**Meeting Summary**

**NorthWestern Energy Transmission Advisory Committee**

**December 16, 2015**

**9:30 AM, MDT**

**Meeting Participants**

This Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) meeting was conducted in person at NorthWestern Energy’s offices in Butte, via teleconference and the internet site GoTo Meeting.com for those not able to join in person. Those participating included:

**Name Organization**

At NorthWestern Energy (NWE) Offices

Don Bauer NWE Electric Transmission Planning

Kathleen Bauer NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Josh Laurandeau NWE Regional Transmission Planning

John Leland Consultant for Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG)

Kelly Lovell NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Cathy Mathews NWE Electric Transmission Planning

Kim McClafferty NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Jonathan Pytka Talen Energy

Emmett Riordan NWE Transmission Engineering, Construction and Planning

B. J. Schubert NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Mark Zora Talen Energy

Dale Mahugh NWE Customer Care Key Accounts/Meeting Facilitator

Via Telephone & Internet

Chelsea Loomis NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Travis Allen MATL/Enbridge

Bill Pascoe Great Northern/Absaroka Energy/Exergy

**Standards of Conduct & Anti-Trust Policy Review**

After introductions, Kelly Lovell began the meeting by reviewing NWE’s Antitrust Policy, and the Standards of Conduct Policy and Safeguards. These documents are available at NWE’s OASIS web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/01-Agenda_12-16-15-TRANSAC-Final.doc>

**Agenda**

Dale Mahugh next reviewed the posted agenda with the group.

**Administration**

**September 16, 2015 Meeting Summary** – Dale Mahugh asked if the participants had reviewed the meeting summary from the previous meeting and if there were any changes or corrections. None were noted. The September 16, 2015 meeting summary is posted at NWE’s OASIS web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/TRANSAC_Meeting_Summary_9-16-15_Final.docx>

**Action Item List**

Kelly Lovell reported there were no new action items or updates to report.

**Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) Load and Resource Data Request**

Cathy Mathews shared her report on the WECC Load and Resource Data Request. Cathy noted that updated load information for 2016 will have to be submitted to WECC in March. Last year, NorthWestern Energy (NWMT) sent thirty four data requests to its large industrial customers and Electric Cooperatives and 24 responses were received back. WECC has indicated they are in the process of revising the spreadsheet to be used for reporting the 2016 information.

Cathy’s report can be found at NWE’s OASIS website address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/02-LR_Update.docx>

***Question:*** *Jonathan Pytka of Talen Energy asked about their customers and if they would receive a copy of the final report after all of the information is gathered?*

**Answer:** Cathy stated that WECC sends the report to her. Information for their customers could be forwarded to them.

**Compliance Efforts**

Cathy Mathews also read her report on compliance activities. Of note, Cathy shared the settlement between WECC and FERC regarding the Arizona-Southern California outages that occurred on September 8, 2011. This event contributed to major revisions in the NERC TPL standards; requirements R2 through R6 and R8 in the new standard go into effect on January 1, 2016.

Cathy’s report along with the web links to specific referenced discussion items can be accessed at NWE’s OASIS web site address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/03-Compliance_Update.docx>

**Generation Interconnection Update**

Kelly Lovell provided the Montana Generation and Interconnection Queue Update which has been posted on NWE’s OASIS web site address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/04-TRANSAC-GIA_Queue_Update_12-15.docx>

***Question:*** *Jonathan Pytka asked if the 1351 MW of wind in the queue includes the 750 MW new wind project considered at Colstrip.*

**Answer:** Yes, the Queue reflects this project.

**Regional and Bulk Electric System Updates**

Chelsea Loomis (joining by phone) shared an update of several activities as outlined in her presentation (web link attached below). Chelsea noted that Craig Quist is the new chair of the NTTG Planning committee and she will be the Vice Chair for 2016-2017.

Chelsea noted EPA 111d study work is in progress and NWE has embarked on an initiative to study transmission in an EPA 111d world. She noted this is only at a high level yet and final carbon emissions rulings post EPA 111d enactment could change the outcomes.

While discussing the study assumptions, outlined in the presentation, she noted that each assumes no coal in the generation mix. Wind and hydro were dispatched differently in the cases; high hydro and wind for export cases and low hydro and wind for import cases. Replacing 2520 MW of current coal generation output in Montana would require approximately 7500 MW of new wind generation to replace base load, assuming sustained generation at 30 percent of name plate capacity; this information is not a recommendation for a full replacement of coal with wind, simply an example of the magnitude of the possibility.

The findings based on these assumptions were varied. In addition to the items listed, it was noted that Montana, now a generation rich State, could become an importer of electricity and with the potential loss of the 500 kV line, import capability could be diminished. The removal of Colstrip, Hardin, BGI and Montana One further contribute to voltage support issues in the Billings area. The addition of a gas plant in the Billings area would help, but might not resolve all the problems. There is also the issue of currently not having sufficient natural gas supply in this area to fuel a 250 MW plant. To access Chelsea’s presentation, please go to NWE’s OASIS website address at:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/05-_Regional_Update_December_2015.pptx>

***Question:*** *Mark Zora asked if the 250 MW natural gas plant mentioned would be identified as base load supply.*

**Answer:** Chelsea said yes, that was the assumption made.

***Question:*** *Jonathan noted that the information here is very informative, but is this complete and where do we go from here?*

**Answer:** This is a first attempt to review and identify areas of concern. As more information is available, information will be refined and will be posted to OASIS.

***Question:*** *If the EIM in California expands to the Northwest and NWE were to join, what area of NWE would be involved and is it possible that TRANSAC would be involved?*

**Answer:** Chelsea noted that she assumes it would be the same persons that are involved with the Regional NTTG group. She foresees that TRANSAC would not be directly involved; they would be updated of operational studies taking place and general outcomes.

**Local Area Plan Update**

**Reminder of Deadlines in Quarter 1**

Kelly shared with the group, the first Quarter 1 deadlines to be aware of in the 2016-2017 Local Area Planning Cycle. These are available on the NWE OASIS website address at:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/06-Annual_Quarter_1_(2016)_Reminder.docx>

**Local Area Transmission 2-year Plan Update**

Kelly noted at the September 16th TRANSAC meeting, the draft Local Area Plan was available for review with a 30-day Stakeholder comment period. Comments were received and the Local Area Plan was finalized and posted on NWE’s OASIS website November 11th.

**Business Practice ETP Document Update**

The Business Practice ETP document was posted for a 30-day Stakeholder comment period dated October 30th. No comments were received; the Business Practice was approved and finalized December 1st, effective December 7th.

***Question:*** *Mark Zora asked, during the review process are shuttered plants like Stone Container and their associated substation and supporting infrastructure still included in the in the plan.*

**Answer:** Don noted that when load changes like this occur, facilities are sometimes removed or sometimes left in place. Infrastructure that still provides network benefits would likely be left in place; salvageable equipment for serving load may be removed for use elsewhere if benefits justify the cost. The facilities at Stone Container are still available and NWE does not currently have any plans to remove them, and they are included in our planning studies but without load. The facilities at Bonner that served the sawmill and related industry there are similar in nature, although there are new businesses locating there that are now using some of the infrastructure that was formerly dedicated to Stimson. One removal that will probably be noted in the next review is the retirement of the Rainbow Switchyard that is being replaced by the new Crooked Falls Switchyard.

**Public Meetings Review**

Don shared that the meetings in Billings and Missoula went well and was a good culmination of the two year process. Attendance was rather light at both meetings, but the attendees appreciated the time spent to explain the Transmission Local Area Plan. It was good to see representation from several of the REC’s at the meetings. Kathy Bauer attended the Billings session and Kelly Lovell joined the Missoula meeting. Don said this travel provided him with an opportunity to show Kathy and Kelly several substations and other infrastructure improvements that are taking place in these areas. Much of the discussion was focused on concerns about coal plants shutting down, and our long range plans for the Bitterroot area transmission system.

**Action Item List Review**

There were none to discuss.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Proposed TRANSAC meetings dates in 2016 are as follows:

* March 16, 2016: Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) - Meeting
* June 15, 2016: Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) - Meeting
* September 14, 2016: Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) – Meeting
* December 7, 2016: Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) – Meeting

**Adjournment:**

Reaching the end of the itemized agenda, Dale noted that Don Bauer would like to address the group. Don shared that his wife Kathy, who is known to all of us, has been an integral part of NWE’s representation on TRANSAC and has now overseen four complete planning cycles in the course of the last eight years, is retiring at the end of 2015. Over the past year, she and Kelly have been working closely together to insure a smooth transition. We all wish Kathy the very best in her new adventures!

Dale asked if anyone had anything further to bring before the group, hearing none, he thanked everyone for their participation and declared the meeting adjourned.

**Disclaimer**

Committee members provide advice to NWE as individual professionals; the advice they provide does not bind the agencies or organizations they serve.