



Redwood Coast Energy Authority  
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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**Jefferson Community Center Auditorium  
1000 B Street, Eureka, CA 95501**

**September 28, 2023  
Thursday, 3:30 p.m.**

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Chair Sheri Woo called a regular meeting of the Board of Directors of the Redwood Coast Energy Authority to order on the above date at 3:31 p.m. Notice of this meeting was posted on September 25, 2023.

PRESENT: Natalie Arroyo, Alternate Director Jana Ganion, Kris Mobley, Frankie Myers (participated from Weitchpec Yurok Tribe Office from 4:05 to 5:01 p.m.), Elise Scafani, Vice Chair Sarah Schaefer, Jack Tuttle, Frank Wilson, Chair Sheri Woo. ABSENT: Scott Bauer, Skip Jorgensen, Jason Ramos.

STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT: Business Planning and Finance Director Lori Biondini, Finance Specialist Ronnie Chausse, General Counsel Nancy Diamond, Power Resources Director Richard Engel, Senior Power Resources Manager Jocelyn Gwynn, Executive Director Matthew Marshall, Account Services Manager Sally Regli, Humboldt County Health Officer Dr. Candy Stockton, Board Clerk Lori Taketa, Deputy Executive Director Eileen Verbeck.

### **REPORTS FROM MEMBER ENTITIES**

Director Arroyo praised Executive Director Marshall's and a Biomass Technical Advisory Group member's participation in the Redwood Region Economic Development Conference.

Chair Woo reported that PG&E says it will repair the Ruth Lake 2 MW hydroelectric plant grid interconnection by the end of 2023. The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District has lost electricity sales revenue for 2023, a copious rainfall year, which would have benefited ratepayers. Staff noted the complaint and will discuss next steps with Water District staff.

### **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Members of the public Bob Rhode and Jesse Noell submitted written comment opposing biomass energy production and supporting distributed solar energy generation, respectively. Chair Woo closed the non-agenda item public comment period.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- 4.1 Approve Minutes of August 24, 2023, Board Meeting.
- 4.2 Approve Disbursements Report.
- 4.3 Accept Financial Reports.
- 4.4 Approve Resolution 2023-8, Approving and Attesting to the Veracity of the 2022 Power Source Disclosure Report and Power Content Label.
- 4.5 Approve the Attached Update to the Executive Director Salary Range Based on a Midpoint of \$267,000 Effective July 1, 2023.

Chair Woo requested item 4.1 be removed and Business Planning and Finance Director Biondini requested 4.5 be removed from the consent calendar. No member of the public requested removal of consent calendar items.

**M/S: Arroyo, Schaefer: Approve Consent Calendar items 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Ayes: Arroyo, Ganion, Mobley, Scafani, Schaefer, Tuttle, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Jorgensen, Myers. Abstain: None.**

Chair Woo requested the words “Power Resources” be removed from the first paragraph of section 8.2 on page 4 of the August 24, 2023, RCEA Board minutes.

Business Planning and Finance Director Biondini submitted written comment, expressed concern over the process used to calculate the Executive Director salary midpoint increase and suggested alternative actions.

The directors discussed:

- Higher Executive Director salaries at other Community Choice Aggregators and the anticipated difficulties of recruiting an experienced replacement.
- Changing workplace norms, including remote executive work options.
- Different methods of adjusting the Executive Director’s salary.
- The importance of equitable methods in adjusting salary schedules.
- Appropriate roles for staff and the Board in re-evaluating salary schedule development methods.

**M/S: Mobley, Tuttle: Approve Consent Calendar items 4.1 and 4.5.**

**The motion passed. Ayes: Ganion, Mobley, Scafani, Tuttle, Wilson, Woo. Noes: Arroyo, Myers, Schaefer. Absent: Bauer, Jorgensen. Abstain: None.**

**CCE BUSINESS** - Chair Woo confirmed there was a CCE Business quorum present.

## **OLD CCE BUSINESS**

**6.1** Presentation on Public Health Impacts of Biomass Energy Plants on Nearby Populations, by Dr. Candy Stockton, Health Officer, Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services. (Information only)

Dr. Stockton shared data on short-term respiratory impacts on populations near biomass energy plants based on a New York state study which she deemed most comparable to Humboldt County’s demographics and health care structure. Using the study’s findings, Humboldt County could expect roughly 7-8 emergency room lower respiratory disease visits per month, which is significant in the context of Humboldt County’s small population and limited medical resources. Dr. Stockton discussed socioeconomic and other factors that may contribute to nearby residents not seeking medical care during a respiratory emergency and absenteeism impacts on school-age children and working adults. Dr. Stockton stressed that she was not advocating for one energy source or another but providing context for energy procurement decision-making.

The Directors discussed:

- How Scotia's geography and weather patterns do not significantly change the New York study findings' applicability to Scotia.
- The need for careful air quality study design and measurement to assure usable results for assessing regulation compliance, and the need for CalPoly Humboldt involvement in an air quality study. Staff offered RCEA funding for this effort if needed.
- The need to consider costs to the community and inequitable distribution of impacts when making any energy procurement decision.
- The possibility of gathering relevant air pollutant data as part of the County's Live Well Humboldt Community Health Improvement Plan research.

Member of the public Walt Paniak submitted an article on air pollution's effect on antibiotic effectiveness and pointed to Humboldt Sawmill Company's PM 2.5 particle emission levels. Chair Woo closed the public comment period.

## **6.2 Biannual RCEA Strategic Plan Update (Information only)**

Executive Director Marshall reported on agency work on strategic plan goals. Recent work was highlighted:

- Rural Regional Energy Network statewide energy efficiency funding and program development,
- The upcoming 2022 Power Content Label energy source postcard,
- Current status of the delayed Sandrini solar project, which will provide 40% of RCEA's customer electricity load when completed, and
- The pending launch of RCEA's second electric bike rebate program.

The directors discussed:

- The possibility of the program purchasing e-bikes in bulk to reduce cost, the cost of electric bikes at local stores, and challenges of ordering inexpensive e-bikes online.
- E-bike rebate outreach efforts, RCEA's e-bike rebate webpage and the expectation that the state's and RCEA's rebates will go quickly.
- The need to engage now to advocate for offshore wind energy transmission routes that meet multiple Humboldt County objectives, including Tribal Nation energy reliability and regional infrastructure investment needs at problem areas such as Willow Creek and Southern Humboldt.
- The need to pursue funding for Schatz Energy Research Center to continue research on offshore wind energy transmission.

There were no comments from the public and Chair Woo closed the comment period.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **8.1 Foster Clean Power A Renewable America Solar Project Contract Amendment**

Senior Power Resources Manager Gwynn reported on this project whose conditional use permit has already been granted by the County. The contract's amendments, negotiated so both RCEA and the developer shoulder industry cost increases, were described. The contract price changes improve the project's viability after wet weather delays and financing challenges. There were no comments from the public and Chair Woo closed the comment period.

**M/S: Arroyo, Schaefer: Approve Amendment 1 to the Foster Clean Power A LLC Power Purchase Agreement and authorize the Executive Director to execute all applicable documents.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Ayes: Arroyo, Ganion, Mobley, Scafani, Schaefer, Tuttle, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Jorgensen, Myers. Abstain: None.**

## **8.2 Electric Vehicle Charging Hub Project Design Contract**

Executive Director Marshall described this project to install 10 electric vehicle charging sites across the county, and the current step of hiring the electrical engineering designers. There were no comments from the public and Chair Woo closed the comment period.

**M/S: Mobley, Tuttle: Authorize the Executive Director to execute all applicable documents for Professional Electrical Design and Engineering Services associated with the North Coast Plug-In Electric Vehicle Charging Network Phase 2 Project with Whitchurch Engineering, Inc. for a not to exceed value of \$99,088, subject to RCEA General Counsel review.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Ayes: Arroyo, Ganion, Mobley, Scafani, Schaefer, Tuttle, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Jorgensen, Myers. Abstain: None.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **9.1 RCEA Office Building Property Purchase and Development**

Deputy Executive Director Verbeck described RCEA's current and projected office space needs, previous efforts to locate a suitable building, and plans for staff, public meeting and educational space in a new office location. The proposed cash purchase of a vacant Old Town lot on which to build an office building was described. The ad hoc Building Relocation Subcommittee scope of work was extended through the property development process. There were no comments from the public and Chair Woo closed the comment period.

**M/S: Schaefer, Arroyo:**

**Approve Resolution No 2023-07, Accepting Real Property Interests in Assessor's Parcel Number 001-131-007, 805 3rd Street, Eureka CA.**

**Approve the expenditure of \$285,000 plus closing fees and costs estimated to be less than \$5,000 for the acquisition of real property at 805 3rd Street, Eureka, CA, APN 001-131-007.**

**The motion passed with a unanimous vote. Ayes: Arroyo, Ganion, Mobley, Scafani, Schaefer, Tuttle, Wilson, Woo. Noes: None. Absent: Bauer, Jorgensen, Myers. Abstain: None.**

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **10.1 Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Marshall reported from the CalCCA strategic planning sessions that other CCAs were facing similar procurement challenges as RCEA and are discussing measures to address current market constraints. Regulatory and Legislative Policy Manager Faith Yakovleva was introduced. Staff added that Board meetings will move to the Wharfinger Building's downstairs Bay Room for easier ADA accessibility and sound starting next month and announced a morning open house to inform contractors and vendors of rebates and other RCEA efficiency programs. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Directors requested staff reports on RCEA's role and work on offshore wind electricity distribution and transmission issues, and a discussion on the salary schedule structure and potential changes. There were no public comments on this agenda item.

Chair Woo adjourned the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

Lori Taketa  
Clerk of the Board