

## **MINUTES**

of the Public Utilities Commission Agenda  
held jointly at its Offices in Carson City  
and Las Vegas, Nevada

Wednesday, September 13, 2017

10:00 AM

**Agenda 16 - 17**

Present: Chairman Joseph C. Reynolds  
Commissioner Ann C. Pongracz  
Commissioner Bruce H. Breslow  
Assistant Commission Secretary Trisha Osborne

### **ITEM 1 – PUBLIC COMMENT**

A

Pursuant to NRS 241.020, a period of public comment will be allowed at the beginning of the meeting and again before the adjournment of the meeting. All public comment will be limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker.

*Comments by Fred Voltz. See also Exhibit A.*

### **ITEM 2 – CHAIRMAN**

A

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA**

Comments by the Chairman.

FOR DISCUSSION ONLY.

*Chairman Reynolds welcomed Commissioner Breslow to the PUCN.*

*Item 3A is brought to the Commission by the Assistant Commission Secretary and can be voted upon without further discussion, unless any Commissioner has edits or comments.*

*No edits or comments.*

*Chairman Reynolds moved that the Commission approve the meeting minutes as submitted. Motion passed (2-0). Commissioner Breslow abstained because he was not present for Agenda 15-17.*

### **ITEM 3 – COMMISSION**

A

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF NEVADA**

Approval of agenda meeting minutes.

FOR POSSIBLE DISCUSSION/ACTION: APPROVE OR REVISE SEPTEMBER 1, 2017, AGENDA 15-17 MEETING MINUTES.

*Chairman Reynolds combined Items 4A and 4B for consideration.*

*Hearing Officer Lomoljo provided an overview of the dockets and the proposed Orders presented as part of the Commission's briefing materials.*

*Chairman Reynolds asked if there were any parties that moved to intervene in either docket.*

*Ms. Tammy Cordova, Staff Counsel, responded that the only participants in both cases were the Regulatory Operations Staff (“Staff”) and the utility.*

*Chairman Reynolds asked if his understanding was correct that the Solar Thermal Systems Demonstration Program is different in concept from the Solar Energy Systems Incentive Program.*

*Ms. Cordova confirmed that is correct and stated that the Legislature had different goals with the different Programs.*

*Chairman Reynolds asked if the amount of the rebate level stipulated for 2018 is different than the amount for 2017 or 2016.*

*Hearing Officer Lomoljo responded that there is a difference for Southwest Gas Company (“Southwest Gas”) as the utility aligned its proposed rebate levels with that approved for Sierra Pacific Power Company (“Sierra Pacific”) in 2017. Sierra Pacific’s rebate level is the same as last year so rebate levels for both utilities are now aligned.*

*Chairman Reynolds asked if that rebate level went up or down.*

*Hearing Officer Lomoljo responded that the “per therm” rebate level for Sierra Pacific went up last year but the utility did not award any rebates last year as there were no applications, even with the increased rebate amount. Southwest Gas is proposing to increase its “per therm” rebate level for 2018.*

*Chairman Reynolds moved that the Commission approve the Stipulations and proposed Orders for Items 4A and 4B. Commissioner Breslow seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously (3-0).*

#### **ITEM 4 – UTILITIES HEARINGS OFFICER**

**A 17-07004**

##### **SOUTHWEST GAS CORPORATION**

Application of Southwest Gas Corporation for approval of annual plans for the Solar Thermal Systems Demonstration Program for Program Year 2018.

FOR POSSIBLE DISCUSSION/ACTION: ACCEPT OR REJECT STIPULATION. ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. APPROVE HEARING OFFICER’S PROPOSED ORDER AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. GRANT OR DENY APPLICATION AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. ORDER MAY ISSUE.

**B 17-07019**

##### **SIERRA PACIFIC POWER COMPANY**

##### **NV ENERGY**

Application of Sierra Pacific Power Company d/b/a NV Energy for approval of annual plans for the Solar Thermal Systems Demonstration Program for Program Year 2018.

FOR POSSIBLE DISCUSSION/ACTION: ACCEPT OR REJECT STIPULATION. ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. APPROVE HEARING OFFICER’S PROPOSED ORDER AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. GRANT OR DENY APPLICATION AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. ORDER MAY ISSUE.

*Items 5A is brought to the Commission by the Division of Engineering (“Staff”) and can be voted upon without further discussion, unless any Commissioner has questions or comments.*

*Chairman Reynolds asked Staff to provide an overview of the summary report presented as part of the Commission’s briefing materials.*

## AGENDA 16-17 MINUTES

*Mr. Gary Cameron, Resource Planning Engineer, stated that the Report submitted by Nevada Power Company (“Nevada Power”) makes one notable change to the original Action Plan which is that spending on the Brownfield Study has been suspended. This change will eventually trickle through to save ratepayers some money.*

*Chairman Reynolds stated that there are references to the Modified Final Order issued in February 2016 in Docket No. 15-07004 and asked for more background on this matter. In particular, Chairman Reynolds asked why Nevada Power states that it has indefinitely delayed any more work or expenditures associated with the Brownfield Study.*

*Ms. Anne-Marie Cuneo, Director of Regulatory Operations, responded that the Brownfield Study was to give approval to spend the money necessary to study a site for the utility to possibly develop its own utility-scale solar generating facility. As time has progressed, power purchase agreements for large-scale solar, as well as loads in Nevada, have gone down and with the looming Energy Choice Initiative, the utility has stopped spending money on developing the Brownfield site.*

*Chairman Reynolds stated it is his understanding that because the Brownfield Study has been indefinitely delayed, \$41,000 of approximately \$2.4 million has been expended.*

*Ms. Cuneo confirmed that the utility has spent some money and stated that the \$41,000 was likely used for permitting activities which typically does not cost a lot of money but can take a long time.*

*Chairman Reynolds asked what happens with the remaining \$2.39 million that has been allocated.*

*Ms. Cuneo responded that the utility simply does not spend the money and it does not eventually end up in consumer rates after review and approval.*

*Commissioner Breslow commented that he is always going to want to know “why” and including a paragraph of explanation as to the “why” in the summary reports would be very helpful as well as be more transparent to the public.*

*Chairman Reynolds moved that the Commission approve the Report, adopt the recommendations by Staff, and close the docket. Commissioner Pongracz seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously (3-0).*

### **ITEM 5 – DIVISION OF ENGINEERING**

**A 17-04003 NEVADA POWER COMPANY  
NV ENERGY**

Report of Nevada Power Company d/b/a NV Energy on the progress of its Action Plan relative to its 2016-2035 Integrated Resource Plan.

FOR POSSIBLE DISCUSSION/ACTION: APPROVE OR REJECT REPORT.  
ADOPT RECOMMENDATIONS AS FILED OR WITH MODIFICATIONS. CLOSE  
DOCKET. ORDER MAY ISSUE.

### **ITEM 6 – PUBLIC COMMENT**

**A**

Pursuant to NRS 241.020, a period of public comment will be allowed at the beginning of the meeting and again before the adjournment of the meeting. All public comment will be limited to no more than three (3) minutes per speaker.

*Comments by Fred Voltz. See also Exhibit A.*

*Chairman Reynolds noted that a Special Agenda has been scheduled for Tuesday, September 19, 2017, at 9:00 AM.*

*Meeting adjourned.*

# EXHIBIT A

**PUCN Agenda Meeting 16-17--First Comment Period--September 13, 2017--Fred Voltz**

In the interest of economy, the following comments pertain to items 4A and 4B on today's agenda.

The Solar Thermal Demonstration Project has had a shockingly underwhelming performance in the seven-year period since the Legislature created it. The economics of such systems, including the huge installation and acquisition costs, continue to make it an unattractive option for most Nevadans, even with the already-generous subsidies from other ratepayers and Federal taxpayers.

While it is noteworthy and commendable that the total amount of incentives budgeted and the incentive rate per therm has been radically reduced from the original proposals by Southwest Gas and Sierra Pacific, there has been no improvement in the excessive administration costs, at least compared to the total amount of incentives to potentially be paid.

In the case of Southwest Gas, it proposes to spend \$165,000 to award a maximum amount of incentive rebates of just \$150,000. Spread over the 25 target installed systems, this translates into administrative costs of \$6,600 each. If the number of actual participants decreases, the administrative costs only rise. And let's remember, these administration costs do nothing to directly conserve plentiful and inexpensive natural gas. . .the target of the Solar Thermal Demonstration Project.

For Sierra Pacific, it had zero participation in program year 2017, but requests \$36,000 in administrative costs for a maximum \$30,000 in potential incentive rebates.

In the real, non-government, non-monopoly world, it would be considered ludicrous to spend more money on overhead than on the core component of any project.

The two utilities involved with implementing the law need to take a harder look at how they are allocating administrative resources. The PUCN can help them along with that process by approving administrative costs of \$135,000 for Southwest Gas and \$27,000 for Sierra Pacific, or 25% below the proposed amounts. It would be up to the two utilities to figure out how to reach those targets.

RECEIVED  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS  
17 SEP 13 AM 10:58

The concepts of 'dialog' and 'conversation' suggest the participation of more than one party.

It is a sad commentary about the state of a public agency when it must be forced by a publicly-elected legislature to hold one general consumer session a year, even though that same public has been forced to pay for the existence of the agency through a stealth mill tax applied to essential utility service monthly billing.

Service to those paying the operating costs of a public entity should be of paramount consideration.

It is a very realistic expectation that when public servants are asked questions about how they are conducting the people's business, those questions receive a respectful, frank answer. No such dialog or conversation was forthcoming at last night's Clark county general consumer session.

In a relatively small state such as Nevada (We're in the lower third of the 50 states by population.), the residents expect their elected and appointed government officials to be readily accessible and responsive to their needs. When someone signs on as a public employee, these are two of the cardinal rules of engagement.

So, if the general public cannot ask and receive answers to questions at general consumer sessions, when will the people in charge make themselves accessible and answer thoughtful and appropriate questions about how the public agency does business? The questions asked and not answered had nothing to do with pending dockets, so that excuse cannot be used as a rational justification for a failure to respond.

For those of us monitoring the PUCN's actions, this situation is yet another troubling piece of evidence as to how the PUCN chooses to operate very much against the public interest, genuine openness and genuine transparency.

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OF NEVADA LAS VEGAS  
17 SEP 13 AM 10:58

September 13, 2017 Angel De Fazio- Second Comment

17 SEP 13 AM 10:59

Joe I have stated ad nauseum that you are shilling for BriBri's New NV, by promoting, forcing, pushing solar at all costs.

Last night you affirmed my assertions. A commenter had people stand up in the audience, who supported solar. I played back the video, and you were so happy, animated and eager to get the number of people on the record, you counted 16, the speaker said 22, so, you had it entered into the record, 22 for solar. So where was the count for those who ARE NOT for solar? Were they included in this biased poll? Of course not, this ongoing confirmation that unless you are on the 'solar train', you are treated as a red-headed stepchild! So much for not leaning on any particular side of an issue.

I still can't figure out how the NEM customers can THINK they are getting the full reimbursement for excess generation. Since they are going to be combined with the non-solar customers. That this combined class, are all paying the same amount.

The way I see it, they are paying for their own reimbursement. A friend's wife, who has a Ph.D., in economics and teaches 400 level Econ classes at a California University, couldn't figure out, how they are getting their full reimbursement either.

I sincerely want to thank you for giving me more creditability from your actions last night. I had a couple of people in the audience, who didn't believe that you are afraid to interact with me, so, I INTENTIONALLY went up to you, and you did JUST WHAT I WANTED you to do. Watch Dogs THANKS YOU!

Rhetorical question, since you NEVER answer any queries...are you open to consider, on dockets that require a consumer session, holding it after the hearings and prior to the draft order being presented at an agenda meeting, so the public is fully informed of the impact upon them? Rather than this insane current protocol, where they are given a 'WE DON'T KNOW THE FINAL OUTCOME' opportunity to comment on?

Since Ann took over Alaina's term, which is due to expire on the 30<sup>th</sup>, inquiring minds want to know, is BriBri going to reappoint her, or did she NOT perform up to PREDETERMINED standards?

AS when BriBri DIDN'T reappoint Noble, it was known in July, so, this is 'PAST DUE'...right?

Since Joey is in so TIGHT with BriBri, ok, it's an OBVIOUS FAMILY AFFAIR, with Joe's wife replacing the SHORT TERM GC, who replaced Joey...it doesn't

take a ROCKET SCIENTIST to figure out, that there is WAY too much collusion/nepotism between these families.

So during all these INTERACTIONS, has Joey been UPDATING BriBri on her CONCURRENCE with the ORDERS that he wants to push thru? To promote BriBri's New NV?

Will she make the cut? Guess we will have to wait out the next 2 weeks.

ALSO...its INTERESTING that APPARENTLY hiring a SO CALLED SR ATTORNEY for the GC's Office WITH 1 YEAR LEGAL EXPERIENCE WAS A PIPE DREAM!

As there is a NEW JOB POSTING, where TWO YEARS EXPERIENCE is a MINIMUM QUALIFICATION! HA! WE were right...

Guess there was TOO MUCH ON THE JOB TRAINING NECESSARY?

Also, job starts on 12/1...interesting, just when the GRC is over. Guess they are figuring, they will have TIME to SPOON-FEED the new person?!

So JUST where are all these new hires going to be situated? Is Barbie going to renegotiate the leases to increase office size? If that's the case, then are we looking at ANOTHER INCREASE to the MILL TAX???????????

Or will it come from the slush fund, oops, I mean their reserve account?