

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee was called to order at 1:05 p.m. by Chair Ben Benoit on the Zoom virtual platform.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**Board of Directors present:**

Todd Rigby, City of Eastvale  
Russ Brown, City of Hemet  
Chris Barajas, City of Jurupa Valley  
Ted Hoffman, City of Norco  
Rita Rogers, City of Perris (1:11 p.m. arrival)  
Ben Benoit, City of Wildomar (Chair)

**Technical Advisory Committee Members present:**

Bryan Jones, City of Eastvale  
Rod Butler, City of Jurupa Valley  
Andy Okoro, City of Norco

**3. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**4. CONSENT CALENDAR** – (Norco / Eastvale) 5 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Items 4.A through 4.E were approved. Representatives from the Cities of Canyon Lake and Perris were not present.

**A. Summary Minutes from the August 12, 2020, Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee are Available for Consideration.**

**Action:**            *I.        Approved the Summary Minutes from the August 12, 2020, Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee.*

**B. Financial Report Summary Update**

**Action:**            *I.        Received and filed.*

**C. Program Schedule Update**

**Action:**            *I.        Received and filed.*

**D. Regulatory and Legislative Activities Update**

**Action:**            *I.        Received and filed.*

**E. WCE Enabling Agreement to add Additional Energy Provider**

**Actions:**            *I.        Adopted Resolution No. 2020-16; A Resolution of the Board of Directors of Western Community Energy approving Master Power Purchase Agreements.*

2. *Approved the Edison Electric Institute Master Agreement (“Master Agreement”) between Western Community Energy and Uniper and authorize the Executive Director, or designee, to execute the Master Agreement, in substantially similar form as approved by Legal Counsel.*
3. *Approved the Edison Electric Institute Master Agreement (“Master Agreement”) between Western Community Energy and NextEra and authorize the Executive Director, or designee, to execute the Master Agreement, in substantially similar form as approved by Legal Counsel.*

## **5. REPORTS / DISCUSSION**

### **A. Program Launch Update**

Tyler Masters, Director of WCE, reported that opt-out reports have been aggregated from weekly to monthly. Opt-outs peaked during the mass enrollment months of April and May 2020. The August opt-out rate increased slightly. Staff believe this could be attributed to, 1) post-launch mailers are still being mailed to the Net Energy Meter (NEM) customers pursuant to July’s enrollment phase; 2) pre-launch physical mailers for October’s enrollment phase; and 3) the recent transition to summer rates, and this past month we have had multiple heat waves. Due to the heat waves, usage is increasing, which may cause customers to believe that their bill is higher because of the switch to WCE, which is not true. In total, opt-out rates across all customers hover at approximately 5.8%. Initial assumptions provided for a 5% opt-out rate in residential and 10% opt-out rate for commercial.

Opt-up status to WCE’s 100% green Choice Plus Plan continues to increase with a total of 48 customers; this number has tripled since launch. NEM customers are enrolled on a quarterly basis that best align with their 12-month generation usage true-up schedule.

The final of the four enrollment phases will occur in October 2020, after which this time all of the eligible customers will have had the opportunity to enroll in WCE. Beginning in October 2021, WCE will aggregate all NEM true-ups to the month of October annually thereafter.

The California Independent Service Operator (CAISO) has initiated two multi-day flex alerts in the last 30 days due to a western region-wide heatwave, coupled with the rapid decrease in energy generated by wind resources and an unexpected loss of another generating capacity. Three of WCE member cities were impacted.

Director Russ Brown indicated that the list of impacted areas on SCE’s website is confusing and incomplete. Can WCE prepare some kind of translation of information posted on SCE’s website and equate it to something geo-based that consumers can view and understand.

Mr. Masters responded that the nomenclature for roaming outages is confusing. There is a long, convoluted way to obtain geographic mapping. For recent and future outages, WCE will attempt to breakdown the information provided by SCE in an understandable manner so the customers know how to find that information and determine if they will be impacted.

Director Todd Rigby suggested emphasizing to constituents the ability to opt into outage email / text notices. Regarding the 5.8% residential opt-out rate, how does that affect WCE since the anticipated opt-out rate would be 5%. Is it normal for CCAs to see opt-out spikes several months into a launch.

Mr. Masters responded that because the commercial opt-out rates are so much lower, the overall assumptions are still well within the anticipated percentages. Regarding opt-out spikes, staff anticipates that after post-launch physical mailers are sent, there will be a decrease in opt-outs.

Director Rigby expressed concern in the residential opt-out rate with the reason being pricing concerns. From the beginning WCE indicated that its rates would be approximately 2% lower than SCE rates and the customers are not believing that. Another high percentage of customers have opted-out because they do not like being automatically enrolled.

Director Ted Hoffman asked if staff will contact those who have opted out.

Mr. Masters responded that staff is currently assessing an opt-back-in campaign. WCE's opt-out rate is still quite a bit lower than other CCAs throughout the state. Staff believe that it may be best to focus on the larger commercial customers which have opted-out.

Director Chris Barajas suggesting waiting until after January for another messaging campaign when SCE raises its rates. Perhaps information can be added to the FAQ page listed on the website regarding the wait time in switching between SCE and WCE.

Chairman Ben Benoit indicated that it would be worth it to circle back to those who have opted out. Perhaps staff can do a bill comparison to show how much they would have saved.

**Action:**            I.        *Received and filed.*

## **B. Non-Residential Client Engagement and Outreach Update**

Don Ries, WRCOG Program Manager, reported that Southern California Edison (SCE) will have two rate changes effective October 2020 and January 1, 2021. WCE has 14,638 commercial clients. Only 538 of those have opted out. Staff has completed initial contact with all of the top 50 clients, those with significant energy usage.

Staff continue updating and utilizing templates which project cost savings, provide custom usage reviews, and assist to determine applicable tariffs for commercial clients. One revision to the template being made includes SCE charges versus just generation charges. Secondly, the templates will include the affects of switching back and forth between SCE and WCE.

An online savings calculator is expected to go live by the end of November 2020.

Director Todd Rigby asked if staff tracks the reasons for commercial opt-outs.

Mr. Ries responded that the reasons are not separated from the residential opt-outs. Initially, staff focused on the large energy consumers and are now working to initiate conversations with the smaller commercial customers.

**Action:**            I.        *Received and filed.*

## **C. Marketing and Outreach Activities Update**

Avie Barron, WRCOG Senior Analyst, reported that since launch staff have been working with consultants on a post-launch marketing strategy which include targeted advertisements utilizing Facebook and Instagram platforms and will aim for specific geographic locations to access WCE customers.

Staff will be working to respond to questions and comments posted on social media as quickly as possible.

Staff are focusing on WCE's website; for the month of August, over 11,000 visitors visited the website. A savings counter and alert banners have been added to the website. New to the website will be a landing spot for Agency updates, future flex alerts, etc.

Printed and digital advertisements continue with Pandora and the Press Enterprise, as well as YouTube. Advertisements will run every other month.

WCE will begin sponsoring local events such as State of the City events, as well as subscribing membership to local Chambers of Commerce. WCE will also begin providing micro-sponsorships to 48 Parent Teacher Associations in late fall in order to "give back to the community."

**Action:**            I.        *Received and filed.*

#### **D. Bill Collection and Bad Debt Update**

Andrew Ruiz, WRCOG Chief Financial Officer, reported that this Board adopted a Delinquent Accounts, Collections, and Bad Debt Policy in November 2019. In April 2020, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in response to the COVID-19 epidemic, passed a resolution authorizing and ordering utilities to implement emergency customer protections. One protection was to suspend disconnection for non-payment and associated fees. In May 2020, this Board updated its Policy to reflect CPUC's order.

WCE now allows up to 180-days for both residential and commercial customers for unpaid balances to be paid in full or for payment arrangements to be made before the account is reverted back to Southern California Edison (SCE).

There are currently no accounts delinquent under this updated Policy. There are, however, 625 delinquent residential accounts and 427 commercial accounts that would have been flagged under the old Policy. If staff were to assume that all of these account balances were written off, this would represent a 1.06% bad debt percentage. WCE has estimated a 1.0% allowance for bad debt. WCE is working with SCE to obtain a recurring aging report for its shared customers.

Director Todd Rigby asked if the bad debt amount is going up.

Mr. Ruiz responded that once staff received data from SCE, we will have a clearer picture on the actual bad debt total.

Director Rita Rogers indicated that the City of Perris is offering utility, rental, and mortgage assistance for up to three months, and is surprised to see outstanding receivables so high in her jurisdiction.

**Action:**           1.       *Received and filed.*

#### **E. 4th Quarter Budget Amendment**

Andrew Ruiz, WRCOG Chief Financial Officer, reported that energy revenues are a little higher than anticipated, and expenditure were less than anticipated due to the hedge energy being procured lower than projected. Overall, there is a total net increase in expenditures of approximately \$29,000.

**Action:**           1.       *Approved the 4th Quarter Budget Amendment for Fiscal Year 2019/2020.*

*(Jurupa Valley / Perris) 6 yes; 0 no; 0 abstention. Item 5.E was approved. A representative from the City of Canyon Lake was not present.*

#### **6. REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Rick Bishop reported that the 6th Annual Solar Valley Conference is scheduled for September 14, 2020, from 8:30 am. – 12:15 p.m. WRCOG has applied for a Climate Resilience Challenge grant to develop a Energy Resilience Plan and was awarded \$200,000.

#### **7. ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

There were no items for future agendas.

#### **8. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Director Todd Rigby announce that the City of Eastvale will be holding its State of the City virtually on October 1, 2020.

**9. NEXT MEETING:**       **The next Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, October 14, 2020, at 1:00 p.m., on the Zoom platform.**

**10. ADJOURNMENT:**

**The Joint Meeting of the Board of Directors and Technical Advisory Committee adjourned at 2:45 p.m.**