



Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

MINUTES

January 14, 2025 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Vice Chair Ethan Lawton called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center Auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The meeting agenda was posted on January 10, 2025.

Members present:

Norman Bell

Deborah Dukes

Colin Fiske

Benjamin Fordham

Richard Johnson

Luna Latimer

Ethan Lawton, Vice Chair

Kit Mann (arrived 6:14 p.m.)

Members absent: Chair Christopher Honar, Dennis Leonardi, Pliny McCovey.

Board-nominee vacancies: Blue Lake Rancheria (Michael Shackelton resigned on January 14, 2025), Fortuna, Rio Dell, Yurok Tribe.

Board Liaison present: Kris Mobley (non-voting)

Staff present:

Elizabeth Burks, Executive Director

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director

Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Executive Director

2. Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

No non-agenda public comment was received at the meeting.

3. Consent Calendar

3.1. Approve November 12, 2024, CAC Meeting Minutes.

3.2. Approve CAC 2024 annual report for presentation to RCEA Board of Directors.

3.3. Adopt 2025 CAC Annual Meeting Calendar.

Executive Director Burks requested that her name be deleted from the list of members approving the November 12, 2024, CAC meeting minutes. Ms. Burks resigned from the CAC on October 18, 2024. There was no public comment on this item.

Motion Dukes, Second Latimer: Approve Consent Calendar Items 3.2 and 3.3, and the corrected November 12, 2024, CAC meeting minutes.

The motion passed with the following unanimous vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Fordham, Johnson, Latimer, Lawton, Mann. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Honar, Leonardi, McCovey.

5. Wave Energy Update: CorPower Grant Proposal Letter (Information only)

Power Resources Director Engel described past ocean surface wave energy research and development in Humboldt County and RCEA's interest and participation in these efforts. In November, commercial wave energy developer CorPower Ocean asked RCEA to collaborate on a Department of Energy-funded pilot project at Oregon's PacWave wave energy test facility. RCEA could benefit by gaining first-hand experience with wave power's performance, reliability, grid compliance and cost competitiveness and by potentially diversifying RCEA's renewable power portfolio. Committee members supported CorPower collaboration and asked staff to find a way to develop and procure tidal or wave energy locally to meet the future offshore wind energy industry's large energy needs in Humboldt Bay. The group discussed the partnership's potential financial impacts to RCEA, high costs for early-development wave energy procurement and the potential scale and output of wave energy should it be developed off Humboldt County. There was no public comment on this item.

6. Annual Report on Humboldt Sawmill Company Biomass Use (Information only)

Each year, RCEA's Biomass Technical Advisory Group examines data provided to RCEA by Humboldt Sawmill Company. The information and BTAG comments are shared with the CAC and RCEA Board per an agreement made between HSC and RCEA when extending their power purchase agreement to 2031. Power Resources Director Engel shared information on the Scotia power plant's biomass feedstock sources, carbon emissions, efficiency and air quality standard compliance. Based on a Cal Fire-funded analysis, HSC plans to develop a biomass feedstock hydrogen production facility in Mendocino County. The committee members discussed: how hydrogen production's carbon footprint is similar to biomass energy's; Community Choice Energy's intention to not worsen climatic conditions; the importance and high current market price of resource adequacy, which RCEA procures at a locked-in, lower-than-current-market price through the HSC contract; and increased transparency of HSC's Scotia power plant operations resulting from the 2021 memorandum of understanding and BTAG, CAC and RCEA Board discussions. A member requested a clear standard and definition of when the HSC biomass plant is in violation of its contract with RCEA. Following legal counsel guidance, RCEA staff rely on the Air Quality Management District to determine whether the Scotia plant is operating in good standing. There was no public comment on this item.

7. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Burks reported on her first two weeks in her new role, reevaluation of the committee's goals and subcommittees, and a request for qualifications for design-build teams to provide solar and storage systems at 12 rural Humboldt County fire stations. The Kern County Sandrini solar project began operations, and the project's battery storage component will go online in December 2025. The Sandrini solar facility will supply more than 1/3 of RCEA customers' (roughly equivalent to 55,000 homes) electricity each year. The California Public Utilities Commission approved the Northern Rural Energy Network and allocated \$33 million for NREN to bring energy efficiency programs to Humboldt, Lake and Mendocino County as well as a large swath of the Sierra Nevada region served by the Sierra Business Council. RCEA, the Blue Lake Rancheria, Karuk, Yurok and Hoopa Valley Tribes and the Department of Energy Grid Development Office signed a conditional award

to lock in funds for microgrids in areas not reliably served by the electricity grid. The Foster Avenue microgrid project is under construction in the Arcata Bottoms.

8. Member and Board Liaison Reports

Member Johnson asked that the CAC meet at different locations around Humboldt County periodically to generate more interest in RCEA's work. A developer approached the City of Blue Lake about installing a battery energy storage facility at the defunct biomass plant site. Member Mann will report back to the committee on developments.

Vice Chair Lawton adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Lori Taketa
Clerk of the Board