. There are no FTE increases in 2021. There is currently a hiring freeze and any new position requests will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

Q: Is the 3% inflation factor a cushion? A: The 3% assumption was made based on forecasts at the time.

Rates will be finalized when the King County pass through has been approved in the final budget.

Q: Is there any hope that the things for the unsheltered population will get any better from a budget standpoint in the next five years? A: This is a complex problem that requires a lot of work and funding. We hope SPU's work will make a difference.

CIP Draft Reporting for 2021-2026 SBP Natasha Papsoueva, Corporate Performance Director and Keri Burchard-Juarez, Deputy Director for the Project Delivery and Engineering Branch (PDEB), presented. The CIP draft report is the final piece of reporting to be presented to the Panel. Keri showed the Panel a new document called the SPU Capital Investment Projects – PDEB Portfolio. The right-hand column provides key updates on SPU's most important projects. The left-hand column shows spending upcoming opportunities for businesses to submit Requests for Proposals and Construction Bids. The back page shows the phase an individual project is in. This report will be presented to the Panel on a quarterly basis. SPU has been working hard on this report and would like to get the Panel's feedback.

Natasha showed the Panel a new website that shows projects and other activities happening by neighborhood. The idea is for users to be able to drill down and get more detailed information. Project budget and schedule information will appear in real time. In February 2021 we will review the new SBP report layout with the Panel. This will include initiatives and investments, metrics and CIP reporting. We will present Q1 2021 data in the new format in May 2021. The layout of the new reporting will appear in the SBP appendix.

Q: What do the green areas of the city map represent? A: Those are probably showing drainage areas. Once the site is live, you can filter and turn off that information.

Q: Why is there a smaller number of projects on the first page of the report as compared to the back page? A: The first pages has projects SPU thinks are of interest to the Panel and is not meant to be a comprehensive list.

Q: Can you add budget information for each project and whether or not the project is on budget? A: Yes, we can add a budget and a variance column.

Seeds of Resilience – Dani Purnell, Corporate Policy Director, presented. The 'Seeds of Resilience' impact investment concept was previously called the blue/green jobs initiative. SPU is still developing the concept so we won't discuss much detail at this time, just the bones of what we are looking at. The concept will align with SPU's vision for the next 50 years with the focus on community centered, one water and zero waste. A sample of the concept points include focusing on market development, reinvesting ratepayer dollars in community-lead efforts and targeting BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) job opportunities. The program will follow eight design principles and will appear as an initiative in the SBP Strategic Initiatives and Investments table. SPU's goal is to have the proposal vetted by the Mayor's Office in time to be adopted into the SBP in Q1 2021. If this happens, the CRP will be provided an opportunity to review the proposal and include a recommendation in the Panel letter.

Q: I am concerned where the funds will be allocated from in order to do this within the existing rate path.

A: SPU is evaluating that now. We do not want to impact the current rate path.

Q: Have nonprofit community partners been identified? A: Not yet. Please let us know if you have any ideas.

Maria – you should reach out to Seattle city clubs. Maria has additional information she can provide.

Comment: It would be helpful to learn more about the community members and how that would work.

Q: Is there a relationship to the Green New Deal (GND)? Can some of the overlap be sorted out? A: Yes, there is a relationship. We will coordinate with the Mayor's Office and other departments involved with the GND.

SBP Update - Vanessa Lund, Cocker Fennessy, reviewed changes that have been made to the language in the plan since the Panel's last review in May. Changes were made in an effort to make the document understandable. There was also so fine tuning for accuracy.

Q: Will the financial forecast be made available to the Panel? A: Yes, it will be in the appendix. It is being finalized and sent out to you when complete.

Q: Where will the Panel letter appear? It should be mentioned somewhere and have a link to the document. A: It will be posted on the SBP website.

Executive Summary: We tried to keep it to two pages but ended up with four. It highlights the four focus areas.

Q: How are you going to make it pretty? A: Good designers!! We are using the 1% for Art program for some assistance.

Q: Can we learn more about the donations program? A: Yes, we will put that on a future agenda.

Q: Will the text be updated or just the look and feel of the report? A: There will be some minor word adjustments. The look and feel will undergo more updating.

Q: I don't see anything about the unsheltered population the plan. My peers ask about that topic. A: It is part of page 2. We will add something more specific about this goal.

Panel Deliberations: Karen Reed lead the Panel through a discussion of their letter. Additional work will happen at the December 14 meeting.

Next Steps: SPU plans to submit the final SBP mid-Q1 2021 and will work with the Mayor's Office and Council the process and scheduling public hearings. There are no detail to share yet.

Meeting adjourned at 2:50 pm.