**Meeting Summary**

**NorthWestern Energy Transmission Advisory Committee**

**September 15, 2016**

**9:30 AM, MDT**

**Meeting Participants**

This Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) meeting was conducted in person at NorthWestern Energy’s (NWE) 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

Becki Christie NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Jim Hadley NWE Electric Transmission Planning

Chelsea Loomis NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Kelly Lovell NWE Electric Transmission Planning

Mark Mallard NWE Electric Transmission Planning

Cathy Mathews NWE Electric Transmission Planning

Kim McClafferty NWE Regional Transmission Planning

B. J. Schubert NWE Regional Transmission Planning

Dale Mahugh NWE Customer Care Key Accounts/Economic Dev/ Meeting Fac.

Frank Jarvenpaa Western Area Power Administration (WAPA, Billings, MT)

Jonathan Pytka Talen Energy Supply, LLC

Via Telephone & Internet

Travis Allen Enbrige/MATL

Jeff Blend MT Department of Environmental Quality

John Leland Consultant for Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG)

Bill Pascoe Pascoe Energy Consulting representing Absaroka Energy

Baryaley Sharwani Western Area Power Administration (WAPA, Watertown, SD)

**Administration**

Anti-Trust and Standards of Conduct Review

After completing introductions of those participating in person and by phone, Kelly Lovell shared NWE’s Antitrust Policy and the Standards of Conduct Policy and Safeguards with the group. These documents are available at NWE’s OASIS web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/01-Agenda_09-15-16-TRANSAC-Final.doc>

Agenda

Dale Mahugh next reviewed the posted agenda with the group.

Acceptance of June 29, 2016 Meeting Summary

Dale Mahugh asked if the participants had reviewed the meeting summary notes provided from the previous meeting and if there were any changes or corrections to be noted. There were none. For reference, the June 29, 2016, meeting summary is posted at NWE’s OASIS web address:

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/TRANSAC_Meeting_Summary_Notes-_6_29_16_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 the Loads and Resources update and key takeaways included the Edison Electric Institute’s (EEI) August 18, 2016 issue of “*EEI Daily Energy News*” noting US coal production dropped in the first quarter of 2016.

Compliance Efforts

Cathy Mathews next provided the Compliance update. Cathy shared details of several MOD updates, involving MOD-026 and MOD-027.Voting closed on August 25, 2016 and both variances proposed failed by nearly three to one margins. TPL-001-WECC-CRT3 which contains a revised Table W-1 is awaiting approval from the WECC Board of Directors (since the TRANSAC meeting, this has been approved).

Both of Cathy’s reports, along with the web links to specific referenced discussion items within the reports can be accessed at NWE’s OASIS web site addresses below:

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

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

Generation Interconnection Update

Becki Christie presented 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_09-16.docx>

**Regional and Bulk Electric System Updates**

Chelsea Loomis next shared the Regional Planning update with the group and noted several significant efforts.

The Northwestern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG) and the Columbia Grid are still discussing merging. There has been some discussion of NWE exiting, but as of now, the talks continue. One item of concern is that there is no overarching governance or use of a facilitator to provide oversight.

Blackstart Study efforts continue for the path from the Cochrane units to the Control Center. The Control Center plans to take up the work in early 2017 with the goal of certifying Cochrane as the designated blackstart facility.

Study work continues with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)/Avista (AVA) on Path 8. Chelsea noted the collaboration between parties has been excellent and they are optimistic about the outcome.

It was also noted that Path 80 study work recommendations have been accepted and the path rating of 600 MW traveling in each direction has been confirmed.

NTTG has developed base cases for a number of scenarios and continue to look at a number of areas. They are next planning to look at Null Case scenarios next and reviewing transmission needs of the future. They hope to have a preliminary plan out for review in December.

Regarding new generation projects, Chelsea noted that the current PSC rate moratorium for new solar projects has slowed applications for proposed projects of the 3 MW variety, there are still some larger projects in play, including; 300 MW on the Colstrip 230 kV line, 250 MW on the Broadview 230 kV, 750 MW on the Colstrip 500 kV and more than 700 MW elsewhere on the NorthWestern Energy system.

***Question:***

Frank Jarvenpaa asked if Colstrip 1 and 2 are going to go away, should there be a recommendation to propose a path reduction for this affected line?

***Answer:***

It is believed that no action should be taken at this time as there are a number of prospective projects.

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/05-Regional_Planning-Sept_15_TRANSAC.pptx>

**Local Area Plan Update**

State of the System Update

Jim Hadley shared the current status of base case creation and the Local Area Plan with emphasis on the current year State of the System studies. All system normal and single point of failure outages were considered per the new TPL requirements, with findings presented for P0, P1, and P2 events. Future scenarios will consider all system conditions and events per the new TPL requirements.

Jim’s presentation is quite detailed and for anyone not in attendance, please refer to The Local Area Plan Update which is available at NWE’s OASIS website address below.

<http://www.oasis.oati.com/NWMT/NWMTdocs/06-State_of_System_09-15-16.pptx>

***Question:***

Frank Jarvenpaa asked if the thermal capacity factor or 125% was a unilateral assumption used across the system for winter conditions.

***Answer:***

Don Bauer and Jim Hadley indicated this is now the case for all lines and transformers in winter loading conditions. Many of the protective relays are still set for 100% thermal; rather than reset them all at once, relays only are adjusted as problems are identified (study results showing winter loading greater than 100%).

***Question:***

Frank Jarvenpaa asked if these assessments and study results are used in (for) TPL studies as well.

***Answer:***

Don Bauer noted yes, whenever possible to avoid a duplication of efforts.

***Question:***

To aid in clarification, Chelsea Loomis asked if it was a fair assumption to say that the 10 -15 year studies all assume that Colstrip 1 and 2 are offline.

***Answer:***

Yes, this is the case.

**Action Item List Review**

No items were noted to be added.

**Upcoming Meetings**

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

* **December 7, 2016:** Transmission Advisory Committee (TRANSAC) – Meeting

**Adjournment:**

After asking the group if there was anything further to be brought forward at this time and hearing none, Dale 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.