

OPERATING COMMITTEE MEETING
November 30, 2023
9:30 AM

The ARPA Operating Committee met at the Las Animas City Council Chambers, 532 Carson, Las Animas, CO., at 9:30 AM on November 30, 2023. Committee members in attendance included Randy Holland¹ (Holly), Lynn Wright (Las Animas) Houssin Hourieh (Lamar), and Dave Bachicha (Trinidad). Also in attendance was Linda Vigil (Trinidad), Chris Arguello and Ed Salazar (La Junta) and ARPA staff members Rick Rigel, Aarin Ritter and Arvenia Morris.

Call to order: Chairman Hourieh called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM.

Approval of Agenda.

The agenda was approved as received.

Approval of Minutes: August 24, 2023. The minutes of the August 24 meeting were approved as presented.

Operating Committee Member Reports: Chris Arguello reported the City of La Junta is building a new jail facility. **a. Update on Solar Installations.** The interest for solar development in the communities appears to be weakening somewhat.

TextPower - Presentation from Mark Nielsen. The Committee received a presentation by zoom from Mark Nielsen from TextPower on texting as a form of customer communication. Committee members were interested in exploring this as an option and directed staff to get a proposal for both a group system, under ARPA, and also individual systems, to see if there were significant cost savings as a group.

Power Supply Options: a. Update on Potential Solar Installations. Sandhills Energy received grant funding from the Rural Utilities Service (RUS), including a forgivable loan, for development of solar installations in the communities of Trinidad, Lamar and La Junta. Staff will work with the three utilities to update, or modify, their interconnection agreements as necessary to allow the solar installations interconnection onto their systems. ARPA is currently reviewing the Purchase Power Agreement with Sandhills Energy for purchase of the output from the three solar installations. The Committee discussed the potential for Members to receive a portion of the output.

Update on Federal and State Funding Opportunities. a. Follow-up with CLPE Regarding Distribution System Planning Services. Dalton Shaffer, CLPE, attended the meeting by zoom to

¹ Left the meeting at 11:32 AM

review the status of their work on the distribution system planning and potential schedule going forward.

b. Update on Microgrid Planning Grant. Springfield/ARPA submitted a Planning Grant application to DOLA on November 16 for a planning grant for a microgrid in Springfield. CLPE provided a proposal for the planning grant engineering. DOLA anticipates announcing the funding awards in mid to late February.

Miscellaneous Operations. a. Update on ARPA Wind Turbine T-4. Rick provided an update. LUB is in the process of reviewing updated quotes for replacement of the gearbox.

b. Consider Cost-of-Service Study Contract with JK Energy Consulting. NMPP will no longer offer Cost of Service (COS) studies. The Committee is interested in a contract with JK Energy Consulting (JKEC) to provide that service for their utilities. Staff will approach JKEC about developing a contract that will be similar to the approach used for bucket truck/equipment inspections. That method has the Members COS studies performed under one contract and the Members will reimburse ARPA its individual Member cost.

c. Discussion on Cooperative Procurement of Supplies and Materials. Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) is interested in discussing ways public power utilities can work together, including procurement of supplies and materials. Staff will follow up with CSU to see if/how that could be coordinated.

d. Discussion on Training Funds Including Year End Funds Not Spent. Most years ARPA has budgeted training funds that are not spent. The Committee discussed expanded uses of the training funds not currently identified in the training reimbursement guidelines. They also discussed the possibility of ARPA providing matching funds for specific equipment/tools/purchases.

e. Discussion on NMPP Membership Refund. NMPP Energy is closing down its subsidiary that provided services such as Energy Distribution Service and Cost of Service (COS) studies. Staff anticipates a refund of approximately \$8,500. The Committee discussed beneficial uses for the funds related to staff training, specifically, they were interested in a transformer training trailer. Staff will research specifications and costs associated with building a transformer training trailer.

Member's Usage Report. No report.

Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting Date. The next meeting of the Operating Committee will be February 15, 2024 in Las Animas beginning at 9:30 AM.

Adjourn. The meeting concluded at 12:28 PM.


Submitted by Houssin Hourieh, Chairman