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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**September 22, 2022 - Thursday, 3:30 p.m.**

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Notice of this meeting was posted on September 17, 2022. Vice Chair Chris Curran called a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Redwood Coast Energy Authority to order on the above date at 3:33 p.m., stating that the teleconference meeting was being conducted pursuant to the AB 361 Brown Act open public meeting law revisions signed into law on September 16, 2021, and Governor Newsom's State of Emergency Proclamation of March 4, 2020. Vice Chair Curran stated that the posted agenda contained public teleconference meeting participation instructions.

PRESENT: Chair Stephen Avis, Rex Bohn, Vice Chair Chris Curran, Mike Johnson (Fortuna Alternate Director), Sarah Schaefer, Frank Wilson, Sheri Woo. ABSENT: Scott Bauer, Mike Losey (Fortuna Director), Jack Tuttle. STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Ardi Arian, Renewable America President and CEO; General Counsel Nancy Diamond; Power Resources Director Richard Engel; Senior Power Resources Manager Jocelyn Gwynn; Executive Director Matthew Marshall; Power Resources Specialist Colin Mateer; Board Clerk Lori Taketa; Deputy Executive Director Eileen Verbeck.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no public comments on items not on the agenda. Vice Chair Curran closed the oral communications portion of the meeting.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 3.1 Approve Minutes of August 25, 2022, Board Meeting.
- 3.2 Approve Disbursements Report.
- 3.3 Accept Financial Reports.
- 3.4 Extend Resolution No. 2022-6 Ratifying Governor Newsom's March 4, 2020, State of Emergency Proclamation and Authorizing Remote Teleconference Meetings of RCEA's Legislative Bodies, for the period September 22, 2022, through October 21, 2022, pursuant to Brown Act revisions of AB 361.

Neither directors nor members of the public requested that items be removed from the consent calendar.

**M/S: Schaefer, Woo: Approve consent calendar items.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote. Ayes: Avis, Bohn, Curran, Johnson, Schaefer, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Tuttle. Abstain: None.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **5.1. Foster Clean Power A Solar Plus Storage Power Purchase Agreement - CPUC Mid-Term Reliability Procurement**

Power Resources Senior Manager Gwynn reported on the proposed solar and storage project in Arcata by developer Renewable America. Staff proposed that RCEA procure energy, resource adequacy, and renewable energy certificates from this project to satisfy the state's 2024-2025 mid-term reliability requirements. The project is going through the County permitting process.

Renewable America President and CEO Ardi Arian introduced himself and described site studies, current and proposed land use. The County issued a permit for a nearby cannabis project which requires solar electricity. The proposed site is desirable due to a nearby grid interconnection point. The project meets County development requirements.

The directors expressed concerns about using agriculture lands for solar farms and allowing willing landowners to submit piecemeal development requests. RCEA's strategic plans call for working with the County on limiting energy projects to designated renewable energy development areas. Efforts on that collaboration with the County have been postponed until County staff completes Climate Action Plan work.

There were no responses from the public to Vice Chair Curran's invitation for comment and the public comment period was closed.

**M/S: Woo, Schaefer: Approve Power Purchase Agreement with Foster Clean Power A LLC and authorize the Executive Director to execute all applicable documents.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote. Ayes: Avis, Bohn, Curran, Johnson, Schaefer, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Tuttle. Abstain: None.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **6.1. Rural Electric Vehicle Charging CEC Grant**

Executive Director Marshall reported on the proposed award of \$700,000 to RCEA for rural Humboldt County electric vehicle charging site development. The grant requires \$175,000 in match funding.

The directors discussed the charging stations' potential to enable vehicles to help power the grid during emergencies and whether proposed Southern Humboldt sites can be powered given PG&E's recent reports of infrastructure limitations. Staff agreed to provide more detailed equipment costs for RCEA-developed projects going forward.

J.A. Savage submitted a written comment requesting that the charging stations be able to process credit and debit card transactions instead of requiring use of a cell phone app.

To member of the public Sunny's inquiry about the construction timeline, staff responded that the project will go through the design and permitting process in early 2023 before construction through early 2024. Vice Chair Curran closed the public comment period.

**M/S: Johnson, Bohn: Approve accepting CEC Rural Electric Vehicle Charging Grant in the amount of \$700,000 and authorize \$175,000 in RCEA match funds for a total project**

**cost of \$875,000 and authorize the Executive Director to execute the Grant Agreement and any associated documents necessary to secure the grant following review and approval by RCEA General Counsel.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote. Ayes: Avis, Bohn, Curran, Johnson, Schaefer, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Tuttle. Abstain: None.**

Vice Chair Curran confirmed there was a Community Choice Energy quorum.

## **OLD CCE BUSINESS**

### **7.1. Renewable America North Bank Road Projects Update – CPUC Mid-Term Reliability Procurement**

Power Resources Senior Manager Gwynn reported that the project developer has changed the project's location, scope and operation date and the project no longer helps meet state-mandated mid-term reliability goals. The project would still fulfil Board local solar energy development goals. Development of a smaller solar project submitted to RCEA by Renewable America as a feed-in tariff project at this project's original site will be contingent upon Board approval to buy power from this larger solar development and County permit approval.

The directors expressed concern about the perceived piecemeal approach to local power purchase agreements (PPAs) and potential misconstrual of RCEA's PPAs as support for unpopular development projects on agricultural or timber lands regardless of social or environmental consequences. It was clarified that determination of each energy development project's environmental impacts and zoning appropriateness is beyond RCEA's purview. Developers usually need confirmed power buyers to find project financing to go through the permitting and construction phases. It is rare for fully permitted, post-CEQA process projects to respond to calls for renewable power providers and to find developable Humboldt land not already covered by trees or zoned for agriculture or industrial use. Projects under contract to RCEA to which the County does not grant permits will eventually fail to meet development milestones in the contract and go into seller default, if the contract is not canceled when the permit is denied. RCEA staff is honoring community-determined and Board-approved goals to procure local renewable energy. The directors expressed support for local renewable power, concern for project siting, and support for continued negotiation.

There were no responses from the public to Vice Chair Curran's invitation for comment and the public comment period was closed.

**M/S: Avis, Schaefer: Authorize staff to continue negotiations with Renewable America of a long-term power purchase agreement for the 5 MW North River Clean Power solar plus storage project.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous roll call vote. Ayes: Avis, Bohn, Curran, Johnson, Schaefer, Wilson. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Tuttle. Abstain: None. Non-Voting: Woo.**

## **NEW CCE BUSINESS**

### **8.1 2022 Integrated Resource Plan Portfolio Review**

Power Resources Director Engel described the state's required biennial Integrated Resource Plan filing, which helps the state plan for electricity needs for the next 10 years and helps staff ensure that the agency meets state decarbonization, reliability and cost-effectiveness guidelines as well as the Board's renewable energy procurement goals. Staff Director Engel described four possible energy portfolios with varied amounts of offshore wind, geothermal and biomass energy. Staff are recommending a diverse preferred conforming portfolio. The directors were asked to weigh the value of local versus non-local renewable power considering different available power sources, to consider whether to continue biomass procurement beyond the Humboldt Sawmill Company contract expiration in 2031 through 2035, and whether short-term large hydropower contracts should be pursued beyond the 2020s to hold a place for offshore wind and other resources that will take a long time to develop.

The directors discussed the need for power grid upgrades and the desirability of a southern transmission route to accommodate both large-scale Humboldt County offshore wind and Sonoma County geothermal development, the source of actual electrons used in Humboldt County and how local renewable projects green the greater electric grid and reduce local reliance on PG&E's Humboldt Bay Generation Station, and the probability of purchasing more in-state renewables as Pacific Northwest large hydropower availability wanes. The desirability of committing to local biomass through 2035 was mentioned, as it would allow HSC to invest in clean power delivery upgrades and repairs. Staff will request director approval for the diverse portfolio option at the next Board meeting.

Lucas Giese, a resident of Bayside, inquired about RCEA's public engagement on the Integrated Resource Plan beyond Board and Community Advisory Committee meetings. Staff described public engagement efforts to update the agency's RePower strategic plan in 2019 which included community input on power sources, and plans to do public workshops in 2023 to inform the 2024 IRP update. To Mr. Giese's inquiry on how load assumptions were developed, staff Manager Gwynn described requirements to use the California Energy Commission's load forecasts. Vice Chair Curran closed the public comment period.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **9.1. Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Marshall described recent PG&E reports about transmission system problems that are preventing electricity load growth in Southern Humboldt. Previous staff discussions with PG&E covered upcoming Southern Humboldt cannabis projects and other planned growth but PG&E had previously expressed no concerns. Staff will discuss with PG&E immediate and near-term grid-management actions RCEA can take to alleviate local load congestion until transmission upgrades are made. To engage effectively, RCEA needs clearer understanding of congestion locations, which PG&E has previously not disclosed.

The directors differentiated between limited transmission into and out of the county and the current problem involving Southern Humboldt substations and transmission lines. They described completed construction projects that were promised electricity by PG&E but which were not connected to the utility's distribution system and the potential harm to regional economic development as developers threaten to abandon projects due to lack of electrical supply. No member of the public commented on this report. Vice Chair Curran closed the comment period.

## **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Directors requested that a PG&E Regional Vice President attend the next RCEA Board meeting to discuss PG&E's inability to serve electricity load increases in Southern Humboldt, and PG&E's lack of communication with government agencies regarding this matter.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

There was no public comment regarding closed session item:

- 11.1** Conference with real property negotiators pursuant to Government Code § 54956.8 in re: APNs 001-141-005 and 001-141-006; RCEA negotiator: Executive Director; Owner's negotiating party: Wells Commercial; Under negotiation: price and terms.

The directors adjourned to closed session at 5:29 p.m. The Board reconvened from closed session at 6:09 p.m. Executive Director Marshall stated there was nothing to report from closed session and adjourned the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Lori Taketa  
Clerk of the Board