



Draft Minutes

Community Advisory Committee Meeting

Tuesday, June 20, 2023

6:00 pm

In Person:

The Lake Merritt Room
Cal State East Bay - the Oakland Center
In the Transpacific Centre
1000 Broadway, Suite 109
Oakland, CA 94607

Or from the following locations:

- 3602 Thornton Ave, Fremont, CA 94536
- Starbucks - 20663 Rustic Dr. Castro Valley, CA 94546

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84794506189>

Or join by phone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

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Webinar ID: 847 9450 6189

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If you have anything that you wish to be distributed to the Committee, please email it to the clerk by 5:00 pm the day prior to the meeting.

C1. Welcome & Roll Call

Present: Members Landry, Hu, Liu, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Pacheco, Lutz and Chair Eldred.

Excused: Members Talreja, Souza and Vice-Chair Hernandez

C2. Public Comment

This item is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on any EBCE-related matters that are not otherwise on this meeting agenda. Public comments on matters listed on the agenda shall be heard at the time the matter is called. As with all public comment, members of the public who wish to address the Committee are customarily limited to three minutes per speaker and must complete an electronic [speaker slip](#). The Committee Chair may increase or decrease the time allotted to each speaker.

The clerk read the following public comment letter into the record:

(6:40) Tom Kelly's provides context to explain the history of Bright Choice and highlights the requirement in the Agency's Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) to beat PG&E on greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Tom references a previous submission that describes the JPA elements and the Agency's obligation. He points out that the early history of Bright Choice, as mentioned in the staff memo, demonstrates the Board's intention to offer a cleaner energy mix than PG&E. However, he notes that over the years, without Board approval, the emissions for Bright Choice have increased significantly. Tom emphasizes that the JPA establishes a legal obligation for EBCE to provide electricity with lower GHG intensity than PG&E, which has not been met. He suggests two options: either comply with the JPA or reform the agreement to remove the reference to competing with PG&E on GHGs and renewable content. Tom believes that most jurisdictions and individuals concerned about climate change would prefer their electricity supply to have better GHG performance than PG&E.

The clerk read the following public comment letter into the record:

(10:54) In his public comment letter, **Jim Lutz** responded to the proposed changes in the EBCE 2023-2024 rate structure, advocating for a more independent rate-setting approach. Mr. Lutz criticized the current practice of establishing EBCE rates in relation to PG&E's rates, stating that it may lead to overcharging. He suggested a new method which involves estimating operating costs, market volatility risks, and prudent reserves, then dividing these costs across projected energy sales. Furthermore, Mr. Lutz noted difficulty in confirming his rates as a Renewable 100 customer, using a comparison between his EBCE bill and a friend's Alameda Municipal Power bill to illustrate potential opportunities for rate reduction. He requested the Board evaluate alternative methods of setting customer rates.

(15:16) Jessica Tovar expressed concern about the Health-E Communities \$15M budget item, specifically the first \$5M slated for induction cooktop

installations. Tovar notes that the origin and purpose of an additional \$250,000, secured from an unnamed foundation for an unspecified electrification health and air study, remain unclear. She emphasized that the details of the study, partners, and funding should be clarified for public input. She further points out that the initial \$15M arrangement with UCSF Benioff sparked controversy due to a lack of transparency, arguing that these funds' utilization should be made known to the public, the Community Advisory Committee, and the Board of Directors. Tovar highlights the Board's commitment to transparency regarding these funds from a November 16, 2022 vote, urging follow-through.

(19:20) Dan Glassoff, representing a company that creates high-density solar structures, sought guidance for how to introduce his product to EBCE. The product, a solar structure that can reach up to 120 feet in height, reportedly generates a megawatt of power using just 10 to 15 percent of the land typically required for ground-mounted installations. Glassoff claimed that this would increase resource adequacy at a lower cost due to the reduced need for land and less line loss, as the power can be generated and stored close to where it's used, instead of at a remote location. He is seeking the appropriate contact within EBCE to discuss this proposal further.

C3. Approval of Minutes from May 15, 2023

(21:47) Member Pacheco requested the following correction for the May 15, 2023 minutes: on page 5, at under his comment that he is referring to ab538.

Member Pacheco motioned to approve the minutes pending his requested correction. Member Lutz seconded the motion which passed 7/0/1/3

Abstain: Member Swaminathan

Excused: Members Talreja, Souza and Vice-Chair Hernandez

C4. CAC Chair Report

- **Report back from Community Innovation Grants Planning Meeting**

(23:32) CAC Chair Eldred discussed several items planned for the June 21, 2023 Board of Director's meeting, including various Consulting Service Agreement amendments, an approval for a legal vendor, an administrative procurement policy contract, and a storage and renewable bid optimization software item. She also mentioned EBCE's third Energy Prepay Transaction, and the Emissions Overview which, despite being repeatedly postponed, will be presented with the Committee's comments.

(25:32) JP Ross reported on a Community Grants planning workshop held on June 7th, noting that they had good participation from both community

members and Community Advisory Committee members. The aim was to collect feedback and ideas for grant solicitations as they prepare to issue the first round of grants from the Community Grants Program. Ross revealed that they are requesting an additional \$1.4 million of funding for the program in the current year's budget, bringing the total to \$5.6 million.

CAC Chair Eldred requested that staff send the Community Grants workshop prompts to CAC members for their feedback.

(31:17) Member Hu provided feedback about the Community Grants workshop, stating:

"I heard ideas around thinking creatively about existing services and programs, especially around direct services, and then layering EBCE priorities and technologies on top of that. So, thinking about how we can connect EBCE's interest in induction stovetops with local suppliers and food and resource giveaways, among other creative ways to serve our local community while meeting EBCE's priorities. I heard interest in filling funding gaps and promoting collaboration, leveraging local-trusted messengers, focusing especially on specific hard to reach populations. We thought about how we can broaden this network. We asked the question, "who is doing energy or climate work?" with the understanding that there are many creative messengers that might be interested in collaborating with the EBCE community."

CAC Chair Eldred spoke in approval about the increased budget for the community grants and the positive feedback that was provided by previous grant recipients. **Jessica Tovar** expressed appreciation for the openness of the workshop to explore new and creative ideas, and asked to see more of the notes that came out of the input from the other Community Grant workshop groups.

C5. EBCE FY 2023-24 Budget (CAC Action Item)

Adopt a resolution approving the FY23-24 budget

The Committee Discussed:

- **(39:21)** Referring to slide two (titled "Executive Summary - June Update) **CAC Chair Eldred** asked for a clarification of the difference between the proposed 2023-24 value proposition and the current value proposition.
- **(45:15)** **CAC Chair Eldred** asked if staff had made adjustments to the value proposition in response to feedback around removing the one-time bill credit instead applying those funds to regional activities.

- **(1:06:27)** Referring to slide fifteen (titled “Building Electrification”), **Member Pacheco** asked for clarification about the program design for the Electrification Workforce Training Program in Las Positas.
- **(1:07:24)**) Referring to slide fifteen (titled “Building Electrification”), **Member Liu** asked if the Electrification Workforce Training Program is funded solely by EBCE. Member Liu also suggested that staff consider partnering with community colleges to implement EBCE’s workforce development goals.
- **(1:12:45)** Referring to slide 16 (titled “Health-e Communities”) **CAC Chair Eldred** asked if clarification can be provided about the undisclosed partnership and funding for the health care initiative. (see Jessica Tovar’s public comment letter at _____)
- **(1:13:42)** **Member Lutz** asked for an estimate of the staff time that will be needed to coordinate a healthcare research study.

(1:23:47) **Jessica Tovar**, along with undersigned community-based organizations and East Bay Clean Power Alliance members, wrote a letter calling for the Board of Directors to increase funding for Community Resilience by at least five times in the 2023-2024 budget. This increase is for planning and implementing community-based microgrids at community-trusted resilience hubs. Jessica Tovar argued that critical municipal facilities that are located in police and fire stations may not be trusted or accessible for low-income, people of color, immigrant, disabled, or senior community members during a disaster or power shut-off. She contended that there is an increasing need for emergency energy services in communities marginalized due to systemic injustice. Tovar advocated for addressing energy access inequities and expanding the microgrid project to include community-trusted spaces such as schools, community centers, shelters, senior centers, and places of worship. Jessica Tovar stated that the majority of Local Development budget benefited middle and affluent customers to the detriment of low-income communities.

(1:27:32) In a spoken public comment, **Jessica Tovar** raised several questions and suggestions about the proposed 2023-24 budget. She expressed concern about the lack of clarity surrounding the \$5M Health-e Communities budget and urged for the creation of a Health-e Communities workshop, akin to the Community Grant program workshops. Tovar spoke in approval of the funding allocated for technical assistance within the Community Resilience and Virtual Power Plants initiative but advocated for additional funding for microgrids in community-trusted locations such as community centers, senior centers and places of worship. Jessica Tovar stressed the increasing need for power sources that are independent from the main grid due to instituted power shutoffs. Lastly, Tovar advocated that funding for community grants should be replenished on an annual basis. She expressed gratitude for the additional \$1.4 million but suggested that EBCE can do more.

The Committee Discussed (continued):

- **(1:31:09) Chair Eldred** observed that owners of county-funded buildings are contractually obligated to provide affordable housing construction for 55-years, even if the building is sold. CAC Chair Eldred asked if EBCE can implement similar safeguards in order to build microgrids in community-trusted locations such as community centers, senior centers and places of worship.
- **(1:33:28)** Following Chair Eldred’s comment, **Member Hu** commented that when the state was building its community resilience program, it addressed similar questions related to building and resource management. Member Hu offered to send relevant guidelines and documentation to staff if needed.
- **(1:34:13)** Noting that “Each increase of carbon free procurement of 5% has an expected cost impact of between \$3.6 and 21MM (see slide 5, titled “Draft Budget: Carbon Free Procurement Options”), **Member Pacheco** asked for staff to explain the range in this cost impact, and if that range applies to a particular program or to the entire budget. Member Pacheco also spoke in approval of reducing the value proposition discount and increasing local development funding.
- **(1:38:21) Member Landry** asked for a clarification of the difference between the savings resulting from a reduction of the value proposition discount to Bright Choice relative to PG&E (see slide 8, titled “Draft Budget: Value Proposition Alternatives”), and the savings resulting from the elimination of the one-time on-bill credit to customers (see slide 9, titled “Draft Budget: Proposed Surplus Allocations”). Member Landry also spoke in approval of increasing investment in microgrids and resiliency centers.
- **(1:43:48) Member Lutz** spoke in favor of transitioning to cost-of-service rate setting rather than setting rates in relation to PG&E.
- **(1:46:08) CAC Chair Eldred** reminded the body that the CAC had already provided feedback to the Board to support of the elimination of the on-time on-bill credit to customers in favor of increased investment in lowering carbon emissions or local development, and resilience centers in particular.
- **(1:48:07)** Referring to slide 15, titled “Building Electrification”), **CAC Chair Eldred** asked for staff to consider geographic distribution in the selection of workforce training partners.
- **(1:50:00) CAC Chair Eldred** spoke in favor of increasing the budget for Community Grants by \$250,000 in order to support Innovation Grants (see slide 19, titled “Community Grant (update)”).
- **(1:51:16)** Referring to slide 30, titled “Draft Budget: Personnel Demographics”), **CAC Chair Eldred** spoke in favor of including equity-

based metrics such as the gap between the lowest and highest paid workers, and a breakdown of salaries by race and gender.

- **(1:53:06) Member Hu** asked if EBCE has an emergency fund that can quickly provide funding for critical community needs in an emergency. Member Hu also advocated that EBCE should provide continued support for workshops and spaces for the local community to bring new ideas and collaborate.

(1:57:11) CAC Chair Eldred motioned to support staff recommendation with the modification of changing the 50/50 split as the final tier of the waterfall and instead of a one-time on-bill credit of \$9.94, while preserving the \$50 credit for CARE, FERA and medical baseline customers, use the \$14.75MM for lowering carbon content and local development or resilience centers, including the hiring of additional staff.

(1:58:26:55) Member Hu offered a friendly amendment to consider the creation of an emergency fund.

(1:58:48) Member Pacheco seconded the motion.

The motion was approved 6/0/2
Abstain: Members Liu and Swaminathan

C6. New Brand Name Proposal (CAC Action Item)

Present the process and proposed new name for EBCE

The Committee Discussed:

- **(2:18:45) CAC Chair Eldred** spoke in support of the need for a new brand name in order to promote geographical inclusivity.
- **(2:21:16) Member Landry** spoke in opposition to the name, stating that it does not feel inspiring, and that it lacks identity as a CCA if “community energy” is not included.

(2:25:01) Jessica Tovar provided feedback to the new name that she gathered from a community workshop. Jessica Tovar stated that a participant expressed concern about losing the essence of “Community Energy” if just “Ava” was used alone. Other concerns raised were the cost of the name change and potential confusion it may cause. Some participants found the new name to be genderizing and associated it with tech products like Siri and Alexa, while another commenter likened it to a beauty product rather than an energy company. The key takeaway was to ensure that “Ava” and “Community Energy” remain connected in the name, and staff that should be intentional about this.

The Committee Discussed (continued):

- **(2:28:34) Member Hu** spoke in opposition to the brand update, stating that “Community Energy” should always be included in the name. Member Hu also stated that the name felt like the agency was aligning itself with the tech space, and that it might indicate a directional change for the agency.
- **(2:32:05) Member Landry** asked for staff to explain why the name change could not be decided at a later date.

(2:38:07) CAC Chair Eldred motioned to support staff recommendation and to adopt “Ava Community Energy” as the new name for East Bay Community Energy, with very strong recommendations around the intentionality of keeping “Community Energy” in the name and not losing it in our branding.

Member Swaminathan seconded the motion, which failed 4/0/4/3

Yes: Members Liu, Swaminathan, Lutz and Chair Eldred

No: none

Abstain: Members Landry, Hu, Lakshman and Pacheco

Excused: Members Talreja, Souza and Hernandez

C7. CAC: Stockton Seat and Six-Month Term Extension (CAC Action Item)

Create interim seat for Stockton and extend Regional member terms by six months (i.e., through Dec 2023)

(2:40:19) CAC Chair Eldred stated that CAC members have already been contacted with regards to this item, so there is no need to discuss it at this time.

The Committee discussed:

- **(2:41:52) Member Pacheco** asked if the interim Stockton member would be able to vote.

The clerk read the following written Public Comment Letter from Tom Kelly into the record:

The clerk read the following public comment letter into the record:

(2:43:15) Tom Kelly states that EBCE’s original intention, as codified in its JPA, is to offer Bright Choice with fewer greenhouse gases (GHGs) than PG&E. Kelly points out that Bright Choice’s GHGs, which were initially lower than PG&E’s, have increased significantly without board approval since the adoption of an emission factor in 2018. He argues that EBCE is now out of compliance with its JPA. To rectify this, he suggests two options: adhere to the JPA by offering electricity with lower GHGs than PG&E, or revise the JPA to remove

the obligation to compete with PG&E on GHGs and renewable content. He is confident that most jurisdictions would prefer their electricity to have lower GHGs than what PG&E offers.

C8. CAC Member and Staff Announcements including requests to place items on future CAC agendas

There were no CAC Member and staff announcements.

The Committee discussed:

- **(2:46:12) Member Hu** asked for the clerk to explain how CAC members can be reimbursed for parking and public transportation costs.
- **(2:46:46) Member Hu** asked if there has been a recent Legislative Update that list the current bills that are of interest to EBCE.

C9. Adjournment to Monday, July 17, 2023 at 6:00 pm