



## Wisconsin Public Utility Institute

### **Wisconsin Public Utility Institute Executive Board Meeting Meeting Minutes December 8, 2011**

The meeting was called to order by Cara Lee Mahany Braithwait at 8:33 a.m.

In attendance: Cara Lee Mahany Braithwait, WPU; David Benforado, MEUW; Charlie Higley, Citizens Utility Board; Barbara Nick, WPS Corp.; Peter Taglia, Peter Taglia E&E Consulting; Jeff Ripp (in for John Schulze), PSCW; Kristin Ruesch, PSCW (in for R.J. Pirlot); Scott Williams, WPU & UW Energy Institute; Jim Schubilske, We Energies; David Donovan, Xcel; Kevin Vesperman, WI Division of Energy Services (replaces Dave Jenkins); Terry Nicolai, Alliant; Paul Meier, UW Energy Institute; Steve Peters, Office of Rep. Josh Zepnick

By phone: Robert McKee, ATC; Cheryl Parrino, Cheryl Parrino Consulting; Jordan Hemaidan, Michael Best & Friedrich; P.J. Distefano (chair), Deloitte and Touche; Brian Rude, Dairyland Cooperative; Earl Gustafson, WI Paper Council;

Excused:; Lynn Hobbie, MG&E; John Imes, WEI; Mike Corradini, UW-Madison Engineering Physics;

#### **June Meeting Minutes**

Dave Donovan moved to approve minutes, Charlie Higley seconded. Dave Benforado asked everyone to review the minutes and double-check to see if they made a commitment to asking another organization to become a WPU member. Cara Lee said that many have followed through in contacting those organizations.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

#### **Nominations Committee**

Currently the charter states that one board member must represent either cooperative or municipal utilities. Cara Lee stated that she would like to reflect the differences between municipal and cooperative utilities by requiring both one cooperative representative and one municipal representative on the board. Though this would change the charter, it would not affect the current makeup of the board, because Brian Rude represents a cooperative utility and Dave Benforado represents municipal utilities.

The charter also states that a regional transmission organization must be on the board. This spot is not filled, although American Transmission Company does serve on the board and represents transmission

interests. Efforts have been made in the past to bring someone from Midwest ISO on the board but have not been successful. Bob McKee said he will contact a few people whom he knows at Midwest ISO about becoming a board member.

There is still an open position for a representative from the legislature. R.J. Pirlot and John Schulze reached out to Senator Zipperer's office about becoming a board member but have not received a response. It was decided to make another appeal to Sen. Zipperer. If he is not willing serve, Senator Cowles will be the next legislator to be contacted.

There is also an opening on the board for a business associated with distributed generation.

### **Budget**

WPUI has a balance of about \$57,000 for the first half of FY 2012. This is on top of about \$220,000 of carryover from previous years. Cash flow is very lumpy, especially with programs like Energy Utility Basics and EEI, which are the most expensive but also generate a lot of revenue. Cara Lee stressed the importance of having enough cash on hand to deal with the lumpy cash flow. Staff salary is about \$98,000, most of which is covered by membership fees. While some WPUI programs carried a negative balance, the revenues from Energy Utility Basics helped make up the difference.

The most pressing challenges are the economy and the effect that has had on in-person attendance to WPUI programs. At the same time, more speakers are asking for at least travel expenses to be paid for by WPUI. The program assistant position held by Linda White is ending at the end of December, and that role may need to be partially filled by a few different people.

### **Energy Hub Conference**

Ash Bharatkumar and Luke Vandenlangenberg gave a presentation on the efforts of Energy Hub. The student group held its annual conference on November 4 at the Wisconsin Institutes of Discovery. The topic was "Greening the Grid" and had a variety of speakers and students in attendance to discuss future grid issues and initiatives. The conference had 166 confirmed attendees from 50 different majors on campus.

For the upcoming year, Energy Hub plans to do more tours of energy facilities, such as the solar and geothermal systems at Epic as well as a nuclear power plant in Byron, IL. Students would also like to continue their outreach program to elementary students to teach them basic concepts of energy. Energy Hub would also like to work on collaborative programs with other energy student groups in the Midwest and around the country.

## **Past Programs**

Cara Lee reviewed the WPUI programs from the past calendar year, including:

- March 22: Understanding the Nuclear Emergency in Japan (follow-up May 6)
- March 29: EPA and the Energy Industry
- April 18-20: LPPC Rates Meeting
- May 19: Consumers, Conservation and Convenience
- June 10: Smart Grid Workshop
- July 14: Utilities as Transportation Fuel Providers
- July 24-27: EEI Advanced Rates Course
- August 1-5: EEI Transmission and Wholesale Markets course
- September 7: Smart Grid Cybersecurity
- October 3: Assessing Natural Gas' New Promises and Controversies
- October 24-28: Energy Utility Basics
- November 16-17: Nuclear Power Post-Fukushima

These programs brought in a number of top experts from around the country. Many of them were recorded and are available to view online as streaming video. Peter Taglia suggested for future board meetings to mark which ones were recorded in case board members want to view them or share with colleagues.

A program on advanced meters was canceled but will be held sometime in the spring of 2012. This program will only be open to members and those invited by members.

WPUI has secured the EEI Rates for next year, but whether it will run the EEI Transmission course again has yet to be determined.

EUB received a lot of positive feedback from attendees. The largest complaint was that the small-group sessions were not interactive enough. Cara Lee said she will work with the session leaders to make sure they incorporate more interaction into their presentations.

## **Membership**

Cara Lee took the suggestions of some board members and labeled the membership renewal letters as "invoices" to clear up confusion about what the letters were for. It appears to have paid off, because several members have renewed in a short amount of time. Cara Lee presented the list of current members and labeled which ones have already renewed for 2012 and which ones she believes could be at risk for not renewing. She will send out a note in January with an updated list of those who have not yet renewed.

Membership letters were also sent to former member organizations as well as organizations that had at least one employee attend a program in 2011.

It has been proposed that Foley and Lardner, in addition to becoming a member, also have a seat on the board. From discussions with Foley and Lardner, it was recommended that Brad Jackson serve this role. Dave Benforado suggested that the nominations committee meet within the next month to discuss this and other upcoming nomination issues and send out an e-mail with its recommendations to the board.

### **Programs in 2012**

WPUI is working with the State Bar Association on a program dealing with new EPA regulations and the effect on Wisconsin utilities. This program is scheduled for January 26.

WPUI also plans to pursue two programs that would be relevant to both energy and water utilities. These program ideas were developed in conversations with Jeff Ripp and John Schulze at the Public Service Commission. One program would discuss declining sales, increasing costs and increasing rates. The other would discuss economic development rates in Wisconsin. Cara Lee asked members of the board to help with planning either program. Barb Nick offered to help with the declining sales program, Charlie Higley and Terry Nicolai offered to help with economic development rates.

### **Other Possible Programs for 2012 and beyond**

Jeff Ripp suggested a program (or series of programs) related to delivering coordinated water and energy efficiency programs at utilities (especially municipals that own both). It could be framed as a sharing of best practices. Cara Lee was concerned about whether this would duplicate other organizations' efforts to do efficiency training, but it was suggested that WPUI could partner with these organizations.

Dave Benforado suggested a "History of Regulation in Wisconsin" power lunch. Dave Ludwig from PSCW gave a presentation on history of utility regulation at MEUW and has agreed to give it to a WPUI audience. Dave Benforado suggested the program would last a couple hours around noon and include a couple of former commissioners for their reaction. Cara Lee and Scott Williams will look into an appropriate venue and the possibility of tying it to a UW-Madison course on utilities or regulation.

Bob McKee asked the board to keep in mind FERC Order 1000 for a future discussion, either as its own program or as part of another program.

Jordan Hemaïdan suggested a program to look at the status of energy storage and reliability of renewable generation. Though energy storage may not have a near-term impact, it may be useful to understand where the technology currently stands. Barb Nick suggested a program with the title "Reliability, renewables, roles and responsibilities, and reality," which would deal with reliability issues of renewables and distributed generation.

Kevin Vesperman suggested a program focused on short-term uncertainty vs. long-term planning. The current availability of cheap gas is delaying decisions on longer-term issues relating to nuclear and coal plants and transmission, for example.

Peter Taglia suggested a program on biogas, and not just on the electric side. It could also focus on BioCNG as well as voluntary programs for customers to purchase renewable gas. It could be a partnership with the Wisconsin Bioenergy Initiative. Jeff Ripp suggested that Shaw Group may be interested in a program on this topic.

Barb Nick suggested an informational program on the evolving MISO market - "Operational challenges in an evolving world." Some smaller utilities may not be aware of roles and responsibilities under new NERC requirements. Emphasis would be on operators of small generation; anything that could affect the bulk power system. This would not be a training session but an opportunity to do "what if" scenarios. Brian Rude suggested surveying coops and munis to see where their needs are and their level of interest. Brian Rude, Bob McKee, Al Herman, and Dave Benforado agreed to help with putting together this program.

### **Other Business**

Cool Choices was recommended as a non-paying member – WPUI plans to work in collaboration with Cool Choices to put together programs around the region.

Scott Williams plans to hold a roundtable discussion on workforce development and how to create a better student pipeline to the energy industry. This roundtable will be preceded by individual conversations with different utilities and other companies in the energy utility industry.

The next board meeting will be held on Tuesday, July 10, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:59 a.m.