



Spring Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2025, (hybrid)

Members Present

Alice Massara, Chair, Tacoma Power*
Sarah Letsch, Avista
Bob Guenther, Organized Labor Rep.
Brian Young, PNWH2*
Christina Chestnut, Thurston County Chamber/WorkSource
Christine Reid, IBEW 77
David Fortney, Portland General Electric*
Jason Selwitz, WSU Energy Program*
ML Norton, Centralia City Light
Steve Marshall, CATES*

Ex Officio

Monica Brummer, CoE Director
Court Stanley, Centralia College Trustee
John Steidel, Centralia College Faculty
Rulon Crawford, Centralia College Faculty*

*indicates virtual attendance

Minutes Recorder

Emily Girt, CoE Program Coordinator

Members Absent

Aman Gill, Centralia College Faculty
Connie Smejkal, Centralia College VPI
Dan Kay, Wahkiakum PUD
Erik McCoy, Puget Sound Energy
Joe Clark, Lewis County Transit
Kate McAteer, WSU Tri-Cities
Nicole Schwall, Lewis County PUD
Richard Debolt, Economic Alliance/Lewis County
Sarah Pace, Energy Northwest
Travis Kinney, Lewis County PUD

Guests

Mike Bowen, Fellow, Clean Buildings
Emily Klickman, Fellow, K-12 Outreach

Welcome & Introductions

Short Introductions: Name, title, & business. Additional comments are captured below.

- Brian Young: Deputy Director Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Association. Hub money flows through about 15 different projects in the Pacific Northwest.
- Christina Chestnut: We are in a transition right now, focusing on training and education and supporting relationships between training partners and community.

Fall Meeting Minutes (Nov 2024)

Action: Approved

CoE Update/Business

Bright Highlights (Since November)

- **Projects:** H2Skills funded and contracts signed with PNNL; and Powerize NSF Engine Grant led by Portland State University application submitted.
- Met with and toured battery storage companies ToyotaLift and BrightNight.

- **SBCTC review:** SBCTC was impressed by the support we had from the advisory board; comments were positive.
- **Strengthening communications plan** (social media, blog posts, website updates) and building partnerships (IBEW, UA plumbers and pipefitters).

Events

- *Securing the Supply Chain Summit: Building Resiliency*, Tri Cities: Rep's from Energy Northwest, PNNL, and Benton County PUD served on an energy panel moderated by Monica. Expanding the grid, wildfires and supply chain issues were the topics of discussion, with nearly 65 in attendance.
- *World Hydrogen North America*, Houston: Supported H2Skills project, assisted at PNNL's booth and interviewed industry and labor participants.
- *WCERTE*, Seattle: Met engineering and engineering tech educators. Connected with Seattle Pacific University who is interested in starting an energy and power certificate.
- *Ilwaco High School Trades Fair*, Ilwaco: Supported Pacific County PUD to recruit students into job shadowing opportunities. The PUD is losing 80% of its employees in the next two years (losing 44 of 55 employees due to retirement).
- *Green Transportation Summit & Expo (GTSE)*, Tacoma: Purchased 10 tickets for educators to attend, meet vendors, see equipment and ask questions.
- *CEWD National Conference*, DC: Great conference. Monica served on an energy innovations panel and invited Ilene Munk, CETWAC, and Sarah Lessner, EnergyNW to attend. She shared 32 million workers will be needed nationally in energy in the next 10 years.

News

- *Advanced CTE National Career Clusters*: Energy, paired with natural resources and agriculture, is identified in its own career cluster - which will help the K-12 system recognize careers in energy.
- CoE's celebrated 20 years of business at WEC. Monica will continue to co-chair the CoE Directors leadership.
- SEI Fellows
 - K-12 Outreach: Emily and the mobile lab connected with over 1,080 students; and 490 students experienced climbing transmission towers using VR headsets.
 - Building: Mike finished benchmarking 10 buildings in Lewis County and will help lead Commerce's BEACON fellows next year. Nine Fellows will be placed throughout the state to assist building owners with Clean Buildings laws.
 - *FWEE Summer Energy/STEM Academy*: We are expanding from 3 days to 5; and incorporating new partners - Lewis County Transit, Centralia City Light's Yelm Hydropower project, and TransAlta. Students are traveling from Spanaway to Ilwaco to attend; and we will host visitors from Jefferson, Clark, and Cowlitz PUD's.

Not-so Bright Highlights (since November)

- Last year, our heads were spinning from all the projects and opportunities that were coming our way. Since January, we have lost more than \$33 million in canceled projects.
 - Grays Harbor Carbon Capture: negotiations turned into cancellation
 - EV truck grant for CTCs: led by PacMtn, was not funded
 - Shoreline's energy/solar program: launched and closed
 - CBP (community benefits pillars) in national grants: crumbled
 - Congressional Direct Spending: \$1 million/Senator Murray, canceled
 - Clean has become the new dirty word
- Word of the year: Uncertainty
 - Has come up time and time again in different circles
 - Confusion: climate, CBP, EV, equitable, clean, funding
- Budget
 - Inflation adjustment for all CoE's was cut from the governor's budget (21% cut).
 - SBCTC is concerned that there is not enough money to sustain all 13 CoE's. They have decided to fund the CoE's through Dec. 2025 and do a review. Are the CoE's still aligned with industry and CTCs?
 - A CoE review committee, including 3 college presidents, 3 college VPs, and SBCTC staff, will review the CoE's as well as labor market data from a third party. We don't know how involved the CoE directors will be in this review or the data that will be used. We do have friends on the committee, and our president is hopeful that we will not be cut.

FY 2026 Workplan

- How do we make this strategic and impactful? We will have \$5,000 left after salaries and benefits. We need your help to create a work plan and update the strategic plan.

Opportunities/Ideas

- Virtual meetings: CEWD West Coast consortium (quarterly), WSU Green Transportation EV Training, and Energy Educators (quarterly)
- Website, news clips, and social media promoting industry and education; as well as promoting Careers in Energy Week and Public Power Week.
- FWEE Summer Academies x3 (2025-27): funds from CoE and SEI in the Centralia College Foundation to continue the summer academy in 2026.
- REVIT (renewable energy vehicle and infrastructure technician training)
 - It has gone from one class period to three at Centralia High School, and there is interest from other schools in offering this class.
 - Aman is almost done with the first dual-credit class for high school and college.
- H2 Skills: Aman is working on a team that's creating hydrogen curriculum for two-year colleges.
- SEI Fellows Program: Mike will start a second fellowship with Centralia College; and Emily has been hired in TRIO. We will hire a new K-12 Fellow in September.

Upcoming Events (*attending)

- June: H2Skills DACUMs,* SWW Energy/STEM Summer Academy*
- July: NWPPA Electric Utility Systems Operator Class,* PNWER Annual Summit,* NWPPA Women in Public Power Conference*

- August: Rocky Reach Hydropower for Educators,* AGI Day,* GTSE
- September: RHA Annual Conference,* CTA Fusion Week,* Green Hydrogen Summit* piloting H2Skills & expanding REVIT
- October: World H2 Day, Center for Hydrogen Safety North America Conference*, Careers in Energy Week, WEC,* Energy NW Public Power Forum
- November: CleanTech Alliance Innovation Showcase, CEWD National Conference, RE+ Charge H2

New Possibilities

- Clover Park Technical College Lineman school & Grays Harbor College
- Power & Energy cert. at Seattle Pacific University
- Waterpower Clubs at colleges

Discussion points:

- Missing the opportunity to use forest products to aid in energy production and create more jobs.
- Colleges are also facing some budget items and federal funding for student financial aid.
- There is nothing that isn't affected by what is happening with federal funding. AmeriCorps is shut down. There isn't a corner of our market that isn't affected.
- Does the CoE need to change its name? Do we need to take clean out of it? Partners have been asked to take our logo out of materials because of the word "clean".
 - We are hearing that words like clean and equitable are causing problems for projects.
 - Regarding use of the word clean, this is happening across the nation in different industries. Looking at the impact of our verbiage. We talk about DEI for example: we know the funding has been impacted and the use of that term and the impacts of some of those initiatives we've seen have a disparate impact on certain groups within the organization or population. I think that is what is happening with the word clean. If something isn't clean does that mean it's dirty? That has a negative impact. Tacoma Power has shifted DEI efforts to center around belonging and allyship to no longer ostracized or potentially shame our white majority, being inclusive to everyone.

Letter Discussion:

A letter to support the CoE was drafted by Alice. The committee reviewed the letter and agreed to sign and give to Dr. Mohrbacher for the review committee. Discussed board consensus on signing the letter, what letterhead to use, and getting approval to sign the letter.

CoE Wrap Up

- Moving to a new office on the corner of King and Pear Streets.
- Hydrogen equipment funded by Fortescue has been ordered and is being manufactured.
- New Advisory Board Chair nominations will be virtual

Pulse of the Sector – Around the Room Share (limit 2-3 minutes each)

Alice

- Recently launched a new pre-apprenticeship program to create more accessible pathways focused on line and meter careers.
- Development pipeline:

- This summer we are welcoming over 40 interns (for power, water, and rail). Really our cornerstone for our talent development pipeline.
- Deepening our focus on leadership development programming to build more internal leadership.

Brian

- My world is as clear as mud like many out there.
- We were successful in landing a \$1 billion grant from DOE for the hydrogen hub, to build hydrogen infrastructure across the PNW including MT. The program is under a lot of strain and uncertainty. DOE is doing a review of projects for their viability, which is expected to be complete by the end of summer. Represents \$50 billion total in the seven hydrogen hubs including private investment.
- 45V tax credit is required for most of the projects to pencil out. Recently it came out that the committee is going to slash the tax credit.
- Lots of time spent going to DC to get information and make friends. Companies are threatening to pull back on projects needing investments. We're doing everything we can to keep these projects alive and moving forward.

Christine

- Legislatively, it was one of the most difficult sessions with regards to budgets, impacts, and federal government affecting everything we do.
- Senate Bill (5600?) that has to do with streamlining permitting and SEPA exemption for transmission and workforce didn't get through but will be ongoing.
- Wildfire mitigation work with our utilities was successful.
- Overall worker safety. Still supporting hydropower in our efforts with other organizations. Reaching out to school counselors to talk about pathways.
- IBEW 125 was affected by the BPA layoffs.
- Like many others we are still waiting for the other shoe to drop, and there seems to be a lot of shoes.

Sarah

- Engineering requirements have been a point of tension leading the talent team. The candidate pool has changed drastically over the last 10 years. We have been very ridged in hiring requirements but times are changing, and talent is looking different. For example, we had a candidate with an engineering technology degree rather than civil, electrical, or mechanical degree. Missed that on his resume and they fell in love during the interview process. Changed the requirements after that. The utility may need to be open to accepting a wider variety of engineering degrees because there are less students completing electrical engineering degrees.
- Some of you may remember our high school craft student program. After this year we are going to conclude the program and plan to evolve it. After a lot of great lessons learned we weren't having a lot of conversion. Need to think differently about how to get students in the pipeline. The average Avista apprenticeship entry age is 28 years old, so the students were competing the program, but weren't moving forward as applicants. Many of the crews said they loved the students but they need more life experience. We will be reviewing other options to connect those between 18 and 28.
- Tribal relations have taken quite a bit of time and energy lately as some of the settlement agreements are being threatened to reopen for negotiation and may affect our budget in other areas.

- I was thinking a lot about clean energy throughout the presentation and the connotations on the importance of natural gas, critical for reliability and customer affordability. Doing a lot of education and awareness campaigning around natural gas and how to make it cleaner and more efficient.
- Thinking about how to create more access to CDL programming. Shifting to a culture of belonging rather than DEI initiatives.

Monica

- We will no longer be a sector co-leader for CCW after some guideline changes. CleanTech Alliance and KineticWest will take over that role. CCW is also losing 80% of its funding and time will tell what funds will actually be available for projects.

ML

- We have a touch-a-truck related to Public Works Week next week with various schools and trucks. The kids seem to love it, but we have to disconnect the fuses on the horns because the horns are too loud for the event.
- We just had a new hydro-operator qualify and meet his journeyman requirements. Three apprentices are coming up. The program is backed by the community; we had 73 applicants, so there's awareness that this will lead to a good job.
- Wildfire mitigation plans per state requirements- relays (conductor drop) have the ability to turn off the transmission lines.
- We are as concerned as you are about the future of energy. We're shutting down old generation without replacements. We have about 130 solar units on homes here and they are about 10% effective, put out about 10KW throughout the year but should do about 1MW.

Bob

- Worked on Bill 5033, passed and will call to question biosolids on agricultural lands, are we poisoning our water?
- Keeping the mobile lab active; Monica and Emily have done a bang-up job this year getting that to the schools. We hooked up Napavine High School, Chehalis Middle School, Centralia Middle School, and Boisfort schools to plug in the lab and not have to use the generator. \$48,000 provided by the Coal Transition Board to hook up other area rural schools. Have asked for \$240,000 from Senator Murrays office for the lab for 2026. Looking at \$67,000 for additional hands-on simulators (feller-bunchers and log processors) for students to use.

SHIP grant/Toolbox Talks, Christina Rupp, CCE Director

Washington State Construction Center of Excellence (CCE), Renton Technical College

- Priorities include access to education and training, mentorship and sponsorship for marginalized communities, succession planning, apprenticeship and job training, construction workforce re-entry, and toolbox talks
- 10-15 minute informal safety meetings delivered onsite to address critical accident prevention and health topics before the workday begins.
- Over 180 toolbox talks for industrial, commercial, and residential construction sectors in English, Spanish, and Russian.
- Downloadable from CCE website and also have an app available.

New Toolbox Talks

- New Talks partner construction and clean energy. Contracts with subject matter experts to develop and prioritize what will be put in the toolbox talks.
 - PNCECE and CleanTech Alliance are partnering with CCE for new talks.
 - OSHA will attach reference points for the talks that apply. Lots of opportunities for feedback to make adjustments before sending it for translation. Use services that have experience with live job-site language.
 - Toolbox Talks funded by Washington State Labor & Industries' Medical Aid fund (SHIP grant).
 - Supports workplace safety, health, and return-to-work initiatives.
- Project focus: develop and disseminate new TBTs for clean energy industry emerging and critical safety issues.
- Timeline
 - August-October 2025: survey development for clean energy-specific feedback, dissemination of survey in early October.
 - October-December 2025: SME content development based upon survey response priorities, vetting begins with LNI DOSH.
 - January-March 2026: final drafts posted to WSCCE, phone apps, CleanTech Alliance, and PNCECE; safety video production begins; marketing for new TBTs.

CCE Upcoming priorities

- 60 new and updated TBTs with safety videos by end of 2025
- AI utilization in the construction industry workgroup
- Apprenticeships Rock Career Exploration Website Reboot

Q&A:

- Has this progressed to logging or any type of forestry work?
 - We've covered industrial and residential construction and are expanding to clean energy. At this point we do not have any partners in forestry but could probably do as many talks for forestry as we have for everything else combined.
- Are there any talks that are videos?
 - All of the talks are designed for safety officers to read/review/use during safety talks live on-site. People can take it and make it their own. There will be videos as part of the new grant and will be coming out next year.

Resume the Pulse of the Sector

Christina C.

- Working on helping with the Napavine youth apprenticeship program to secure additional funding. Will also be able to help more students get their GED, coupled with the Open Doors program. It will be not only Napavine School District participating, there are also conversations with Centralia/Chehalis, Mossyrock, Winlock, and Gravity Learning Center programs.

Court

- There are some draconian regulations coming up regarding non-fish bearing streams on private forest land that will affect small landowners and rural areas.

- Had a meeting yesterday with a focus on forest products, manufacturing, and workforce development. Discussed how to get into K-12, in the past focused on 4th graders; have peak curiosity and had a program to get kids into the woods. Also had a program for teachers to help them learn.
- The federal budget is concerning to the college, especially with TRIO and FAFSA. Next week there is a spring conference for college trustees, they will discuss some of it, but I will be in Montana at an avian conference talking about AI (avian influenza) and how it affects egg production. The avian flu has been decimating egg production and that's why prices have been going up.

John

- Teaching students mechanical, fluid, and electrical systems are sneaky ways to teach students math. Poor math skills in K-12 are why most fail to become engineers. There is going to be a huge shortage of technicians in the future to fix things.
- There is going to be a huge shortage of energy. We actually pump electricity to southern CA and large demand periods can cause shortages here. AI is a huge consumer of energy.
- Germany is already recycling a wind farm after 20 years of service- they dismantle the turbine, bury the blades, and the concrete bases are getting blown up essentially and they are not putting new towers up. There is a huge expense for wind and solar that doesn't pencil out.

Meeting Adjourned