



**Minutes**  
**Utilities Policy Advisory Committee (UPAC)**  
**Wednesday, June 5, 2024**  
**Blue River Boardroom, 5<sup>th</sup> floor, 121 S. Tejon St., Colorado Springs, CO**  
**and Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting**

**Committee members present in the boardroom or via Microsoft Teams:** Vice Chair Hilary Dussing, Gary Burghart, Scott Smith, Michael Borden and David Watson

**Committee members excused:** Chair Larry Barrett, Katherine Danner and alternate Chris Meyer

**Staff members present in the Boardroom or via Microsoft Teams:** Al Wells, Marcela Espinoza, Bethany Schoemer, Andrew Colosimo, Natalie Watts, Gail Pecoraro, Leslie Smith, Christian Nelson, Jason Rigler and Tristian Gearhart

**Utilities Board members present in the Boardroom or via Microsoft Teams:** Chair Dave Donelson

**City of Colorado Springs staff present in the boardroom or via Microsoft Teams:** David Beckett

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chair Hilary Dussing called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. and called the roll.

**2. Approval of December 6, 2023, UPAC Meeting Minutes**

Committee Member Scott Smith made a motion to approve the December 6, 2023, meeting minutes and Committee Member Micheal Borden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. UPAC Bylaws Update**

Ms. Bethany Schoemer, Strategic Planning and Governance Specialist Senior, discussed two changes made to the UPAC Bylaws after the last completed assignment. The first proposed change included adding language to ensure an assignment is completed within the timeframe of the Utilities Board that approved the assignment. The second change was establishing a UPAC liaison, either the Chair or Vice Chair of the Utilities Board, to provide support, guide and direct UPAC as they move through an approved assignment. Ms. Schoemer explained there was also administrative clean up to the Bylaws to mirror the Utilities Board Bylaws. She discussed the next steps and advised the changes will be going to the Utilities Board on June 18 for approval.

Committee Member Smith asked for an explanation on the role of the UPAC liaison and their responsibilities. Ms. Schoemer and Mr. Dave Donelson, Chair of the Utilities Board, stated the liaison would be an advisor to UPAC to guide them through a given

assignment. Committee Member Smith also questioned the authority UPAC will have over staff and the process that will need to occur in future assignments. Mr. Tristan Gearhart, Chief Planning and Financial Officer, advised staff will continue to provide information on assignments, however, the Utilities Board will have the final say on the information staff will bring forward to the committee.

The Committee discussed who would be responsible in bringing forward an assignment and voiced concerns of completing an assignment within the given timeframe. It was clarified that UPAC will receive assignments from the Utilities Board directly, not Springs Utilities' staff. Future assignments will need to be completed within the given timeframe to avoid confusion with future Board Members.

Mr. Gary Burghart expressed concerns over Springs Utilities' leadership participation at UPAC meetings. Mr. Gearhart and Mr. Donelson assured committee members that staff values UPAC's recommendations.

#### **4. Citizen Comment**

None

#### **5. Committee Member General Discussion**

Mr. Donelson advised the Utilities Board is proposing UPAC explore nuclear energy as the next potential assignment. He stated there are new guidelines surrounding zero emissions and clean energy and Springs Utilities would benefit from the prospective findings. Mr. Donelson explained the Committee could investigate the legitimacy of federal funding with new technology, such as modular reactors requiring less water and reducing waste, and explore the new technology being used in surrounding states, like Wyoming and Utah.

Committee Member Watson expressed interest in the recommended assignment scope and stated it would be beneficial for UPAC to explore state and federal regulations surrounding nuclear energy.

The Committee discussed how the suggested assignment would correlate with policy and Mr. Donelson gave an example of the possibility for UPAC to suggest a nuclear energy policy that could investigate new technology every two years to avoid possible delays in advancing Springs Utilities' energy future.

Vice Chair Dussing asked for a scope of work from staff and a list of questions on the assignment for the next step. Ms. Schoemer recommended bringing forward a draft scope of the assignment to the July 3 UPAC meeting and then to the Utilities Board on July 17 for approval.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Vice Chair Dussing adjourned the meeting at 9:07 a.m.

**Next meeting:** July 3, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.