



Draft Minutes

Community Advisory Committee Meeting

Monday, July 15, 2024

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 remote locations:

- 1343 Fairview Ct, Livermore CA 94550
- 4563 Meyer Park Circle, Fremont, CA 94536
- 4664 Rousillon Ave, Fremont, CA 94555
- Starbucks at 1857 11th St. Tracy, CA 95376
- 1234 W Oak St, Stockton, CA 95204

Via Zoom:

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

Or join by phone:

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

US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 929
205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or 877 853 5257 (Toll Free)

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, Balkissoon, Weiner, Stephenson, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Pacheco, Harper, Lutz and Chair Hernandez

Not Present: Members: Hu, Kaur and Vice-Chair Souza

Member Weiner served as an alternate for Member Hu (North).

Member Pacheco joined the meeting at 6:20pm

Member Swaminathan left the meeting at 8:25pm.

Member Weiner left the meeting at 8:46pm.

C2. Public Comment

This item is reserved for persons wishing to address the Committee on any Ava Community Energy-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.

(10:03) Public Comment - Brenden Pittman asked about the timing of the board's consideration of the carbon-free allocation for nuclear energy. He also shared information about PG&E's community outreach program regarding the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, which offers educational presentations about the facility.

(13:48) Public Comment – Alya Paz, from the Local Clean Energy Alliance offered to organize and facilitate a study session for the Community Advisory Committee to learn about resilience hubs and their role in climate and energy resilience.

C3. Approval of Minutes from June 10, 2024

Member Weiner motioned to approve the minutes. Member Landry seconded the motion, which was approved 9/0/0/0/4:

Yes: Members: Landry, Balkissoon, Weiner, Stephenson, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Harper, Lutz, and Chair Hernandez

No: none

Abstain: none

Recuse: none

Not Present: Members Hu, Pacheco, Kaur and Vice-Chair Souza

C4. CAC Chair Report

(18:46) Chair Hernandez reported on the June 12th Board of Directors meeting, highlighting several key points:

1. Public comments from the June 12 meeting focused on rejecting the nuclear energy allocation and supporting resilience hubs and efforts to support low-income and disadvantaged communities to obtain solar+storage.
2. Howard Chang presented the 2023-2024 Budget presentation. Member DiFranco's proposal for a revised budget allocation (reducing reserves from \$50 million to \$30 million and increasing on-bill credits for CARE/FERA customers and local business development plan funding) was not supported by the board. Instead, the board unanimously approved the staff's budget recommendation.
3. The board unanimously appointed Howard Chang as the new CEO of Ava Community Energy, replacing Nick Chaset.

Member Pacheco joined the meeting at 6:20pm

C5. Fremont R100 Default Request (Board Action Item)

Request from the City of Fremont to opt up some or all customers to R100

(23:37) Alex DiGiorgio presented on the City of Fremont's request to default all residential and commercial customers (except those on CARE/FERA or medical baseline programs) to Renewable 100. Alex explained that Fremont would be the largest jurisdiction to make this switch, representing about 17% of Ava's load, and its implementation could potentially increase the Renewable 100 premium for all customers due to current wholesale energy costs. Alex DiGiorgio outlined possible implementation timelines (either all at once in 2025 or phased over 2025-2026) and asked that the Board consider approval of Fremont's request and decide on the most appropriate implementation timeline.

(37:53) Member Lutz questioned the decision to apply increased R100 rates uniformly to all customers when Fremont joins, suggesting alternatives like vintaging or tiered rates similar to PG&E's PCIA. **Alex DiGiorgio** explained that while such approaches are technically possible, the current practice is to have a single R100 rate for all customers. **Member Lutz** noted this approach was adopted by default and might be worth reconsidering.

(57:00) Member Stephenson asked about the potential for spreading out the implementation of Fremont's Renewable 100 default over a longer period to mitigate the premium increase. Alex DiGiorgio acknowledged this as a possibility, though current analyses only cover 2025-2026. **Member Stephenson** also asked about the impact on non-residential customers. **Alex DiGiorgio** responded that while percentage increases would be similar to residential customers, the actual monthly premium for commercial customers would likely be substantially higher due to their typically higher energy usage.

(1:00:52) Member Weiner asked to calendar a discussion about Ava taking a

more active role in easing supply chain issues and making renewable energy cheaper, such as working with legislators and regulatory agencies to streamline permitting processes. **CEO Chang** responded that Ava is already actively working to drive down renewable energy costs through various means, including policy efforts to ease transmission and interconnection buildout, negotiating better prices for long-term contracts, and managing the challenges of increased demand for renewable energy in a rising price environment.

(1:03:54) Member Swaminathan asked about the possibility of mitigating short-term high Renewable Energy Credit (REC) prices by purchasing a flat strip of RECs over a longer period. **CEO Chang** confirmed that Ava already employs such strategies to manage costs but stated that current market conditions have elevated prices across both short and long-term contracts.

Member Swaminathan left the meeting at 8:25pm.

(1:06:16) Public Comment – Jessica Tovar spoke about the importance of local investments as outlined in Ava's local development business plan to reduce reliance on energy markets. Jessica Tovar also spoke about the need for ongoing debt relief programs and support for community-based organizations to help rate-payers who are struggling with energy costs, especially when considering defaulting customers to R100.

(1:09:26) Public Comment – Audrey Ichinose asked about customers' options when faced with the new Renewable 100 default in Fremont, including the possibility of opting down to Bright Choice. Audrey Ichinose also asked that Ava identify and reach out to all rate-payers who are eligible for CARE/FERA/Medical Baseline discounts prior to implementing the R100 default.

Alex DiGiorgio clarified that all customers, including those in Fremont, will retain the option to choose Bright Choice for a discount, and that customers on low-income discount programs like CARE/FERA are not included in the default transition to Renewable 100.

(1:12:05) Public Comment – Brenden Pittman asked about the specifics of Fremont's climate action plan and for Ava's data on opt-out rates from previous auto-enrollment scenarios. Brenden Pittman also spoke about the importance of public outreach to explain rate changes.

Alex DiGiorgio responded that in previous opt-up scenarios, the percentage of customers opting out entirely was extremely low (a fraction of a percent), while about 4-7% of customers actively chose to switch to Bright Choice, indicating awareness of their options.

Member Pacheco motioned to support the staff recommendation with no

specific direction about the implementation timeline, and with the provision that rate-payers are informed about their ability to opt-down.

Member Lutz offered the following friendly amendments:

- 1. That Fremont and Ava staff negotiate the best phase in with the emphasis on keeping prices low;**
- 2. that rate-payers are informed about how to opt-down from R100;**
- 3. and that the Board and staff take aggressive legislative and regulatory action to reduce connection delays and other impediments to lowering renewable energy costs.**

Member Landry offered the following friendly amendment:

- 1. That the board consider providing a debt-relief program for Ava rate-payers who are in arrears.**

Member Pacheco accepted the friendly amendments from Member Lutz and Member Landry.

Member Weiner seconded the motion, which passed 8/1/0/0/4:

Yes: Members: Landry, Balkissoon, Weiner, Lakshman, Pacheco, Harper, Lutz and Chair Hernandez

No: Member Stephenson

Abstain: none

Recused: none

Not Present: Members Hu, Swaminathan, Kaur and Vice-Chair Souza

C6. New Community Inclusion – San Joaquin County (Board Action Item)

JPA membership request from San Joaquin County, and analysis

(2:03:48) Alex DiGiorgio presented on San Joaquin County's request to join Ava's Joint Powers Authority, which would potentially begin service to the county's unincorporated areas in 2026. Alex outlined the considerations of this inclusion, including the potential for expanding renewable energy access, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and the financial implications for Ava. Alex explained that while serving San Joaquin County could initially cost Ava money due to current high wholesale renewable energy prices, staff recommends extending JPA membership to the county and authorizing updates to the implementation plan for CPUC certification.

(2:19:12) Member Stephenson asked about Ava's expansion into San Joaquin County cities despite CCAs typically expanding along county boundaries. **Alex DiGiorgio** explained that individual jurisdictions can decide to join CCAs independently and noted that Tracy's proximity to Alameda County sparked initial interest, which spread to other cities.

(2:38:25) Member Weiner asked about the significance of agricultural energy use in San Joaquin County for Ava membership. **Alex DiGiorgio** explained that agricultural energy has a different load profile that can be paired effectively with

solar power, and that the agricultural sector presents opportunities for renewable energy development, electrification of equipment, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

(2:40:31) Public Comment – Brenden Pittman spoke about the importance of understanding different load profiles in the Central Valley and suggested considering long-term trends in agricultural electrification and how they might affect Ava's planning.

Member Harper motioned to approve the staff recommendation.

Chair Hernandez seconded the motion, which passed 9/0/0/4:

Yes: Members: Landry, Balkissoon, Weiner, Stephenson, Lakshman, Pacheco, Harper, Lutz and Chair Hernandez

No: none

Abstain: none

Recused: none

Not Present: Members Hu, Swaminathan, Kaur and Vice-Chair Souza

C7. E-Bike Program Implementation Contract (Board Action Item)

Approve and execute a contract with APTIM

(2:45:47) Brett Wiley presented Ava's plan to implement a \$10 million e-bike program in partnership with APTIM, aiming to launch in December 2024 and run through 2026. The program will offer incentives for e-bike purchases, with a focus on equity by allocating at least 40% of benefits to income-qualified participants. APTIM was selected through a competitive bidding process due to their experience in managing successful e-bike programs, and the contract is structured to be performance-based, with 98% of its value tied to direct participant impact.

(3:03:58) Member Landry asked about access to the e-bike program for individuals with mobility challenges, including older adults and seniors. **Brett Wiley** explained that the program includes incentives for adaptive e-bikes, with higher incentives for cargo and adaptive bikes, and additional support for CARE/FERA customers, while also mentioning partnerships with local organizations to provide educational content and community rides to ensure inclusivity and safety for all participants.

(3:12:37) Member Lakshman asked about the voucher coverage for e-bikes, particularly for CARE/FERA customers. **Brett Wiley** explained that while the vouchers don't typically cover the entire cost of an e-bike, they offer substantial discounts with varying amounts based on bike type and customer income status, with CARE/FERA customers receiving higher incentives and some entry-level e-bikes potentially available at or near the voucher amount.

(3:16:26) Member Lutz asked about the availability of e-bikes in disadvantaged communities and incentives for bike shops. **Brett Wiley** responded that they are working with over 40 bike shops across Ava's service territory, with 22 already verbally committed to the program.

(3:19:22) Chair Hernandez suggested partnering with bike shops for community events and collaborating with organizations like Safe Routes to School to increase e-bike awareness and program visibility. Chair Hernandez also acknowledged potential challenges for small bike shops, such as inventory management and capital deployment, and encouraged staff to address these issues to facilitate successful program implementation.

(3:20:39) Public Comment – Brendon Pittman spoke in support of the e-bike program, describing it as a cost-effective, high-impact initiative that aligns with Ava's mission.

(3:22:24) Public Comment – Jessica Tovar proposed creating a bike-sharing or rental component to the e-bike program for those who can't afford or commit to purchasing. Jessica Tovar also spoke about the importance of building relationships with community organizations serving specific groups like seniors, disabled individuals, and immigrant communities to enhance program accessibility and effectiveness.

Member Weiner left the meeting at 8:46pm.

Member Balkissoon motioned to approve the staff recommendation.

Member Lutz seconded the motion, which passed 8/0/0/0/5:

Yes: Members: Landry, Balkissoon, Stephenson, Lakshman, Pacheco, Harper, Lutz and Chair Hernandez

No: none

Abstain: none

Recused: none

Not Present: Members Hu, Weiner, Swaminathan, Kaur and Vice-Chair Souza

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

- **(3:27:28) Member Pacheco** requested to address offshore wind procurement in relation to upcoming CPUC draft recommendations, seeking a way for the agency to review and comment before the public comment period ends.

- **(3:30:05) Member Lutz** asked for a discussion on the historical costs of electricity, including generation costs and PG&E charges, to explore ways Ava can reduce total electricity bills for customers.
- **(3:33:43) Member Stephenson** suggested analyzing how other utilities like Silicon Valley Power and SMUD offer 100% clean power at half the cost, and recommended looking into how Ava could replicate this to reduce customer costs.
- **(3:36:59) Member Balkissoon** asked if staff is tracking electric vehicle bidirectional charging legislation (SB59) and requested updates on related legislative activities.
- **(3:39:55) Member Landry** asked to schedule a study session that would provide a balanced overview of the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant, including presentations from both PG&E and community groups like Mothers for Peace.
- **(3:39:55) Member Landry** also requested a study session on resilience hubs and a review of past debt relief programs, with consideration for implementing a new one.

C9. Adjourned at 9:54pm.

The next Community Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, September 16, 2024 at 6:00 pm.

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