

REPRESENTATIVE POLICY BOARD
CONSUMER AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 20, 2023
MEETING TRANSCRIPTION

Mark:

I would like to call the Consumer Affairs of the Regional Water Company Authority meeting to order. First thing I like to remind everybody is this is being recorded, and the first thing I'd like to talk about is our safety moment. I'm sure everybody's aware of Daylight Saving time. You got to watch out for fatigue, accident, decreased visibility, pedestrians walking in the dusk, all those things. You see those all now. Use Daylight Savings time to check and replace batteries. That's the most important thing. Check your batteries in your smoke detector, carbon monoxide. Prepare a winter emergency kit, check your fire extinguishers. Those are all good things.

And the next item on the agenda is public comment. Do we have anybody here who'd like to say anything before the meeting starts?

Jennifer:

I don't see anyone from the public.

Mark:

Okay. Now I think in order to hear the 10-year model, we need a motion to go into executive session. Am I correct?

Stephen:

Mark, can I just ask why we need to do this in executive session? I know part of it may be, but is all of it, or is it just because we may ask something? Why are we in executive session? Can someone explain that to me?

Larry:

Well, we're going into executive session because one it's financial modeling and talking about different scenarios in terms of rate cases, but it's also going to cover competitive commercial information as well. And it's a strategy discussion that generally is exempt from open hearings.

Stephen:

Okay. Thanks, Larry. I know we hadn't done this in the past usually, but...

Larry:

And our business is getting a bit different than it has been in the past, so thus the requirement or the request for an executive session.

Stephen:

Okay.

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
November 20, 2023

Rochelle:

We did do it last year as well. We had some strategy items to discuss.

Stephen:

Thank you.

Mark:

Okay. Can I get a motion?

Stephen:

So moved.

Tony:

Second.

Mark:

Now, who is joining executive session? Who's here? We want everybody that we have here going to executive session? It looks like that to me would be okay. Does anybody have any problems with the people that are here going to executive session?

Stephen:

There's no one from the public. There's just the OCA, I guess RPB, and management.

Mark:

Yeah. So everybody who's on this team meeting is invited to executive session. We have a motion that's seconded. All those in favor going into executive session say aye.

Committee:

Aye.

Mark:

So it looks like it passed, and now we're in executive session.

[EXECUTIVE SESSION FROM 5:32 P.M. TO 6:50 P.M.]

Do we have a second?

Mark:

Okay. We're out of executive session. We need a motion, now, to approve our minutes.

Stephen:

So moved.

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
November 20, 2023

Tony:
Second.

Mark:
Thank you very much. All those in favor of approval of the minutes of our October 16th meeting, please say, aye.

Committee:
Aye.

Mark:
Thank you very much. The report of the OCA, Jeffrey Donofrio.

Jeff:
Good evening. No pending consumer complaints. Pretty quiet on the OCA front. We did talk about at an executive committee meeting at some point, having a special meeting with the authority and management, most of which would have to be conducted in executive session because of the proprietary confidential and strategic nature of the information we'd be discussing, really focused on the commercial business. If you look at the last two memoranda that the OCA submitted, in connection with the last two hearings on applications for the acquisition of Targets 1 and 2, you'll see that I had made a recommendation along those lines, and hopefully we can set up a meeting.

An enormous amount of effort, obviously, goes into the 10-year model by authority management, and Rochelle does an absolutely fantastic job of presenting it in a way that really is easy to follow. But it is very much a summary, and the commercial side of things, based on the different models, I think, is something that deserves a little bit more understanding by the RPB and the OCA, and a little bit more devoted dialogue because of the variety of options, and potential alternatives, without going into any of the details, because it is confidential, proprietary, strategic information, but that's something just on the OCA front.

We don't have any pending applications right now. Maybe we can take advantage of the slow period. Only on my end is it slow, right? It's not slow ever, for management at the authority, but just something maybe whether it's in conjunction with the budget planning process that will be hitting full stride on in a few months, or whatever. It's convenient for the authority, and the five member authority, and the RPB. It's just a request that I would reiterate because I think it's appropriate, both in terms of timing, and in terms of the very different potential impacts that we saw on the tenure model.

Larry:
Jeff, this is Larry. Bob Harvey had mentioned, at a meeting that David and I had with him, that there was a need to further explain what the management strategy is on the commercial business. We had planned on having an overview discussion of that topic at the January executive committee meeting. We can certainly include a broader discussion of the commercial business during the budget planning process, which you recall a few years ago, we committed to having a discussion about the commercial business during the budget planning process, when everybody was together at the various committees.

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
November 20, 2023

Jeff:

That's terrific. I appreciate that, Larry. Thank you.

Larry:

Thank you.

Jeff:

Other than that, Mr. Chair, like I said, there's no pending consumer complaints, and nothing on my desk right now.

Mark:

Well, that's great. That's good to hear. Next thing on the agenda is... does somebody have a question?

Naomi:

I have a question for Jeff. Jeff, has this been resolved in New Haven for White Street yet? It just says corresponding, so is that still going?

Jeff:

Yeah. Sunny has been keeping me in the loop, with regard to the exchange they've had with the customer. As far as I understand it, the ball really is in the customer's court at this point. Other than that one Zoom meeting that I was a part of, the customer hasn't contacted me at all. The authority has sent me correspondence that it has had with the customer, that as far as I can tell, the customer is satisfied with the resolution of it. But there's still some work that needs to be done by the customer.

Prem:

That's correct, Jeff. That's correct. I think the ball is in customer's court, and I think the most recent update was that he's working on the meter valve thing, where he had poured concrete and stuff. But the customer's happy. He's working with us, and there's no further escalations on it, Naomi, right?

Naomi:

Okay. Thank you.

Mark:

Great. Any other questions? Jeff? I'm sorry. Okay. The approval of the OCA's invoice for October 2023, for \$1,560.

Naomi:

I so move.

Tony:

Second.

Mark:

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
November 20, 2023

All those in favor?

Committee:

Aye.

Mark:

Opposed? Motion carries. Adopt the calendar year for 2024. These are our meeting dates. Does anybody have a problem with them? I don't know right off bat when the Jewish holidays are, so I can't give you a yes or no, but they look good to me, and I'm sure Jennifer checks that. All those in favor of adopting the Consumer Affairs Committee proposed meeting dates?

Tony:

I would move the calendar.

Stephen:

I'll second it.

Mark:

All those in favor?

Committee:

Aye.

Mark:

Thank you. That passes. The next thing, our next discussion regarding future committee meeting logistics. Do we want to talk about whether we want to keep it as virtual, hybrid, or that you have to come to the meeting. Does anybody have any opinions on this?

Tony:

I'm loving the virtual.

Mark:

So am I.

Tony:

For obvious reasons. I just think the one benefit, I think, that came out of COVID was that we can do this. That we can do it effectively.

Mark:

I think you're right.

Tony:

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
November 20, 2023

I think it's more costly for everybody if we have to come into the Authority. It's nice to see people in person, but I think if you can keep it at least hybrid, that would be ideal for me.

Mark:

Well, I think it's more difficult for Jennifer to have the meeting hybrid, because she has to set up everything, and all that. I agree with you. I'm really enjoying the virtual meetings. I think Bob said it himself, when he recommended that we go to the RPB meeting, which I have to agree with. I'm sorry that I missed it myself. I tried to make it, but I couldn't. I suggest that we all try to go to the big RPB meeting, but I would like to keep it myself as virtual. Does anybody have anything to say about that, more?

Stephen:

Hey, Mark? This is Steve. I just think that once in a while, if there's any outside guests that come in, or whatever, it just might be good to have an in-person meeting once in a while, or the need may occur once in a while. Just a thought.

Mark:

I have no problem with that. Does anybody have a problem with that? I don't think anybody has a problem with that.

Tony:

No.

Mark:

Why don't we decide from meeting to meeting, then? Does anybody have... We should do that for meeting to meeting. Our next regular meeting is on Monday, December 18th, 2023 at 5:30. Let's make it virtual. Does anybody have any problems? I guess not.

Stephen:

I guess it depends on the topic. Prem, is that okay with you?

Mark:

What's the topic, Prem? He'll come up with something.

Prem:

It's going to work.

Mark:

Sounds good. Sounds good. Any new business that come before us? We had a pretty long meeting this time. That's an hour and a half.

Tony:

I move we adjourn, and wish everybody a happy Thanksgiving.

Representative Policy Board
Consumer Affairs Committee
November 20, 2023

Mark:

Don't forget to have a safe, happy Thanksgiving.