

## MINUTES

### Colorado Springs Utilities Board Meeting Wednesday, February 16, 2022

**Utilities Board members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:**

Chair Wayne Williams, Vice Chair Mike O'Malley, Dave Donelson, Randy Helms, Bill Murray, Stephannie Fortune, Yolanda Avila, Nancy Henjum, and Tom Strand

**Staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Aram Benyamin, Travas Deal, Earl Wilkinson III, Joe Awad, Sarah LaBarre, Cindy Newsome, Natalie Watts and Andie Buhl

**City of Colorado Springs staff members present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Bethany Burgess and Jeff Greene

**Citizens present via Microsoft Teams or Blue River Conference Room:** Cindy Aubrey, Mary Burton, David Amess, and Sam Masias

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Wayne Williams called the Utilities Board meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and Ms. Andie Buhl, Utilities Board Administrator, called the roll.

Chair Williams welcomed Board Member Stephannie Fortune to her first Utilities Board meeting.

#### 2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Pastor John Prichard delivered the invocation and Chair Williams led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 3. Consent Calendar

##### 3a. Approval of Minutes: January 19, 2022

Board Member Strand moved approval of the Consent Calendar and Board Member Donelson seconded the motion. The Consent Calendar was unanimously approved with a minor change to the January 19, 2022 minutes.

#### 4. Recognition

##### Behind the Scenes – Rotational Engineering Program

Mr. Aram Benyamin, Chief Executive Officer, and Chair Williams recognized the Rotational Engineering Program. Mr. Benyamin said the program launched in January 2022, and it is designed to prepare entry-level engineers to fill the future engineering needs of the organization. He introduced the first members of the program, who are mechanical engineer graduates from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs.

## **2021-2022 Colorado Springs Utilities Employee Giving Campaign with Pikes Peak United Way**

Mr. Benyamin explained how the annual employee giving campaign at Springs Utilities is one way that employees give back to the community. He thanked staff for their contributions.

Mr. Earl Wilkinson III, Chief Water, Compliance & Innovation Officer, explained how the campaign is accomplished at Springs Utilities, and listed staff members of this year's Employee Giving Campaign Committee. He said 170 employees generously pledged \$81,205.00 and of that, \$36,636.00 went to Project COPE, which will be doubled by a matching grant from Springs Utilities.

Ms. Cindy Aubrey, Pikes Peak United Way President and CEO, Mary Burton, Resource Development Manager, and Mr. David Amess, Senior Vice President of Resource Development, thanked staff and other contributors who were part of the campaign. She personally thanked and expressed gratitude for Springs Utilities employees helping the community.

Board Member Fortune, who also serves as a member on the Pikes Peak United Way Board, also thanked employees who contributed to the Employee Giving Campaign.

### **5. Customer Comments**

Mr. Sam Masias introduced himself to the Utilities Board and expressed dissatisfaction about past events that have occurred at Springs Utilities and how the organization handled them.

### **6. Compliance Reports**

- Economic Development (I-5)
- Community Investment (I-13)
- Annual Board Evaluation (C-2)
  - Chair Williams explained how the Annual Board Evaluation (C-2) is a self-evaluation of the Board and read the results of the evaluation. The Board engaged in discussion expressing concerns as well as areas of opportunities based on the scores.
  - Mr. Masias provided comment and continued to express dissatisfaction about past events that have occurred at Springs Utilities and how the organization handled them.
- E-2 CEO Responsibilities
  - ECA/GCA Update
  - Water Outlook

Chair Williams explained that compliance reports are on the agenda by exception and asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Mr. Benyamin provided a brief supply chain update. He explained how the organization is surveying materials and delivery timelines, and the steps Springs Utilities is taking based on the current supply chain status.

#### **7. Items Called Off Consent Calendar**

None

#### **8. Enterprise Innovation Update**

Mr. Wilkinson explained the concept of innovation at Springs Utilities, and how it integrates with the organization's Lean initiative. He said leaders at all levels are focused on creating a culture that invites and supports innovation. Mr. Wilkinson explained which projects are innovative at Springs Utilities and said the Enterprise Innovation (I-14) compliance report is due annually in August.

Mr. Masias provided comment and expressed concerns about the current state of innovative technology at Springs Utilities.

#### **9. Demand-Side Management (DSM) Energy and Water Conservation Calculations and Verification Standards**

Mr. Wilkinson gave an overview of 2022 DSM (Demand-Side Management) Energy and Water Conservation programs at Springs Utilities. He explained how Springs Utilities applies best practices in establishing and measuring standards for calculating savings/reductions for each efficiency program, which receive periodic review (measurement and verification) where assumptions and calculations are tested against actuals to calibrate.

Mr. Wilkinson requested adoption from the Utilities Board of the DSM Energy and Water Conservation Program Standards and Calculations – and said a similar request will be made annually to the Board.

The Board unanimously agreed to the adoption.

The Utilities Board took a break at 2:40 p.m. and reconvened at 2:51 p.m.

#### **10. Electric System – Overhead and Underground**

Mr. Joe Awad, Acting System Planning and Projects Officer, and Ms. Sarah LaBarre, Acting System Planning and Projects General Manager, gave an overview of Springs Utilities' electric system from an overhead and underground perspective. Ms. LaBarre said that transmission lines carry large voltages (115kV and above) of electricity from power plants to substations and that the organization has 238 miles of transmission with 89% overhead.

Ms. LaBarre said distribution lines deliver electricity from substations to homes and businesses and there are more than 3,600 miles of distribution lines with about 77% of them located underground.

Ms. LaBarre explained that electric masts are how customers receive power if they are served by an overhead distribution line. She said the masts are located outside on a roof or near a meter and resemble a metal pipe or tube.

Ms. LaBarre shared images of underground and overhead systems throughout the city and explained their various types and forms. She also shared maps that highlight the evolution of underground distribution lines pre-1960s subdivisions to present day overhead and underground installations. She also compared system reliability, explaining that overhead lines contribute to 51% of system outages while underground lines contribute to 49% of system outages.

Ms. LaBarre reviewed pros and cons of both overhead and underground lines and concluded with programs and costs for system conversions.

Mr. Masias provided comment and shared images of wooden poles supporting overhead transmission lines. He expressed concerns about how Springs Utilities calculates overhead conversions based on this example.

#### **11. Board Member Updates**

Board Member Avila asked if there will be closed captioning at next month's Utilities Board meeting, and shared updates about the Customer Service Department from February's Personnel Committee meeting.

Chair Williams explained how he attended Daniel's Fund interviews and expressed his thankfulness to be able to participate.

#### **12. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.