



Draft Minutes
Community Advisory Committee Meeting
February 17, 2026
6:00 pm

In Person:
Board Room
Ava Community Energy
1999 Harrison St, Ste 2300
Oakland, CA 94612

Or from the following remote locations:
1343 Fairview Ct, Livermore CA 94550
4563 Meyer Park Circle, Fremont, CA 94536
1234 W Oak St, Stockton CA, 95204
Eden Medical Building - 20400 Lake Chabot Rd #303, 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):
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

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 Committee, please email it to the clerk by 5:00 pm the day prior to the meeting.

C1. (7:41) Welcome & Roll Call

Present: Members: Landry, Weiner, Stephenson, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Pacheco, Harper, Lutz and Vice-Chair Balkissoon and Chair Souza

Not Present: Members: Hernandez

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

(10:32) Public Comment - Jessica Tovar spoke about the current climate crisis, and in opposition to working with organizations that have a relationship with ICE.

(12:35) Public Comment – Debbie Pearson spoke about expenses related to her energy bill.

C3. (16:33) Approval of Minutes from January 20, 2026

Member Landry noted that the minutes should include reference to Jessica Tovar’s opposition, stated during general public comment, to working with organizations that have a relationship with ICE.

Member Lutz motioned to approve the minutes as amended. Vice-Chair Balkissoon seconded the motion, which was approved 10/0/0/0/1 (yes/no/abstain/recuse/not present):

Yes: Members: Landry, Weiner, Stephenson, Swaminathan, Lakshman, Pacheco, Harper, Lutz, Vice-Chair Balkissoon and Chair Souza

No: none

Abstain: none

Recuse: none

Not Present: Members: Hernandez

C4. (12:05) CAC Chair Report

Chair Souza provided a verbal report on the February BOD meeting.

No comments.

C5. (23:10) Overview of large electric load growth trends and implications for Ava Community Energy (BOD Informational Item)

Informational Item providing an overview of large electric load growth trends and implications for Ava Community Energy

Arielle Romero Cox, Director of Strategic Load, introduced the item and answered questions from the committee.

(1:09:52) Public Comment – Rebecca Franke asked if there had been any thought about the incentives that Ava could provide to encourage energy efficiency at data centers.

C6. (1:11:54) SmartHome Battery Program Launch Update (BOD Informational Item)

Informational items presenting program development and status before program launch.

JP Ross, Vice President of Local Development, Electrification, and Innovation, introduced the item and answered questions from the committee.

(2:00:21) Jessica Tovar asked for information about the sites that were not included in the critical municipal facilities program.

C7. (2:01:54) Ad Hoc Committee Update (CAC Informational Item)

There were no updates from the ad hoc committees, but **Chair Souza** stated that the Energy Affordability ad hoc committee will begin to explore the concept of CCA 3.0. CCA 3.0 shifts the focus from a supply side green utility model to a demand side municipal redevelopment model where CCAs would sell energy efficiency and distributed energy resource retrofit packages rather than electricity.

No comments.

C8. (2:05:25) CAC Member and Staff Announcements including requests to place items on future Community Advisory Committee Meeting Agendas

- **Cait Cady, Public Engagement Specialist**, reminded committee members that the deadline for CAC applications and reappointment requests is Friday, February 20 at noon.
- **Chair Souza** requested to agendaize a discussion about a policy regarding community safety or a "no harm" policy concerning organizations that Ava works with.
- **Vice-Chair Balkissoon** requested an update on Ava's policy advocacy efforts with the CEC, CPUC, and other regulatory bodies.

C9. (2:10:19) Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

The next Community Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, March 16, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

2/17/26 – Ava Community Advisory Committee

AI Generated Courtesy Summary - not official minutes

This summary has not been reviewed for accuracy

Welcome & Roll Call

The meeting of the Community Advisory Committee was called to order at 6:10 PM on February 17, 2026, at the Ava Community Energy Board Room, 1999 Harrison Street, Suite 2300, Oakland, California, with remote locations available. Chair Susan apologized for the slight delay in starting the meeting.

The clerk conducted roll call, confirming the following members were present: Member Landry, Member Stevenson, Member Swaminathan, Member Lachman, Member Cheka, Member Harper, Member Lewis, Vice Chair Foxen, and Chair Susan. A quorum was established.

Public Comment

Jessica Guadalupe Tobar from Local Clean Energy Alliance commented on two issues: the extensive rain currently affecting the community, highlighting the climate challenges they have been advocating against, and serious concerns regarding ICE activities in communities. Ms. Tobar emphasized that these issues directly relate to energy concerns, noting that resource wars are energy issues, and that vulnerable communities often lack access to clean energy while facing significant energy burden and debt.

Debbie Pearson shared concerns about a \$450 PG&E bill she recently received despite having installed solar panels in July 2024. She expressed confusion about the Net Energy Metering (NEM) charges over the year and how PG&E's billing works in relation to Ava's billing, which she was told would come in March. Ms. Pearson noted that as a retired senior citizen on limited income, she was upset about receiving such a large bill when she thought solar installation would be saving money.

In response to Ms. Pearson's concerns, Kelly Brozov, Senior Director of Account Services at Ava Community Energy, recommended that the customer contact Ava's call center at 1-833-699-3223, which operates from 9 AM to 5 PM with typically short wait times. Chair Susan reiterated that Ava takes these concerns seriously and encouraged Ms. Pearson to use their excellent call center for assistance.

Approval of Minutes from January 20, 2026

Member Landry requested an amendment to the January 20 minutes, noting that during public comment from Ms. Tobar, she had thanked the committee for opposing contracts with corporations that work with ICE, and a specific corporation name had been mentioned

but was not included in the minutes. Member Landry felt this was important to include as it is a corporation that does business with ICE.

Member Luts commented that they appreciated seeing the summary in the minutes, even though "Ava" was misspelled, as it helped understand the context of that meeting.

Member Luts moved to approve the minutes as amended by Member Landry, seconded by Member Landry. The motion passed unanimously.

CAC Chair Report

Chair Susan provided an update from the Ava Community Board meeting held on January 20, 2026. Key points included:

- Discussion of the Integrated Resource Planning (IRP), an informational item required by the state of California. The board is using several planning tools that may help with future resource planning beyond meeting requirements.
- Information on rate changes based on PG&E's changes to their rates.
- An action item concerning meeting management to handle long meetings, potentially moving items to subsequent board meetings with approval. This item was voted for.

Overview of large electric load growth trends and implications for Ava Community Energy

Ariel Romero Cox, who recently joined Ava Community Energy two months ago after working with Silicon Valley Power for a decade, presented an overview of large electric load growth trends and their implications.

Ms. Cox explained that California is experiencing significant projected increases in peak electricity demand after two decades of relatively flat load. The California Energy Commission forecasts a 42-61% rise in peak demand by 2045, primarily driven by electric vehicles, data centers, and building electrification.

She clarified the distinction between peak load growth versus total annual consumption, explaining that while electric vehicles contribute most to peak load growth (like rush hour traffic), data centers contribute more to overall annual energy consumption (like trucks constantly using highways).

Ms. Cox discussed why data centers are growing in California despite not being the least-cost state, citing proximity to technology centers, strong grid infrastructure, access to clean energy to meet sustainability commitments, and capital market dynamics. However, California is not the primary hub for data center growth compared to locations like Northern Virginia, Arizona, and Texas.

For Ava's service territory, independent studies project 530-770 megawatts of peak demand from data centers by 2030, representing about 11-16% of the statewide forecast. Ms. Cox explained this could equate to approximately 5-7 data centers, with the current pipeline estimated at about 198 megawatts (potentially 3-4 data centers). She noted that 1 megawatt of data center capacity running at 80% load equals the electricity used by about 1,300 average homes in Oakland for a year.

Ms. Cox outlined potential benefits for Ava and member communities, including economic benefits (jobs and tax revenue), spreading fixed administrative costs over a larger sales base, supporting long-term clean energy procurement at scale, and enabling investments in new clean resources and grid infrastructure.

Committee members raised several concerns and questions:

- Member Luts asked about protecting existing customers from transmission costs potentially being spread to Ava's customers.
- Member Stevenson suggested that like highway taxes where trucks pay more, hyperscalers should pay more for their impact on infrastructure, and noted that companies like Google and Amazon have agreed to defray extra costs in other jurisdictions.
- Member Davis asked about Ava's leverage as an energy utility to influence conditions around data center projects and whether Ava had done any analysis of JPA members on land use policies regarding data centers.
- Member Hernandez expressed concerns about how Ava will balance environmental justice criteria while competing with PG&E.
- Member Landry asked about potential impacts from federal rollbacks on electrification.
- Member Butcheco requested information about the current data center applicants and emphasized the need to discuss potential community disadvantages from these projects.

Ms. Cox acknowledged these concerns and explained that Ava plans to bring more information and potential policy discussions to the board in the future, including considerations for large load tariffs and non-standard rate agreements.

SmartHome Battery Program Launch Update

JP Ross, Vice President of Local Development at Ava Community Energy, presented an update on the upcoming Smart Home Battery Program launch and the Resilience Hub Initiative.

The program has \$15 million in upfront and ongoing incentives aimed at adding approximately 21 megawatts of dependable batteries to their virtual power plant (VPP). The initiative targets both residential customers (income-qualified and general market) and community resilience hubs.

Program timeline:

- March 2026: Launch for newly installed solar and battery systems
- April 2026: Open for customers with existing solar and battery systems
- Q2/early Q3 2026: Open for batteries owned by aggregators (third-party owners)

For resilience hubs, recruitment is already underway through a grant with Emerald Cities Collaborative, with technical assistance beginning for sites that have applied.

Mr. Ross explained their approach to installer and customer engagement, emphasizing that solar installers are key partners in delivering program information to customers. Ava has

conducted training for installers and engaged with the California Solar and Storage Association (CALSSA) for outreach.

Key program details:

- The program integrates with Ava's virtual power plant, which already includes their Smart Home Charging program for electric vehicles
- Launch will begin with Tesla and Lunar battery systems, with negotiations underway with 3-4 other vendors
- For resilience hubs, they've had challenges finding commercial battery providers willing to integrate with their systems, so they'll initially launch without requiring VPP enrollment
- Income-qualified customers (CARE/FERA) will receive \$500 per kilowatt hour of battery capacity, compared to \$90 per kilowatt hour for market-rate customers

Committee members asked questions about:

- Resource adequacy credit for the VPP
- The integration challenges with commercial battery providers
- Marketing and customer engagement approaches
- Confirmation that adding batteries to existing NEM 2.0 solar systems won't affect their grandfathered status
- Program metrics and success measures
- Group discount possibilities

Mr. Ross addressed these questions, explaining that while they're not pursuing formal resource adequacy designation, the assets will help reduce Ava's peak demand. He also clarified that customer engagement will focus on working through installers rather than direct lead generation, and confirmed that adding batteries will not affect NEM 2.0 status.

Chair Susan congratulated Ava on being recognized by the National Laboratory of the Rockies as the #3 top green power provider, with 1,957,441 megawatt hours of clean energy sold.

Ad Hoc Committee Update

There were no substantial updates from the ad hoc committees, but Chair Susan introduced the concept of "CCA 3" (Community Choice Aggregation 3), which would enhance the CCA's reach. The Energy Affordability ad hoc committee will explore this concept and prepare a summary.

Member Hernandez shared information about CCA 3, describing it as shifting from a supply-side green utility model to a demand-side municipal redevelopment model where CCAs would sell energy efficiency and distributed energy resource retrofit packages rather than electricity. This approach treats every home and business as a micro-infrastructure project and could lower barriers to participation through on-bill financing mechanisms.

CAC Member and Staff Announcements

Katie from Ava staff reminded committee members that the deadline for CAC applications and reappointment requests is Friday, February 20 at noon. She agreed to resend the application form.

Chair Susan mentioned a need for a policy regarding community safety or a "no harm" policy concerning organizations that Ava works with. This was suggested for potential inclusion on the March agenda.

Member Hernandez requested a future update on Ava's policy advocacy efforts with the CEC, CPUC, and other regulatory bodies.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 PM. The next Community Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, March 16, 2026, at 6:00 PM.