



## **Hualapai Tribal Utility Authority Board Meeting Minutes**

**August 25, 2020**

**Hualapai Cultural Center**

**9:00 AM**

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**1) Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Mr. Montana called the meeting to order at 9:15 am.

**2) Roll Call**

***Board Members***

Charlie Vaughn, Chairman -- present Joined meeting at 10 AM

Joe Montana, Vice Chairman -- present

Lana Keller Robinett, Secretary --present via phone

Jason Davis, Treasurer --present

Rory Majenty -- present by phone

***Support Personnel and Guest(s)***

Bill Cyr, General Manager -- present

Kevin Davidson, Planning Director --present

**3) Review and Approve Minutes**

**July 21, 2020 Board meeting @ Cultural Center**

Motion to approve minutes by Mr. Montana and second by Mr. Davis vote (4-0-1).

-1 not present

**4) Approval of Invoices**

**a) BBC Consulting – General Manager Services-**

Motion to approve; BBC Consulting July invoice of \$5,389.2 by Mr. Montana second by Ms. Lana Keller Robinett, – vote (4-0-1). -1 not present

**5) Manager's Report**

M. Cyr briefed the Board on the following items with additional supporting documents included in the Board package under separate agenda items

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- **Council Workshop**

Mr. Cyr and Mr. Davidson presented a long range HTUA plan outlining the solar project, micro-grid extension and power line to the Hualapai Council on Wednesday August 5. The presentation explained the long term HTUA strategy including a phased in approach over the next 4 or 5 years. All costs were identified along with the impact the projects had in lowering the overall cost of energy to the Tribe. The power point presentation was included in the Board packet agenda item 12. The meeting was also attended by Board members Mr. Montana and Ms. Keller Robinett. The Council provided no specific direction on any of the proposed energy projects.

A last minute update prior to this meeting occurred in the form of a telephone call from Hualapai Chair Dr. Clarke to Mr. Davidson. In that call Dr. Clarke informed Mr. Davidson that the Council will not be supporting the submission of a grant application for the micro grid extension due to a lack of sufficient funds to satisfy the Hualapai grant match requirements.

- **Mohave Electric Meeting**

Mr. Cyr and Mr. Davidson had a telephonic meeting with MEC leadership regarding the acquisition of MEC assets in Peach Springs. The highlights of that meeting were **presented to the Board** with a detailed meeting minutes provided in agenda item 10.

- **GCW Energy Accounting**

During the aforementioned Council work shop a slide was presented by Mr. Cyr showing a graph that indicated the energy usage at GCW had not decreased during the CV 19 shut down at GCW. In fact during the first few months the energy usage actual increased. Mr. Cyr and Mr. Davidson were contacted by the General Manager of GCW—Mr. Colin McBeath. A conference call was set up between HTUA and GCW leadership to discuss this issue. Mr. Cyr and Mr. Davidson explained the origin of the data used to prepare the graph. Mr. Cyr and Mr. Davidson were unable to provide any additional quantifiable data on why energy usage at GCW had not declined during shut down. . Mr. Cyr presented an example of a more detailed energy accounting system that could be used in the future to better monitor energy usage and fuel consumption at GCW.

Mr. Cyr then indicated to the Board that HTUA was at a cross road or perhaps a stand still. HTUA has developed three separate energy projects that in the end lower the cost of energy on the reservation, develop HTUA into a bricks and mortar operating company, and move the Tribe much closer to energy self-direction. In addition, a longer range plan/strategic goal for the acquisition of MEC assets in Peach Springs, secure transmission for access to regional markets at Round Valley, and improve overall system reliability by building a loop transmission system from Round Valley to Peach Springs, to GCW and back to Dolan Springs. Without direction from Council HTUA is at a stand still.

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The Board discussed next steps and felt that it would be appropriate to have a joint meeting with GCW Board to update the GCW of HTUA efforts and to provide the GCW Board with insights into how the operation of the GCW micro-grid and generation be improved upon including but not limited to; increased data collection to allow for development of managing metrics, additional maintenance, details on pending GCW energy related projects and to emphasize that GCW is operating an utility and as such stress the importance of proper training and oversight for their staff working on these utility assets.

- **ATEA comment letter**

See agenda item 14 for copy of letter

- **Last Minute Off Agenda Item—Cares Act-EDA**

The Board was briefed on a call that Mr. Cyr and Mr. Davidson had with the EDA Cares Act representatives regarding a possible grant opportunity for the GCW power line The representatives were hesitant regarding the projects \$15 million or so price tag but they are willing to entertain a grant for that amount in the future however they indicated \$15 million exceeded their normal grant amount.

As the discussion progressed and they were given more detail on the project –they indicated that financing the \$800k or so of the final engineering was more likely to receive immediate consideration. Mr. Davidson downloaded grant details and Richard will review and determine if we should pursue this opportunity. If the grant application is a viable course of action, we will work to submit an application as soon as possible for consideration by their review committee at their October selection committee meeting. They also indicated that they will provide guidance or leads for other grants that may be supportive of the line as well

With the final engineering completed we can develop final cost quote and be in a great position as more grant monies become available for post cv-19 stimulus and overall infrastructure support. With the ROW secured and engineering done ---all we need is the money and the line can be built

## 6) Financial Review

Mr. Cyr updated the Board on financial expenditure to date

### a) 2020 Budget Review –Expenditures to date

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**7) GCW Micro Grid Extension**

- a) Council Chair letter to DOE
  - i) Discussions with DOE

The Board reviewed correspondence from DOE which details the nature of grant matches. In summary the DOE is considering reducing grant match requirements for future and past awards. Any grant match reduction, if they do occur, will only apply to grants that do not have final budget approved by DOE. The Solar grant budget has not been approved as of this date so, if DOE reduces grant match requirements, the GCW Solar project would be eligible for any reduced match level.

Mr. Vaughn indicated that the letter sent out by Council, Dr. Clarke, may not have properly reflected the severity of the financial impact that CV-19 has had on the Hualapai Tribe. Mr. Vaughn felt that the Tribe as a whole could be better at communicating its financial position and in setting overall goals/strategic plan for the Tribe.

**b) Status of Grant Application**

Mr. Davidson reported that he received notification from Council Chair Dr. Clarke that the Council will not be supporting the grant application to extend the micro-grid due to a lack of funding resources by the Tribe.

**8) GCW Solar General Update**

Mr. Davidson and the TERC committee are taking the lead on final site selection and environmental. Hualapai financial department have been made aware of the grant award and required DOE financial required forms/agreement have been forwarded to them for review and execution.

**9) GCW Utility Operations**

See minutes above Section 5 Manager's Report for summary of this activity

- a) Energy and Fuel Accounting
- b) Maintenance Requirements

**10) Mohave Electric Update**

See minutes above Section 5 Manager's Report for summary

- a) Meeting minutes of July 31, 2020 with MEC
- b) Outage Response
  - i) Key Accounts list
  - ii) Key Hualapai Contacts

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iii) Outage portal for Hualapai customers  
11) Proposed Power Line to Grand Canyon West

The Board was briefed on the following

- Tierra ROW change order has been approved by Council and Tierra will complete the last KOP simulation.
- Despite having the plan of development for almost three years now ---the BLM came up with a series of comments and questions on pole locations. We have responded to all of their concerns and are waiting, once again, to hear back from them on our response. The Board was given a copy of an email from the BLM that they were very busy with other projects and it would be sometime before they would get back to us.

a) BLM Specific

- i. Plan of Development-update
- ii. Vegetation Management Plan -Approved

b) NEPA/ Environmental/Cultural/Biological

- i) Cultural Report-Pending Approval
- ii) Biological Report-Approved
- iii) Visual Impact Assessments-Update
- iv) Environmental Assessment Report-draft has been submitted
- v) Tierra Change order-Update—approved by Council

c) Tucson Electric Power System Facility Study Dolan Springs to Grand Canyon West.

- i) System Facility Study –Awaiting approval by HTUA and Hualapai Council - \$100,000

d) Transmission Line Design Contractor RFP- RFP response review-completed –awaiting HTUA and Hualapai Council approval approximately \$800,000

12) HTUA Multi - Year Build Out Economics

See minutes above Section 5 Managers Report for summary of this item

- a) Power Point presented to Council on August 5, 2020

13) Fixed-wireless 4G LTE network in Peach Springs-Status Update (Kevin)

- a) Hualapai recipient of \$50,000 award to perform reservation wide broadband study

Mr. Davidson briefed the Board on his department's success in obtaining grant monies to study the current broad band capability on the entire reservation. The results of the study will be used in helping to formulate a Hualapai plan for the deployment of additional high speed internet across the reservation. Mr. Davidson will be issuing an RFP for providing the study services in the near future.

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**b) Upgrade wi-fi pilot program equipment to 2.5 GHz**

MuralNet is working on upgrading current pilot system to 2.5 GHz.

**c) Community need for additional access due to distance learning**

The pilot educational broadband network deployed earlier this year is operating next to capacity. CV-19 has again impacted this area of our lives as more students are utilizing the system for home studies. Many requests from potential customers have been made to be added to the network; however, the system is operating at capacity and no other customers can be added until additional bandwidth is acquired. WECOM, our current bandwidth back haul provider, does not currently have any additional capacity. They are taking steps to enhance their micro-wave link capacity and that may result in additional bandwidth becoming available.

**d) Wecom limitations on backhaul to serve pilot program**

WECOM has received been awarded a grant to bring more bandwidth to Peach Springs but this project may take years to be deployed. The primary hurdle for development of this system is related to securing the necessary ROW on existing pole lines or for a new pole line.

**14) Federal Hydro Power/WAPA/Other Power related**

The Board reviewed the ATEA letter included in Board Package

**a) ATEA- Comments on Tribal Utility and Energy Infrastructure Legislation for Indigenous People (TUEILIP)-positions**

**15) Other Matters**

**a) Update on tribal council actions – Kevin**

Mr. Davidson briefed the Board on the tribe's efforts to develop a new building to serve as an Emergency Operation Center (EOC). The building would be used to house personnel that are dealing with emergencies such as CV-19.

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Mr. Davidson also briefed the Board of the Tribes intent to develop an RV site in downtown Peach Springs that will hold fifth wheels. The fifth wheels would act as overflow housing that result from CV-19 infections.

**b) AT&T fiber optic easement and status of negotiation – Kevin**

The survey of the 18 mile stretch of AT&T fiber optic cable right of way is in progress

**c) Announcements**

**16) Set time and location for next meeting**

Next meeting date September 22,202 –Cultural Office

**17) Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM motion by Mr. Vaughn second by Mr. Davis vote (4-0-1)