**Meeting Summary**

**NorthWestern Energy Transmission Advisory Committee**

**March 16, 2016**

**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

Josh Laurandeau NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Chelsea Loomis NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Kelly Lovell NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Kim McClafferty NWE Regional Transmission Planning

B. J. Schubert NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Mark Zora Talen Energy

Dale Mahugh NWE Customer Care Key Accounts/Meeting Facilitator

Via Telephone & Internet

Travis Allen MATL/Enbridge

Jeff Blend Montana Department of Environmental Quality

John Leland Consultant for Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG)

Bill Pascoe Pascoe Energy Consulting

**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_03-16-16-TRANSAC-Final.doc>

**Agenda**

Dale Mahugh next reviewed the posted agenda with the group.

**Administration**

**December 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 December 16, 2015 meeting summary is posted at NWE’s OASIS web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/12_16_15_Transac_Meeting_Summary-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**

In Cathy Mathew’s absence, Kelly Lovell shared that the 2016 Loads and Resources Data Request was completed and submitted to the Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC) on March 4, 2016.

The report presented at the meeting can be found at NWE’s OASIS website address:

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

**Compliance Efforts**

Kelly Lovell next shared Cathy Mathews report on compliance activities. It was noted that as a result of the May 26, 2015 settlement between the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regarding the Arizona-Southern California outages of September 8, 2011, a new TPL standard was derived, combining TPL-001, 002, 003 and 004 into one standard, TPL-001. As noted in the previous meeting and in Cathy’s summary, this standard became effective on January 1, 2016.

This 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>

*Question:* Mark Zora asked if NWE has looked at this plan and as a result, anticipate making any changes to its plans and analysis.

Answer: Yes, we have studied it in depth. NWE does not plan to go back and retroactively make changes, however, the new standards will influence this cycle of planning.

**Generation Interconnection Update**

Kelly Lovell shared 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-GIA_Queue_Update_03-16.docx>

*Question: Chelsea Loomis noted that the Control Area Peak appeared to be close last year, do we anticipate any significant changes?*

Answer: Don Bauer indicated no significant change in load is anticipated. Don also indicated that there are a number of small solar projects (<3MW) in the queue and it is not known at this time if all will become reality.

**Regional and Bulk Electric System Updates**

Chelsea provided an update of several activities concerning The Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG), including that MATL is currently in the process of joining NTTG. But there were some Attachment K differences that need to be rectified before they become an actual member. With the beginning of a new two year cycle, work is proceeding to look forward. One Economic Consideration study of retiring CS units 1, 2 and 3 has been received. It proposes replacing lost generation with wind at Broadview for one scenario and another option of replaced lost Colstrip generation with wind at Broadview along with combined cycle gas generation in the Billings area.  The recommendation to the Planning Committee will be to study this request.  The study proposal will include reviewing the introduced wind at three different levels:  100%, 50%, and 35%.  Work is currently taking place on developing the cases, making sure the loads are appropriate and generation dispatch exists. Another inter-regional request is being reviewed for completeness. It involves a TransWest Express line from Sinclair, WY to Boulder City, Nevada. There were no projects submitted for Cost Allocation consideration this quarter.

Chelsea also noted that a recent PSC ruling confirmed that NorthWestern Energy must buy QF output at the established rate and solar credits have been extended. With the changing political climate regarding fossil fuels and coal in particular as a fuel source, and for Washington and Oregon especially, we need to keep aware of what is happening around us and how political decisions could affect everyone.

Chelsea shared that the following Generation Interconnect Agreements (GIA’s) are currently in queue:

-300.9 MW wind farm tied to the 230 kV Colstrip bus

-750 MW wind farm tied to the 500 kV Colstrip bus:

-250 MW wind farm on the 230 kV Broadview bus

-Large amounts of new solar have been added in the GIA queue, most are 3 MW projects connecting to Distribution level.  The flurry of activity is attributed to an attractive power purchase price combined with the extension of the PTC to 2020.

-Another large wind farm (396 MW) is proposed on the 230 kV in NWE’s territory

-there are a handful of 20-25 MW wind farms on the BES

-Chelsea also noted that the Gordon Butte pumped hydro did withdraw from the queue.

*Question: Marc Zora noted that he has seen on the web, several projects proposed in our area including, Fort Peck to Colstrip, a DC tie from Colstrip to Bismarck and Colstrip to Wyoming for connection by 2022. Are these being looked at? (Marc said he would forward the website).*

Answer: Chelsea noted that there is nothing official at this time, but NTTG needs to be involved with these as they do surface.

*Question: Marc asked what the rational was for looking at the 35% wind generation factor.*

Answer: Chelsea noted that this was considered because that is considered to be a recognized wind generation capacity factor.

*Question: Marc asked when modeling scenarios, is any volatility taken into account in the analysis.*

Answer: Chelsea noted that this is considered, but currently only at a high level, more needs to be done in this regard.

John Leland noted that a large DC tie is being considered in northern Texas (Tres Amigos).

**Local Area Plan Update**

Don Bauer next shared the goal for the 2016-17 Local Area Transmission Plan which looks to develop a 15 year plan that incorporates several considerations. He noted that there are no significant changes from what had been considered previously.. The 2016-17 Local Area Transmission Plan’s Goal is available for review on NWE’s Oasis web site address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/06-Goal_for_2016-2017_Local_Area_Plan.docx>

Don shared that with solar generation’s growing interest in our area, it needs to be studied in greater detail, and signed projects will be included in our planning studies. Transmission is not usually an issue, but in most cases, developers tend to look for substations that have available capacity and are seeking a low cost interconnection to the distribution system. Studies will be done to determine what impact these generation sources will have on our system.

Don next outlined the Base Case Planning Scenarios for the 2016-17 Local Area Transmission Plan. This information is available for viewing at NWE’s Oasis web site address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/07-Base_Case_Planning_Scenarios-mlm.docx>

*Question: Chelsea noted that the winter/summer loads are becoming much more similar. Are we now considered a winter or summer peaking utility?*

Answer: Don agreed that the line is getting more blurred, but we are still considered a winter peaking utility.

*Question: When looking at the Table 1 Study Scenarios, John Leland asked about the renewables Assumption being 0 – Max, what was the premise for this.*

Answer: Don said this was really meant to indicate that these were variable. He will draft language to clarify this and will probably assume wind to be dispatched at 50%. This is really a first pass at this and it will be further defined as they go forward, but wind generation will likely be considered at other levels of output as well

**Load Forecast**

Don noted that the load forecast is not yet complete. The full analysis will be presented at the second quarter meeting in June. Currently, the forecast is calling for approximately 1% growth.

**Action Item List Review**

There were none to be added.

**Upcoming Meetings**

Posted Public Meeting dates, and the proposed dates for the remaining TRANSAC group meetings in 2016 are as follows:

* 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**

After asking the group if there was anything further to be brought before the group and 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.