



Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, November 6, 2024
9:00 am

In Person:

Conference Room 5
Ava Community Energy
1999 Harrison St., Suite 2300
Oakland, CA 94612

Or from the following locations:

Dublin City Hall - 100 Civic Plaza, Dublin, CA 94568
City of Pleasanton, City Council Conference Room – 200 Old Bernal Ave., Pleasanton,
94566

Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88267670367>

Or join by phone:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):
US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 301 715 8592
or +1 312 626 6799 or 877 853 5257 (Toll Free) or 888 475 4499 (Toll Free)
Webinar ID: 882 676 70367

Meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Individuals who need special assistance or a disability-related modification or accommodation to participate in this meeting, or who have a disability and wish to request an alternative format for the meeting materials, should contact the Clerk of the Board at least 2 working days before the meeting at (510) 906-0491 or cob@avaenergy.org.

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

1. Welcome & Roll Call

2. Public Comment

This item is reserved for persons wishing to address the Executive 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 Executive Committee Chair may increase or decrease the time allotted to each speaker.

- 3. Approval of Minutes from September 4, 2024**
- 4. SMUD Contract Extension (Informational Item)**
Report on recommendation to extend SMUD agreement for two years
- 5. Resilience Hub Project Management and Technical Assistance (Informational Item)**
Report on recommended contract for project management and technical assistance for resilience hubs
- 6. Committee Member and Staff Announcements including requests to place items on future Executive Committee Agendas**
- 7. Adjourn**

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 4, 2024.



Draft Minutes
Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday, September 4, 2024
9:00 am

In Person:
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Ava Community Energy
1999 Harrison St., Suite 2300
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If you have anything that you wish to be distributed to the Executive Committee, please email it to the clerk by 5:00 pm the day prior to the meeting.

1. Welcome & Roll Call

Present: Members: Kalb (Oakland), Balch (Pleasanton) and Chair Tiedemann (Albany)
Not Present: Member Hu (Dublin) and Marquez (Alameda County)

2. Public Comment

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customarily limited to three minutes per speaker and must complete an electronic [speaker slip](#). The Executive Committee Chair may increase or decrease the time allotted to each speaker.

(15:24) Public Comment: Aya Peters Paz, representing Local Clean Energy Alliance, extended an offer to collaborate with Ava Community Energy in designing and implementing a study session on resilience hubs.

3. Approval of Minutes from June 5, 2024

Member Balch motioned to approve the minutes. Member Kalb seconded the motion which was approved 3/0/0/0/2:

Yes: Members: Kalb, Balch and Chair Tiedemann

No: none

Abstain: none

Recuse: none

Not Present: Members Hu and Marquez

4. Closed Session Public Comment

There was no public comment for the closed session.

5. Closed Session

- A. Conference with Real Property Negotiators pursuant to Government Code § 54956.8: 251 8th Street (Negotiators: CEO Howard Chang, General Counsel Inder Khalsa) (price and terms of payment).

6. General Report Out of Closed Session

There were no items to report out of closed session.

7. Resilience Initiative Overview (Informational Item)

Overview of what work is being done

JP Ross, Vice President of Local Development at Ava, provided an update on Ava's resilience hub activities, highlighting three key areas: residential battery storage, municipal resilience hubs, and community resilience hubs. He mentioned the success of Ava's Resilient Home program, which connects 1,200 batteries to the grid, reducing peak demand. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of partnering with cities to create resilience hubs in critical facilities and community-based hubs, with plans to launch solar and storage incentives in early 2025 as part of Ava's broader resilience efforts.

Member Kalb raised concerns about the timing of a study session on resilience hubs for the board, stressing that it should occur before any major decisions are made. **JP Ross** and **CEO Chang** discussed the plan to gather community feedback through focus groups led by community-based organizations and emphasized the importance of aligning this process with the board's needs for eligibility criteria and decision-making.

Public Comment: Audrey Ichinose from East Bay Clean Power Alliance and the California Alliance for Community Energy requested clarification about the types of critical municipal facilities identified among the 61 sites across eight cities.

Public Comment: Ayla Peters Paz expressed concern over the disparity in funding between community engagement and technical assistance in the resilience hub program and asked for the reasons for the difference.

JP Ross explained that the identified critical municipal facilities include fire stations, libraries, community centers, police stations, and more, all guided by the emergency response plans of Ava's member cities. He noted that each facility requires a customized approach, making the technical work complex, with no uniform solution across cities. In response to a question on funding allocation, **JP Ross** clarified that community engagement funding supports outreach and site identification, while technical assistance funds cover more costly engineering evaluations necessary for implementing resilience hubs.

8. Committee Member and Staff Announcements including requests to place items on future Executive Committee Agenda

There were no Committee Member or staff announcements.

9. Adjourned at 10:51am.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 2, 2024.



**Staff Report Item 4:
Recommendation**

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| To: | Ava Community Energy Authority |
| From: | Kelly Brezovec, Sr. Director, Account Services |
| Subject: | Seeking feedback from the Executive Committee on an extension of Ava’s agreement with SMUD for Call Center and Data Management Services, starting at the end of the current agreement, January 1, 2025, concluding on December 31, 2026. |
| Date: | November 6, 2024 |

Summary/Recommendation

Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) provides critical Customer Care and Data Management Services (CCDMS) to Ava via a contract priced at a per-meter monthly service fee. The current three-year contract, which resulted from a competitive solicitation process, started on January 1, 2022, and ends on December 31, 2024. The proposed new agreement is for two years and falls within the five-year allowance of our procurement policy prior to the need for another solicitation. Additionally, the proposed new contract sees a price increase from \$1.00 to \$1.10 per meter; staff has negotiated elements of the agreement, such as fixed fees for common customizations and new community enrollments in 2025 and 2026, as well as a future-looking \$1 million credit, should Ava enter into a three-year agreement starting January 1, 2027.

Staff seeks feedback from the Executive Committee on a contract extension with SMUD for Call Center and Data Management Services for a two-year term, from January 1, 2025, through December 31, 2026.

Financial Impact

Ava has worked with SMUD since 2018, when Ava first started to serve customers. The contract has been priced at a monthly, per meter rate with additional fees for new programs or enhancements.

| Years | Per Meter Fee |
|-----------|---------------|
| 2018-2020 | \$1.05 |
| 2021 | \$1.05 |
| 2022-2024 | \$1.00 |
| 2025-2026 | \$1.10 |

Table 1: Historical and proposed future pricing of Ava’s contract with SMUD for CCDMS services

While this 10% increase in per-meter price is a significant jump, Ava has seen a flat rate since 2022. If inflation had been applied to the \$1.00 per meter price starting in 2022, the 2025 price would have been at \$1.16 per meter, an additional 5.5% higher than the 2025 rate proposed in this agreement.

The total annual cost of this agreement will increase with the addition of new communities. Table 2 provides an estimate of the annual cost of the per meter fee. In addition to the set fee, Ava should assume an additional \$100-300k annually in enhancement fees, since billing is always evolving, and staff anticipates enhancing billing operations to provide benefits for Ava programs.

| | Meters Served, by end of Year | Annual |
|--|-------------------------------|----------|
| 2025 Assumes service start to Stockton & Lathrop in April | 700,500 | \$9.1M |
| 2026 Assumes service start to Unincorporated San Joaquin County in 2026 | 818,600 | \$10.85M |

Table 2: Future pricing estimates with the proposed agreement

Note that Unincorporated San Joaquin County is included here as Ava has submitted a plan to the CPUC but awaits the official certification letter. The 2025 cost would remain constant in 2026 if Ava does not begin service to Unincorporated San Joaquin County.

Term

The current three-year agreement resulted from a public Request for Proposals (RFP) process in 2021; Ava’s current procurement policy allows for a five-year term before issuing a new RFP.

The proposed two-year agreement does not require Ava to deviate from our standard purchasing protocol and provides flexibility. Over the next two years, staff may perform an assessment of the benefits of bringing some or all these services in-house. Additionally, as a collaborative vendor who values our business, SMUD has added a \$1 million credit to a future contract, should Ava sign a three-year agreement starting January 1, 2027.

Analysis and Context

Service and history

CCAs contract with third parties for data management services, and often, call center services (Call Center and Data Management Services, or CCDMS). SMUD, as Ava’s CCDMS provider, is responsible for critical operational services, including:

- Billing operations
- Data management
- Call center/customer service representatives

Sample activities:

| Service | Activities |
|--------------------|---|
| Billing operations | Ingest billing determinants from PG&E Send bill-ready billing information to PG&E Apply payments to customer accounts |
| Data management | Data feed conduit between PG&E and Ava Develop and share customer characteristic reports Ingest and share interval data feeds |
| Call center | Respond to customer inquiries via chat, email, and phone Manage customer enrollment via web forms and IVR service Continue to update knowledge base with information about Ava programs |

Table 3: Sample Activities of a CCDMS provider

Following a public Request for Proposals (RFP) process, Ava started service with SMUD in February 2018 with an agreement that concluded December 31, 2020. This agreement was extended for another year, until December 31, 2021. In 2021, staff issued a second RFP for CCDMS services. There are currently only two organizations providing CCDMS services to California CCAs. Staff performed a rigorous evaluation of both parties; SMUD was the selected respondent. SMUD and Ava entered a three-year agreement, starting January 1, 2022, ending December 31, 2024.

Select updates to the new agreement

While the bulk of the services SMUD provides are standard, such as providing the billing information to PG&E, there are some opportunities for negotiation and inclusion of updated pricing and services. Table 4 highlights some of these differences.

| Item | Current | 2025-2026 | Change Driver |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| Per meter fee | \$1.00 | \$1.10 | Inflation |
| Common enhancements and updates | Priced uniquely by request | Scheduled pricing, set at current rates | Fix pricing to 2024 levels, expedite regular requests |
| Enrollment of new communities | | Stockton, Lathrop and unincorporated San Joaquin County included | Planned and proposed community enrollments not to incur amendment |

| Item | Current | 2025-2026 | Change Driver |
|--|---|---|---|
| | | | fees for webforms and data activities |
| Rate changes | Included: up to six rate changes due to PCIA or generation rate changes. | Included: as many rate changes as needed for PCIA or generation rate changes. | Allows Ava to change rates with PG&E, planned pricing for other rate changes. |
| Net Energy Metering (NEM) and Solar Billing Plan (SBP) | Annual fees for webform for monthly/annual selection, fees to upgrade billing for SBP | Inclusive of SBP, webform adjustments | SBP as standard, monthly/annual as standard process |
| Real Time Pricing, when out of pilot | n/a | Real Time Pricing: on Ava bill, matching PG&E framework | Looking ahead to implementation of a new type of rate |
| Billing error liability | Not applicable below \$14,000 | Threshold changed to \$10,000 | Increased accountability for SMUD |

Table 4: Agreement updates

Special consideration: Customer Service Team

Customer Care is one of the major components of the agreement. Ava continues to benefit from the SMUD CSR team as a vital partner in our operations. SMUD ranked second in a J.D. Power 2022 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey based on their overall CSR performance, due in large part to their award-winning trainers and 8-year average tenure in the unionized call center. 100% of all calls are recorded and are available for Ava review. In addition to managing incoming phone calls, Interactive Voice Recordings, the team also responds to online chat and emails. All interactions are linked to the billing system, which both SMUD and Ava can access for reporting, quality control, and review. Ava is launching to Stockton and Lathrop in 2025, and potentially to San Joaquin County in 2026; it is important that we not disrupt the first, and potentially only, touchpoint a customer has with Ava.

The CSR team consistently receives praise from our customers and has been responsible for “retaining” over 4,300 customers since the team started tracking this metric in April 2021. In the past 12 months, nearly 1/3 of all customers that talk with a CSR during a request to leave Ava’s service to return to PG&E, stay with Ava. In some months, over 40% of customer calls result in the customer staying with Ava, due to excellent customer service. In addition to handling customer calls about bills and service, the SMUD team is also able to respond to inquiries about Ava programs, such as Health-e Communities, brand surveys, and surplus revenue credits. The team is prepared to add to their knowledge base as Ava’s local development team launches new offerings in 2025 and beyond.

SMUD annually posts a CSR job recruitment for their award-winning, unionized call center. As a means of encouraging local hires, since 2022, Ava's service territory has been specifically highlighted as an area of interest for recruitment. This SMUD/Ava partnership in recruiting has resulted in 84 applications from within Ava's territory. As of October 2024, two new hires to the SMUD CSR team are from Stockton. Ava is again partnering with SMUD to recruit local hires with in advance of a November 4, 2024, CSR recruitment event.

Next Steps

Staff will bring the recommendation and feedback from the Executive Committee to the Board of Directors on Wednesday, November 20.

Attachment

- A. PowerPoint

Agreement with SMUD for Contact Center and Data Management Services, 2025-2026

Executive Committee
November 6, 2024



Summary

- Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) provides Customer Care and Data Management Services (CCDMS) to Ava
 - The current contract ends on December 31, 2024
 - Staff seeks feedback on a new, two-year agreement



Services Provided

Billing Operations

- Ingest billing determinants from PG&E
- Send bill-ready billing information to PG&E
- Apply payments to customer accounts

Data Management

- Data feed conduit between PG&E and Ava
- Develop and share customer characteristic reports
- Ingest and share interval data feeds

Call Center

- Respond to customer inquiries via chat, email, and phone
- Manage customer enrollment via web forms and IVR service
- Continue to update knowledge base with information about Ava programs



Contract Updates: Fee

- Ava has worked with SMUD since 2018, when Ava first started to serve customers. The contract has been priced at a monthly, per meter rate with additional fees for new programs or enhancements.
 - The proposed new agreement sets the per meter cost at \$1.10 per meter, per month
- While this 10% increase in per-meter price is a significant jump, Ava has seen a flat rate since 2022.
 - If inflation had been applied to the \$1.00 per meter price starting in 2022, the 2025 price would have been at \$1.16 per meter, an additional 5.5% higher than the 2025 rate proposed in this agreement.

| | Meters | Annual |
|------|---------|----------|
| 2025 | 700,500 | \$9.1M |
| 2026 | 818,600 | \$10.85M |

| | Inflation Adjusted Rate | CPI Adjustment |
|------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 2022 | \$ 1.00 | 8% |
| 2023 | \$ 1.08 | 4% |
| 2024 | \$ 1.12 | 3% |
| 2025 | \$ 1.16 | |



Contract Updates: Enhancements

| Item | Current | 2025-2026 |
|--|---|---|
| Enrollment of new communities | n/a | Stockton, Lathrop and unincorporated San Joaquin County included |
| Rate changes | Included: up to six rate changes due to PCIA or generation rate changes. | Included: as many rate changes as needed for PCIA or generation rate changes. |
| Real Time Pricing, when out of pilot | n/a | Real Time Pricing: on Ava bill, matching PG&E framework |
| Net Energy Metering (NEM) and Solar Billing Plan (SBP) | Annual fees for webform for monthly/annual selection, fees to upgrade billing for SBP | Inclusive of SBP, webform adjustments |
| Billing error liability | Not applicable below \$14,000 | Threshold changed to \$10,000 |
| Common enhancements and updates | Priced uniquely by request | Scheduled pricing, set at current rates |



Financial Consideration: Term Length

- The current three-year agreement resulted from a public Request for Proposals (RFP) process in 2021; Ava's current procurement policy allows for a five-year term before issuing a new RFP.
- The proposed two-year agreement does not require Ava to deviate from our standard purchasing protocol and provides flexibility.
 - As a collaborative vendor who values our business, SMUD has added a \$1 million credit to a future contract, should Ava sign a three-year agreement starting January 1, 2027.



Special Consideration: Customer Service Representatives

- Customer Care is one of the major components of the agreement
 - Response to phone calls, online chat and emails
- SMUD credentials and benefits
 - SMUD ranked second in a J.D. Power 2022 Electric Utility Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey based on their overall CSR performance,
 - Award-winning trainers
 - 8-year average tenure in the unionized call center
 - 100% of all calls are recorded and are available for Ava review
 - All interactions are linked to the billing system, which both SMUD and Ava can access for reporting, quality control, and review.

Ava is launching to Stockton and Lathrop in 2025, and potentially to San Joaquin County in 2026; it is important that we not disrupt the first, and potentially only, touchpoint a customer has with Ava.



Example Customer Compliments

I was pretty upset getting a big bill from Ava on this month's PG&E bill and then Adrian talked me through on the phone today around 2:30pm and I feel totally fine about it now. Anyway, I really appreciate him walking me through everything - he did great. - D

I just got off the phone with Gary who did a great job explaining why my PG&E bill had charges coming from PG&E as well as Ava Energy for electricity. Gary... was pleasant, concise and explained complicated billing details in plain language. I so rarely have a productive and pleasant interaction with companies, so I wanted to make sure that I highlighted this as a real positive experience with Gary. Thanks, J & C

I just received outstanding service from Adrian! I want to commend him for his knowledge, customer service and patience! I truly believe he is a great asset to your company, and I just wanted him to be recognized. Kudos for having a great person such as Adrian work for your company, I received amazing customer service today! And I am grateful! - K

He understood exactly what I was asking about and went above and beyond to make sure that I got answers to my questions...super patient and clear when it came to showing me...the website. He said that he would call me back the next day, and he did! The voicemail he left was extremely clear and provided me the answer I needed...Ava Energy is lucky to have a person like Eric on the team. I have high standards, and he definitely exceeded them. Thanks, C



CSRs: Local Representatives

- SMUD annually posts a CSR job recruitment for their award-winning, unionized call center.
- Since 2022, Ava has partnered with SMUD to recruit new hires from within Ava's service territory
 - 84 applications have come from within Ava's service area
 - As of October 2024, two new hires to the SMUD CSR team are from Stockton.
- Ava is again partnering with SMUD to recruit local hires with social posts in advance of a November 4, 2024, CSR recruitment event, Ava post shown here.



Ava Community Energy
Just now

🔔 Job Alert! 🔔 Sacramento Municipal Utility District (**SMUD**) is hiring for a Customer Services 1 position in their Sacramento office (with future flexibility)! SMUD provides call center services for Ava and is an essential part of our customer support team.

Applications open Monday, Nov. 4 at 8 a.m. Only the first 3,000 applicants will be accepted, which SMUD is expecting to reach on the first day.

Qualified applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent and should be able to demonstrate 1 year of customer facing experience or equivalent training/education. Applicants should set up a career profile in advance at Careers at SMUD (<https://ow.ly/Cxrn50TYe4Y>) and apply as soon as possible on Nov. 4 at 8 a.m.

Qualified applicants will be invited to an online examination, tentatively scheduled for the week of Nov. 18.



Join our team

Customer Service Representative I

Powering forward. Together.



Next Step

- Staff will bring the recommendation and feedback from the Executive Committee to the Board of Directors on Wednesday, November 20.



Thank you!



Online

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[PoweredWithAva](#)



Community Energy



Resilience Hub Initiative Technical Assistance

Executive Committee 11/6/2024



Agenda

- Review Resilience Hub Initiative
- Provide recommendation for vendor selection for the Program Management and Technical Assistance
- Review timeline of key milestones



Resilience Hub Initiative

Objective: Understand the unique needs of community sites and provide them with resources, technical assistance, and potential incentives to provide energy resilience at local Resilience Hubs.

Community Outreach and Site Identification

- Evaluate community needs via at least **3 public workshops**
- Expand upon case study work on the types of site control, and organizations that are currently operating resilience hubs
- Help define site ownership requirements and eligibility criteria
- Identify at least 90-100 sites interested in becoming resilience hubs through community-based outreach



Technical Assistance

- **Provide technical support** to community-based sites, helping them transition from resilience concept plans to identification of key parameters needed for solar and storage project development
- **\$2M** has been approved for this phase. The goal of this phase is to provide technical assistance to up to 200 sites



Solar + Storage Incentives

- Provide incentives for community resilience hubs to **install solar and storage** and connect with Ava's managed battery program
- 40% of the 23/24 excess revenues have been allocated to this Program with half allocated to upfront incentives for Resilience Hubs and CARE/FERA customers.



Program Development, Management and Technical Assistance Needs

- Received 7 conforming bids from vendors for the following services:
 - **Program Development:** Collaborate across all three pillars of the Resilience Hub Initiative to develop a comprehensive customer journey, ensure a positive customer experience and encouraging participation across the Resilience Hub Initiative.
 - **Technical Assistance:** Provide technical assistance for qualified applicants with the following services:
 - Solar and storage feasibility study
 - Third-party bid reviews
 - Database of relevant grants and incentives
 - **Program Management:** Review technical assistance applications and guide sites through the technical assistance program

Recommendation

- Select NV5 to provide Program Management and Technical Assistance for the Resilience Hub Initiative
- Contract Term: 3 years
- Budget: NTE \$2M (\$2M previously allocated in FY23/24 budget)



Ava Vendor Recommendation

Why NV5?

- NV5 is an industry leading renewable energy resiliency consultant based in San Rafael, CA
- Extensive experience supporting a diverse range of clients, including municipalities, schools, and utilities, on projects of varying scales.
- NV5 stood out for the following reasons:
 - Deep knowledge and experience working with the solar PV and battery storage/microgrid projects
 - Dedicated resources with experience in process development and customer experience
 - Flexible scope of services that can adapt as we understand needs of sites, which could include site visits, contracting support, financial analysis and compliance monitoring
- Ava has an existing contract with NV5, with a positive working experience.

Base Resilience Hub Technical Assistance

~200 sites

- Solar PV and BESS Feasibility Study (*conceptual system designs, project milestones, cost estimates*)
- Third-Party Bid Review
- Grant tracking database



