

## **WPUI Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

### **June 21, 2013**

Cara Lee Mahany Braithwait called the meeting to order at 8:09 a.m.

#### **Roll Call:**

Present: Peter Taglia – E&E Consulting, Tim Kallies – Wisconsin Public Service, Charlie Higley – Citizens Utility Board, Jeff Ripp (in for RJ Pirlot) – Public Service Commission, Dave Siebert – WI DNR, Matt Bromley – Customers First Coalition, Terry Nicolai – Alliant Energy, Robert McKee – American Transmission Company, David Donovan – Xcel Energy, John Sumi – Madison Gas and Electric, Michael Corradini – Wisconsin Energy Institute, PJ Distefano - Deloitte, Heather Leibham – We Energies.

Via Phone: Brian Rude – Dairyland, Earl Gustafson – WI Paper Council, Nilaksh Kothari – Manitowoc Public Utilities

Excused: Paul Meier – Wisconsin Energy Institute, Kevin Vesperman – State Energy Office, Jordan Hemaidan – Michael Best and Friedrich, Rep. Josh Zepnick, Sen. Paul Farrow

Unexcused: Bradley Jackson – Foley and Lardner

#### **December Meeting Minutes**

David Donovan moved to approve minutes. Peter Taglia seconded. There was no discussion. The motion was approved unanimously, with Nilaksh Kothari abstaining (was not a board member in December).

#### **Board Membership**

There were several new nominees to serve on the executive board and several board terms up for renewal.

Cara Lee proposed that Matt Bromley serve on the board to take John Imes' spot as a public interest group on the board. Customers First Coalition represents a wide range of stakeholders, including customer and environmental advocates, labor, and utility providers. Tim Kallies nominated Matt Bromley to serve on the board. David Donovan seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Cara Lee also proposed that Dave Siebert from the Wisconsin DNR serve in an At Large position on the board. Many issues before the utility industry require DNR approval/compliance, and the DNR's input is valuable for future programming. Peter Taglia nominated Dave Siebert to serve on the board. Terry Nicolai seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Nilaksh Kothari was introduced to the board as the board's representative from a municipal utility organization. Manitowoc Public Utilities provides both electricity and water, which will be important for future programs. Peter Taglia motioned to nominate Nilaksh Kothari to the board. Charlie Higley seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Peter Taglia moved to renew board membership for those whose terms were expiring in June 2013 and would like to serve again. Brian Rude seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Heather Leibham will serve as a board member from We Energies, replacing Jim Schubilske, who was recently promoted.

## **Membership**

Member numbers have declined in recent years, with budgets tightening. Cara Lee is appreciative of those who have renewed membership, and noted that membership fees have not risen in six years. Cara Lee and others have been in contact with several people from MISO for membership, as MISO will be part of the discussion for much of WPUI programming. We're told that a committee at MISO is looking into WPUI membership and will make a decision at some point.

## **Budget**

Cara Lee showed a number of slides related to revenues and expenses.

The account balance is holding steady, with an increase of about \$700 from the same time last year. As with most years, cash flow is lumpy, with many registrations and expenses related to Energy Utility Basics in the fall and membership payments in the first few months of each year. A reserve of about \$200,000 is kept to manage the cash flow issues.

WPUI is hiring more students to help with tasks for WPUI but also to help keep Energy Hub a strong student organization.

## **Programs for FY13**

Cara Lee showed a list of programs from the previous year, and noted that video presentations from many of those programs are archived on the WPUI website. PJ Distefano noted that he and several co-workers watch videos over lunch break and are appreciative of the resource.

On the most recent program related to Transmission Siting, Bob McKee and John Sumi commended Cara Lee for striking the right balance and keeping it an educational program. Cara Lee reiterated that the mission of WPUI is to discuss issues to give everyone a common vocabulary and an understanding of the range of perspectives on any particular topic.

## **Board Engagement**

PJ Distefano led a discussion on how to maintain board members' engagement with WPUI throughout the year. He and Brian Rude talked to several board members to get their ideas, including:

- Compiling a bio book for board members
- Board commitments (e.g. level of membership, # of meetings attended, # of times as speaker)
- More than two meetings per year

Cara Lee said that WPUI will send out an e-mail requesting info for the bio book, which will ask additional questions such as what topics people are interested in and what expertise within organizations are available.

Further Discussion:

- Cara Lee said that two official board meetings work for her, but her biggest needs are on help with programming and membership. Rather than form a single program committee, she would like to form a unique committee for each program
- Another need is to reach deeper into organizations for program attendance. In the coming year, Cara Lee will meet with board members individually in their offices and meet other colleagues.
- PJ Distefano proposed that WPUI reconstitute the membership committee
  - o Cara Lee said she would like help in October to draft the materials
  - o PJ Distefano, David Donovan and John Sumi would like to serve on the committee
- Brian Rude proposed that WPUI send the board an update via e-mail every other month (or quarterly)
  - o Bob McKee added that he would like those updates to include post-program summaries and analyses (impressions of how each program went)
- There was general agreement that spending more time on a few high quality programs that would get good attendance is preferred over several smaller programs
- PJ will work on a proposal for board commitments
- PJ Distefano and Brian Rude are currently on the nominating committee. In addition, Matt Bromley agreed to serve on the nominating committee.

### **Energy Hub**

Luke Vandenlangenberg provided an update on the student group Energy Hub's activities from the previous year, including a fall conference, tour of Gundersen Lutheran, meeting with ARPA-E's Cheryl Martin, program on social marketing, and K-12 outreach program.

### **Microgrids**

Electrical Engineering Professor Emeritus Robert Lasseter gave a presentation on the status of microgrid technology. Main points include:

- Distributed energy resources and combined heat and power are becoming more attractive to large customers; this challenges the traditional regulatory model
- Smart distribution systems with DER can increase reliability for customers
- Microgrid is a cluster of loads and DER units (CHP, solar PV, microturbines) and can include storage
- PV, CHP and microturbines are approaching simple payback in less than 10 years; storage costs are not known, however
- The CERTS microgrid can disconnect and reconnect to the larger grid when necessary, relies on multiple units, is a "plug-and-play" system, doesn't need command and control, and is very close to UPS quality.

## **Presentation by EPD – Master of Applied Computing**

- Proposed online degree for working professionals, seeking input from organizations that might send their employees to this program
- Cara Lee will follow up with a short survey to ask if board members' organizations would be interested.

## **Future Programs**

Cara Lee would like to host a series of Chatham House Rule programs related to distributed generation, with the goal of ultimately producing a public program on this topic.

- Chatham House series would be for WPUI members only
- Microgrid/DER discussion also relates to declining sales issue
  - o Brian Rude suggested separate programs on technical and policy issues
  - o Earl Gustafson said he is willing to supply feedback/speakers from industrial customers
- Jeff Ripp mentioned that the Johnson Foundation held a conference on this topic from the water perspective, and will share information from that conference with the board. He sees lots of parallels in declining sales between water/electric utilities.
- The discussion should have a comprehensive perspective, but there may be difficulty in defining the audience
- Terry Nicolai mentioned the Critical Consumers Issues Forum: "Policy considerations for DER" report. Several Wisconsin utilities, commissioners and CUB were involved. We could use CCIF as a framework for talking about policy in WI. Terry will send an electronic copy of the CCIF report to the board.
- Proposed first program: What would microgrids look like in Wisconsin (technical/economic issues)? We don't have the same needs or policies as the East Coast, Minnesota or California, e.g.
- Proposed second program: What are the policy considerations for DER/microgrids in Wisconsin?
- Other considerations:
  - o DER is just a piece of the broader declining sales issue.
  - o Current financial markets are also driving decline in sales: the focus on energy efficiency is high right now because of low interest rates from Fed policy. That may change as interest rates go up.
  - o EPA regulations are also forcing big, long-term investment decisions
- David Donovan would like to serve on this program committee. Others would include Matt Bromley, possibly Jordan Hemaidan, someone from WPS (Tom Smees?), and Brian Rude.

## **Conflicts between water users?**

- o Lots of lawsuits are pending, and perhaps now is not the best time. Dave Siebert will keep the board apprised of this issue. The goal, as with every WPUI program, would not be to solve the issue but to explain what the issue is and what the various perspectives are.

- Perhaps introducing this topic in terms of the water-energy-nutrient nexus would attract more water utilities. There are lots of issues related to new capital investments from water utilities that are often energy-intensive and sometimes are related to nutrient management. How to best manage this to minimize costs would be of great interest to utilities and municipal governments.
- People to serve on this program committee are Peter Taglia, Jeff Ripp, Nilaksh Kothari, David Donovan, Dave Siebert

**Other programs mentioned:**

- Who owns data from meters? (not much interest)
- Chargepoint (how can they resell power?). This program is less of a priority, and could be a half day program
- Plug load forecast presentation by the EIA (this could be a webinar)

**Programs slated for the fall:**

1. Water – scheduled for September
  - WPUI has been working with Jeff Ripp at PSCW and others to draft this agenda
  - Main points to explore in this program:
    - What are the drivers of cost for water utilities?
    - Where will the dollars come from for new capital?
    - What are the range of solutions? (e.g. private capital, regional cooperation)
  - Cara Lee said she would need help in spreading the word about this program to local government managers and water operators.
  
2. MISO's response to FERC Order 1000A (right of first refusal, introducing competition into transmission construction)
  - Bob McKee and Brian Rude have been involved in developing this program
  - Key question: how will MISO implement this rule?
  
3. Cara Lee is working with Tim Kallies on a follow-up to the metering roundtable (including other results from WPS's programs)

As always, WPUI is looking for people to attend Energy Utility Basics in October.

The meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.