

City of San Antonio



Minutes Municipal Utilities Committee

2021 – 2023 Council Members

Dr. Adriana Rocha Garcia, Dist. 4, Chair

Teri Castillo, Dist. 5 | Melissa Cabello Havrda, Dist. 6

John Courage, Dist. 9 | Marc Whyte, Dist. 10

Monday, December 9, 2024

1:00 PM

Council Briefing Room

Members Present: Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Cabello Havrda, Courage, Whyte

Members Absent: None

Approval of Minutes

1. Approval of minutes from the October 22, 2024, Municipal Utilities Committee Meeting

Councilmember Castillo moved to Approve. Councilmember Whyte seconded the motion. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: Courage, Rocha Garcia, Castillo, Whyte

Absent: Cabello Havrda

Briefing and Possible Action on

2. Briefing by CPS Energy regarding the formation of the Community Input Committee [Ben Gorzell Jr., Chief Financial Officer; Troy Elliott, Deputy Chief Financial Officer]

Matthew Jones, Director of Local Government Relations for CPS Energy, provided an overview of the formation of a Community Input Committee (CIC) and its structure. He noted that the committee had been previously known as the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and was established to provide an opportunity for broader representation on key issues. Jones stated that the CAC had 15 members, one from each City Council District, and five at large members selected by the committee. He added that ad-hoc committees were created for specific purposes as needed.

Jones noted that in April 2024, the CPS Energy Board of Trustees voted to amend the Community Advisory Committee bylaws and established the Community Input Committee which was now comprised of 19 members with four appointments provided by the CPS Energy Board of Trustees.

Jones provided an overview of the CIC composition and terms and noted that all appointees required approval by the CPS Energy Board of Trustees. He added that under the new structure, three subcommittees were created: Power and Technology; Rates, Finance & Business; and Customer Relations & Communications. Each subcommittee had six members each and met quarterly.

Jones reviewed the current members and the meeting protocols of the CIC which included meeting at least quarterly on the second Wednesday of the month with meetings being live streamed, recorded and posted to the CIC website along with all agendas and presentations. According to Jones, public input could be provided in person, or delivered by mail, phone, or email.

Jones provided a snapshot of the CIC website and noted that the CIC was one component for community input to the CPS Board of Trustees.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked members of the CIC for their dedication and work on the committee. She asked for clarification on the changes to the CIC. Shannon Ramirez, CPS Legal Counsel, stated that the changes were primarily done due to the inclusion of quadrant members and the combined learnings of the CAC and the Rate Advisory Committee to make changes to the current advisory board. Ramirez stated that the largest change was having the meetings open to the public in an effort for increased transparency and input from the community. She added that under the Open Meetings Act, governing bodies were required to have meetings open to the public but clarified that the CIC was not a governing body but advisory and CPS Energy had chosen to open meetings to the public.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked how individuals would be able to provide input to the committee. Jones reiterated that public input was crucial on preparing agendas and feedback in forming CIC agendas. Chair Rocha Garcia asked which was the greatest input vehicle from the public. Rudy Garza, CPS Energy President, stated that community meetings and open houses attracted community input and that CPS Energy staff had worked hard to attract public input.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on the subcommittees. Jones clarified the committee names and topics covered. Councilmember Cabello Havrda expressed her concern that the general public was not able to attend subcommittee meetings and provide input. Jones stated that the executive meeting reports were completed and provided to the CIC and then the general public. Garza reiterated that the subcommittee work and discussions would be brought forward to the CIC and the Board of Trustees. Councilmember Cabello Havrda stressed her concern of the subcommittee

meetings not being open to the public and if this was directed in the by-laws. Jones noted that matters discussed at the subcommittee level would have no action taken and could be sensitive with intricate matters discussed.

Garza reiterated that proprietary information was often discussed in executive sessions which had to be protected and ultimately issues would be brought to the CIC for review. Councilmember Cabello Havrda wanted to know why subcommittees couldn't break into executive sessions to discuss those issues and leave the meeting for the general public in efforts to increase transparency. Jones noted that the outcomes of this meeting would be discussed at the next CIC full meeting on January 6, 2025.

Councilmember Castillo echoed comments from Councilmember Cabello Havrda and her concerns of having subcommittee meetings open to the general public and noted that the City Council also had subcommittees which were open to the general public. She supported having subcommittees going into executive sessions to discuss proprietary information with the remainder of the meeting being open to the public. Councilmember Castillo asked for clarification on the Open Meetings Act and why they did not apply to the CIC. Ramirez stated that the Open Meetings Act did not apply to CIC or subcommittees since they were not governing bodies and were advisory in nature.

Councilmember Castillo asked if the CIC meetings were always scheduled for the hours of 11:30 am to 1:00 pm and if this was due to availability of members. Ramirez confirmed the normal time for the meetings were from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm and confirmed that the committee and subcommittee members confirmed the meeting times they wanted to meet. Councilmember Castillo expressed her concern that many individuals worked between the hours of 9 am to 5 pm and would not have the liberty to address their concerns to the CIC at those times.

Councilmember Castillo asked if there were any current examples of input of the CAC and CIC impacting CPS Energy Policy. Jones stated that over the 25-year history of the CAC, there were many instances where the committee's recommendations were implemented by the Board. He added that currently the CIC was focusing and providing valuable input on the Horizon 2050 Strategy especially in the area of competitive pricing being implemented into the strategic vision.

Councilmember Castillo inquired on how long it took to upload meeting videos and make them available to the public. Jones confirmed that videos were uploaded for viewing within a matter of days.

Councilmember Courage expressed his concern of the subcommittee meetings were not open to the public but that he understood for reasoning of closed meetings and proprietary information discussions. He requested that coaching/training be provided to CIC members on them conducting public outreach and information gathering from residents. Councilmember Courage stressed that the committee needed to have a broader understanding to represent the entire community on issues brought forward and that he supported the development of the CIC.

Councilmember Whyte echoed the concerns of committee members of lack of transparency with closed subcommittee meetings. He asked if training was provided to committee members. Jones confirmed that training was provided to all members and that subcommittee subject matter training was provided at the subcommittee level meetings. Councilmember Whyte stressed the importance of specific training.

Councilmember Whyte asked for clarification on Horizon 2050 and if there was specific input from the committee on rate changes. Jones stated that the CIC provided great advisory input to the Board and staff on the strategy of Horizon 2050. Garza stated that any time rate increase discussion was set it would initially be brought forward to the CIC to provide input, and he noted that this was also done in the past with the CAC and Rate Advisory Committee. Garza reiterated that CPS leadership would include the CIC to gain input on the upcoming Vision 2027 Strategy and would continue to gain input on Vision 2030, which would include a power generation plan and other policies.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on the process for having agenda items be brought to the committee level and later Board of Trustees. Jones stated that items would be brought to the board level and then to the committee level for further research and discussion, then those findings would be brought forward to the Board.

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked CPS Energy staff for the presentation and stated that she looked forward to reports of activity from the CIC.

This item was for briefing purposes only.

3. Briefing by CPS Energy regarding preparations for the upcoming winter season operating conditions [Ben Gorzell Jr., Chief Financial Officer; Troy Elliott, Deputy Chief Financial Officer]

Benjamin Ethridge, Chief Energy Supply Officer with CPS Energy, opened the presentation of the 2024/2025 Winter Preparation Plan and introduced video to discuss meteorology technology to identify weather incidents and analysis for preparation. The video discussed severe weather incidents to include rain, heat, and hurricane season analysis. The video also reviewed ERCOT energy demand data, energy generation availability analysis, and emergency service outage services. Examples of preventive measures, emergency recovery efforts, conservation programs, and community outreach were highlighted on the video.

Etheridge recapped the energy generation resources and efforts by CPS Energy. He introduced CPS Meteorologist Brian Alonzo who provided an overview of the 2024-2025 Winter outlook to include impacts from the La Nina weather activity. He noted that the La Nina activity was expected to be weaker with anticipated above normal temperatures possible and that below normal precipitation was expected which could enhance wildfire threats during the Winter season. Alonzo noted the Farmer's Almanac called for mild winter temperatures and low amount of precipitation.

Etheridge reviewed energy supply and winter readiness activities which were in progress and completed by December 1, 2024. He noted that energy units were prepared for winter operations and that no units were scheduled for outages during the months of January and February. Etheridge added that a Declaration of Winter Preparedness had been submitted to ERCOT by December 1, 2024, along with natural gas suppliers contacted to confirm weatherization activities. He added that CPS Energy had been awarded Firm Fuel Supply Service to support energy grid operations during the winter.

In the area of power generation, CPS Energy was compliant with Public Utility Commission requirements and had completed new weatherization enhancements, according to Etheridge. He noted that enhancements to the weatherization program were in place to deliver plant reliability during extreme winter weather.

Richard Medina, CPS Energy Chief Energy Delivery Officer, spoke to the utility's energy delivery efforts and noted that safety, operational readiness, and equipment readiness were the key areas for the delivery of energy resources. He noted that CPS Energy leveraged lessons learned to enhance system performance and emergency response during significant weather events.

Medina reviewed operations and reliability winter preparedness in the areas of coordination with partners, drills and exercises, training and energy load shed. He reiterated that communication and collaboration with partners/stakeholders were critical components of CPS Energy preparedness activities.

Medina stated that by December 1, 2024, CPS Energy under winter preparedness had submitted a Weather Emergency Attestation to the Texas Railroad Commission (RRC) describing their compliance with seasonal preparedness inspections and maintenance of critical infrastructure serving power generation and gas distribution as required by RRC Rule 3.66. He added that they had also submitted a Winter Weather Preparedness Attestation to ERCOT describing compliance with seasonal preparedness inspections and maintenance.

CPS Energy Chief Customer Strategy Officer DeAnna Hardwick spoke to customer focused communications for winter preparedness and solutions to support customers during winter months. She spoke to customer focus initiatives to include easier paying options, expansion of the Energy Angels Program, Grillsgiving Event which benefited the REAP Program, and products and services available to residents.

Hardwick spoke to winter preparedness community education on energy conservation, preparedness, and safety during extreme weather events. She stated that CPS Energy was ready to provide emergency messaging to customers and stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia thanked CPS Energy for the briefing and the importance of

preparedness during extreme winter months. She asked for clarification of energy supply availability at the local and state level. Garza stated that CPS Energy had more than significant supply for the local area and that it provided a large portion of the state's energy which provided revenue to the system. He noted that ERCOT spoke to the possibility of a severe winter event and that CPS Energy was ready to meet demand and had strong plans in place to meet extreme weather needs.

Chair Rocha Garcia noted that tree trimming activity along power lines and transformer boxes in preparing for winter events. Garza stated that CPS Energy had trimmed along more lines due to prior events impact to tree damage to lines and transformers. Chair Rocha Garcia thanked CPS Energy for their work on weather preparedness.

Councilmember Courage noted that ERCOT did not want CPS to close certain energy plants and asked if plants were ready in regard to maintenance and peak energy needs. Ethridge reiterated that all maintenance had been completed and that CPS Energy would not conduct any routine maintenance during winter season.

Councilmember Courage asked for clarification on availability of new energy generators to meet the needs for SAWS water resources. Ethridge stated that all maintenance and generation services were ready to meet the need for an extreme winter event and would service SAWS water pumps as needed or in other areas where energy supply is needed. Etheridge noted that CPS Energy was already phasing in several generators which would ultimately provide over 35,000 megawatts of energy.

Councilmember Whyte asked if CPS Energy was confident to meet the need if another Winter Storm Uri hit the area. Garza stated that the system was much better prepared and that communication protocols have been refined to have a much better experience during severe weather.

Councilmember Whyte asked if new sources of energy supply were sufficient to meet the energy needed after closing coal plants. Ethridge confirmed that energy resources are better available to meet need.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda stated that she had confidence in the capability of CPS Energy to meet energy needs and that better communication was now in place if another winter storm event was to occur.

Councilmember Cabello Havrda asked for clarification on energy capacity for large data centers in District 6. Medina stated that new infrastructure had been put into place to meet the large load energy needs of data centers and noted that upgrades to transmission centers were now in place. CPS Energy Board Chair Janie Gonzales spoke to funded improvements and community feedback to get input for energy demand concerns and planning for the future. She stressed the importance of public input in addressing energy demands and strategic planning overall.

Councilmember Castillo thanked CPS Energy on their efforts for safety of CPS Energy

team members and not only addressing energy generation.

Councilmember Castillo asked what coordination was done with the San Antonio Fire Department (SAFD) on possible increased wildfire incidents with a drier winter expected. Assistant Fire Chief Brian Norton stated that SAFD, the utility organizations, and other emergency management stakeholders worked closely together in coordinating and preparing for severe weather and other like incidents.

Councilmember Castillo asked if CPS Energy would pause service disconnections in extreme weather. Hardwick confirmed that staff had protocols in place to cancel disconnections during winter months for all customers. Councilmember Castillo asked if these individuals would be placed on payment or assistance programs. Hardwick confirmed available programs and policies.

Councilmember Castillo spoke to community outreach provided and noted recommendation of resident to provide training or education on rate structures at community events. Hardwick confirmed that education would be expanded to add technical information.

This item was for briefing purposes only.

4. Briefing by the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) regarding preparations for the upcoming winter season operating conditions [Ben Gorzell Jr., Chief Financial Officer; Troy Elliott, Deputy Chief Financial Officer]

Andrea L.H. Beymer, Chief Operating Officer at San Antonio Water System (SAWS), provided an overview of preparation for the upcoming winter season operating conditions. She noted the challenges experienced when Winter Storm Uri occurred and has worked with CPS Energy on lessons learned.

Beymer noted that improvements have included increased communications and partnership relations with COSA, Bexar County, CPS Energy, and other key stakeholders. She added that the utility organizations had implemented recommendations from the Community Emergency Preparedness Committee and requirements under Senate Bill (SB) 3.

Beymer stated that SAWS has overall winter preparedness and system improvements and weatherization efforts which included yearly preventive maintenance work orders for critical sites scheduled to prepare for weather events. She spoke to freeze vulnerabilities identified and preventive actions integrated into normal operating processes. Beymer added potable/treatment facilities were prioritized in accordance with service criticality and previous weather event experiences. She reviewed work completed at water system sites, wastewater facilities, and for fleet operations.

Protecting crews during extreme weather events was a priority for SAWS, according to Beymer. She provided examples of equipment and cold weather inventory to protect field personnel.

Beymer spoke to long term asset protection efforts which included improving design on new facilities and facility rehabilitation projects. She spoke to actions which included moving electrical gear into buildings, installation of critical equipment in buildings, and installation of back generators as a design standard at critical facilities.

Beymer reviewed generation installation efforts to increase power resiliency which included meeting the requirement of SB3 which required retail water utilities to submit Emergency Preparedness Plan (EPP) to TCEQ and establishing minimum service requirements. She stated that the EPP included the installation of generators in various parts of the City in a multi-year phased program with a total program cost of \$300 million. She added that construction was underway and was planned to be completed by 2030.

Utility Collaboration between SAWS and CPS Energy was crucial, according to Beymer. She mentioned that the utilities had entered into an agreement for natural gas generators on SAWS facilities in September 2022. Beymer stated that collaboration established specifications and site designs for natural gas generators with “co-gen” capabilities. She added that efforts hardened SAWS power supplies and allowed CPS Energy to operate and sell power to the grid.

Beymer spoke to SAWS water emergency preparedness efforts to be ready for the unexpected which included a communications campaign in simple and straight forward messaging. She stated that messaging was in English and Spanish and was recognized as an award-winning campaign in the industry.

Beymer stated that improvements include the development of the water system status outage maps which were web-based for customers to gain information on service outages. She stated that the web-platform was also available under a mobile app initiative.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke in support of staff protection in extreme weather and the development of the app and available data. She asked if the outage map provided repair data timelines. Beymer stated that it provided real time input but expanded timelines were still being developed.

Councilmember Whyte asked if another Uri Storm were to occur would SAWS be ready. Beymer stated that SAWS was much better prepared to meet operational needs and better communications were in place to collaborate efforts with CPS Energy and she spoke to current communication efforts. She also spoke to new energy generators that were being installed which provided energy protection and were put in place resulting from SAWS/CPS agreement put in place in September 2022.

Councilmember Whyte asked how a resident gain information on outages if they did not have the SAWS mobile app. Beymer confirmed that residents had the option to call into SAWS customer service phone line to gain data on outages. Councilmember Whyte stressed that importance of communications during extreme weather events between all

entities to include SAWS, CPS Energy, the City, and County.

Councilmember Castillo spoke to SAWS dedication to maintaining the safety of their crews during extreme weather incidents. She asked if SAWS would be facilitating water disconnections during extreme weather conditions. SAWS President Robert Puente stated that SAWS would not be conducting any disconnections during extreme weather incidents to ensure safety of customers.

Councilmember Castillo spoke to recent legislation that provided assistance to customers to provide assistance in paying bills and decrease water disconnections. Puente stated that SAWS worked closely with legislators to develop initiatives on decrease water disconnections.

Councilmember Courage spoke to the importance of collaboration of water and energy utilities and that he felt the utilities had expanded efforts to increase communications. He asked what other efforts had been put into place for energy regeneration to meet electrical service needs during extreme weather at water pump stations. Beymer spoke of efforts now and Puente reiterated that ERCOT had the majority to do with what happened during Uri and that CPS Energy had protocols in place to meet the local need.

Councilmember Courage asked about program to assist individuals with plumbing needs related to pipe breakage at customer homes. Puente spoke to programs that continued to be in place to assist with home indoor pipes and noted that a new program fund with local organizations/stakeholders was developed to assist with burst pipes.

Chair Rocha Garcia noted recent low pressure at the San Antonio Airport and asked SAWS staff to investigate.

This item was for briefing purposes only.

5. Briefing by the San Antonio Office of Emergency Management regarding preparations for the upcoming winter season operating conditions [María Villagómez, Deputy City Manager; Valerie Frausto, Fire Chief]

Deputy Fire Chief Brian Norris provided an overview of winter preparedness for COSA and noted that SAFD was much better prepared to meet needs during an extreme winter event. Norris reviewed the roles of the Office of Emergency Management which included providing operational coordination between key entities, situational assessment, and public information delivery.

Norris spoke to operational coordination and planning and response during a winter event which included preparation protocols with city departments, utilities, and stakeholders. He stressed the need for community education and communications to let the public know of weather alerts and emergency messaging. He noted response protocols which included the development of an Ice Plan led by SAFD in coordination with the Public Works Department and the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDoT) which included the establishment of warming centers, Resiliency Hubs, and situational awareness reports.

Norris reviewed the development of the Cold Weather Guide and door hangers and other increased communication to the public. He spoke to community outreach to inform them of the “4 Ps” which included People, Pets, Plants and Pipes.

Norris stated that a coordinated winter response winter weather plan and tips was delivered by SAFD in partnership with the Communications & Engagement Department, Bexar County, CPS Energy, SAWS and VIA Metropolitan Transit.

Norris noted that City leadership directed SAFD to develop a Cold and Extreme Weather Preparedness Plan which had three levels where different initiatives were put in place based on extent of extreme weather: Level 1 – Daytime Warming Centers; Level 2 – City Resiliency Hubs; and Level 3 – opening Mass Shelter facilities. Norris spoke to examples of shelter deployments and reviewed map of sheltering locations.

Norris reviewed cooperation efforts with outside agencies to include CPS/SAWS, Bexar County, TXDoT and other non-profit stakeholders in the deployment of extreme weather shelter deployments and services. He stressed the importance of situational awareness and coordination of updates to the City Manager’s Office who then provided updates to Mayor and City Council. Norris added that the City’s communication team provided coordination of daily updates to the media.

DISCUSSION

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke in support of resiliency hub improvements especially in her district. She spoke to recent discussions with Texas A&M – San Antonio on the use of their campus gym as a community-based hub and asked if SAFD had discussions on establishing a hub at that site. Norris stated that discussions had been had about establishing a community-based hub in the area and that additional coordination was still in development and on bringing in stakeholders to bring to establishing site.

Chair Rocha Garcia spoke to Washington DC initiative that picked up individuals to go to shelters and how they could be reached for services. She noted that DHS did have a similar program and asked how the program could be marketed. Norris stated that a communication and education plan had been developed with VIA and DHS to reach out to individuals needing services. He stated that 3-1-1 and hotlines were in place to provide information on sheltering services.

Chair Rocha Garcia stated that in the last Point in Time count that many homeless individuals had cell phones and asked if messaging could be coordinated. Norris stated that coordination would need to be done with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and that discussions would be conducted in the near future.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked if animals were allowed into warming facilities. Norris provided clarification of services and partnership with Animal Care Services to provide animal sheltering during extreme weather.

Chair Rocha Garcia asked what the status of the Community Shelter Program. Norris stated that discussions had begun and that more work was needed to fully roll out the Program to include discussions with community partners and stakeholders.

Councilmember Castillo spoke in support of the Preparedness Guide and communications during weather events. She stated that it was important to open facilities for unhoused individuals and allowing “pushcart” at the sites.

Councilmember Castillo noted her support of the current communication efforts to provide information to her district residents. She asked if VIA Transit Centers would be open 24 hours during extreme weather events. Norris stated that the transit centers were not currently open 24 hours but that conversations would take place to discuss possible availability 24 hours a day.

Councilmember Courage noted the positive work of SAFD but asked of the preparedness of surrounding independent communities and if services would be broadened to those areas. Norris stated that staff worked closely with Bexar County to meet the needs of entities outside San Antonio jurisdiction and that communications were constant as well as collaborations. Norris added that SAFD worked closely with Region 20 Education Center to identify housing needs within the education district which included areas outside the City limits.

Councilmember Whyte asked what the Point in Time count was. Maria Villagomez stated that a new count would be done Jan 20, 2025, and that staff would provide data after being gathered.

Councilmember Whyte asked if the City collaborated at all levels of government for sheltering efforts. Norris confirmed that The City collaborated sheltering efforts at the local, state, and federal level to include at the County level for emergency management efforts and he stressed the improved communications between the organizations.

Councilmember Castillo asked if individuals had to be opted in to receive messaging. Norris confirmed that some messaging had to be opted in, but that SAFD did have the ability to push notifications in emergency situations. He stated that the City was part of State level programs that provided information such as is done during Amber Alert scenarios.

Councilmember Castillo requested fire prevention tips and education due to increased instances of fire during winter events. Norris stated that education was continuously provided for fire and carbon monoxide issues. Chair Rocha Garcia stressed the need for carbon monoxide education for all. Norris stated that all fire safety communications were done in both English and Spanish.

This item was for briefing purposes only.

Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:13 p.m.

APPROVED

Dr. Adriana Rocha-Garcia, Chair

Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk

DRAFT