

**SPU Strategic Business Plan Customer Review Panel  
Draft Meeting Summary for June 10, 2013**

Attending:

| <b>Panel Members:</b>                |   |                          |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Suzie Burke                          | ✓ | Tara Luckie              | ✓ |
| Bruce Lorig                          | X | Noel Miller              | ✓ |
| Dave Layton                          | ✓ | Carl Pierce              | ✓ |
| Laura Lippman                        | ✓ | Walter Reese             | ✓ |
| David Gault                          | ✓ |                          |   |
| <b>Staff and Others<sup>1</sup>:</b> |   |                          |   |
| Ray Hoffman                          | ✓ | Craig Stampher           | ✓ |
| Nancy Ahern                          | ✓ | Meg Moorehead            | ✓ |
| Martin Baker                         | ✓ | Karen Reed (facilitator) | ✓ |
| Melina Thung                         | ✓ | Diane Clausen            | ✓ |
| Keith Hinman                         | ✓ | Jared Smith (consultant) | ✓ |
| Terry Martin                         | ✓ | Kim Collier              | ✓ |
| Susan Sánchez                        | ✓ |                          |   |

**Welcome and Introductions.** Karen Reed introduced Jared Smith of Decision Lens. Ray introduced Rick Scott, Deputy Director for Field Operations and Maintenance Branch.

**Review and Approval of Agenda.** No questions or comments on June 10 agenda; *agenda approved.*

**Review and Approval of Meeting 4 Summary.** No questions or comments on the June 5 meeting summary; *meeting summary approved.*

**Review of “Parking Lot” list and status of information items.** Diane described the list of parking lot issues, now grouped by category type.

**Task Force Check-in on Learnings.** Anything missing?

**Q:** Comment that water quality lab rents space from another City department. Would like more information on central service cost allocation. **A:** Will follow up with a general overview of our financial relationship with, and services provided from, the General Fund. Can also describe what services we sell other City departments.

**Response to questions at Meeting 4.** Responses not yet developed; will be ready for July Panel meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Only those individuals sitting at the head table or give presentations to the Panel are included on this list. A number of other staff and consultants attended the meeting.

**Presentation and Discussion: SPU's Strategic Framework, including continuing discussion of SWOC.** Ray Hoffman presented the promise statement; Nancy Ahern described the SPU mission, vision, strategic role and values.

Suggestions, observations, questions from Panel:

- Like the mission statement
- Suggest including “enabling” people in strategic role
- Vision statement: is it really important that people know we’ve done a good job? Maybe good enough just to do a good job?

Nancy, Susan Sanchez, and Kim Collier described the “SWOC” analysis and proposed strategic objectives with respect to the following three (of four) focus areas:

- Achieve environmental compliance & stewardship
- Create an easy & engaged customer experience
- Transform the workforce

Suggestions, observations, questions from Panel and answers from Staff:

**Focus Area: Environmental Compliance and Stewardship**

**Q:** Purpose of SWOC? How will we use it in our materials? **A:** Identifies what is the big picture, strategic position of SPU—where we start from in identifying what we should focus on, which strategic objectives will help get us to our vision.

**Q:** How is climate today differ from 5-10 years ago regarding changing circumstances? What can we learn from the past? **A:** think that we are on pretty stable ground with drinking water regulations; not so with drainage and wastewater. Around climate specifically, are seeing greater variability in weather.

Observations/suggestions:

- Conservation. Think of conservation as *wise use* – not just beating yourself over the head about using water. Focus on efficiency and strategy.
- Wording seems to be of uneven specificity
- An objective to conduct “all” operations in a sustainable way seems impossible. It is setting yourself up for failure. How is sustainability defined?
- Selecting measures –targets – in this area will be difficult.
- Strategic objectives identified seem like a good start.
- Stakeholders vs public and private entities? Do we need to do some wordsmithing here?
- Often a variety of ways to meet environment & public health mandates; this is missing from the first bullet.
- Are all SPU’s environmental programs best conducted by SPU? Or should they be funded by the city in a different way than through utility rates?

## **Focus Area: Create an Easy & Engaged Customer Experience**

**Q:** Where do SPU's low income programs fit? **A:** Ensure equitable service accessibility, and create an opportunity to participate?

**Comment:** Agree there is an outreach issue with renters. There ought to be a way that landlords can pass out info to tenants (e.g., flyers, bill inserts).

### **Observations/suggestions:**

- Create an opportunity to participate – what does this mean? Clarify this objective. Perhaps this should say “create an opportunity *for customers* to participate.”
- Stay away from “minimize” – could be read to minimize contact with customers, instead make it a positive: “maximize efficiency of customer experience” or words like that.
- Distinction between engagement and transparency. Transparency probably more important. Engagement maybe not – do you really want every customer at your door asking to be engaged? To some degree, customers have to be engaged for SPU to be successful (separate recyclables; conserve water; etc.). Different flavors of engagement. Information sharing is one type. Look at “engagement” versus “effective customer service” – maybe what we really want to say is something about effective?

## **Focus Area: Transform the Workforce**

**Q:** How do you manage the balance between using employees vs contracting out? **A:** This will be discussed under the Operational Excellence focus area.

**Q:** Does SPU have trouble hiring for particular positions? **A:** Yes. For example, never have enough Civil Engineers. Info Technology is also highly competitive.

**Q:** Story seems funny (loyal staff, but lots of culture issues) – how do you reconcile? **A:** High loyalty, but lots of cultural problems too. Maybe it's a loyal workforce that is outspoken, and feels SPU can do so much better. That is a positive message.

**Q:** Are you having trouble recruiting people to do heavy labor? **A:** The short answer is yes; challenging to entice folks to these jobs.

### **Observations/suggestions:**

- Overall suggestion: Some objectives have key word; others don't. Make them consistent.
- Overall question: Where in the strategic objectives do we address structural challenges overall (unions, City policies, other)?
- OTJ injuries – increasing with aging workforce? Find another way to word this.
- Consider using “enhance” workplace safety instead of “improve.”
- Employee loyalty—downside is that benefits may be so good that they are reluctant to leave.
- Systems – is this just IT? If not, then re-look at this word.
- Where are union issues brought up?

In discussion related to workforce safety and injuries, staff noted that training refreshers are needed in some areas.

Given the short amount of time remaining, the discussion of the “Operational Excellence” focus area was deferred until the next meeting.

**Demonstration: Decision Lens instrument for weighting and prioritizing.** Keith Hinman introduced Jared Smith of Decision Lens, and described how the Decision Lens program will be utilized in the strategic business plan process. Jared gave a presentation of what the Decision Lens tool can do, vis-à-vis weighting criteria, ranking multiple projects, and prioritizing allocation of funds.

**Presentation and Discussion: Benchmarking Request for Proposals; Status of Contract.** Terry Martin presented the five “buckets” of benchmarking possibilities that SPU has asked its benchmarking consultant to develop. SPU wants the consultant to present specific action recommendations in all five areas. Terry then talked about the timeline for the consultant work.

#### Questions/Answers

**Q:** Side sewer insurance – are you thinking of SPU insuring and repairing side sewers? **A:** Did business case that showed it was not a good idea for SPU, but may consider it.

Next meeting (Meeting 6, July 1):

- Continued discussion of strategic framework
- Baseline, Part 1
- Potential gap action plans, Part 1

#### **Follow up Items for Staff:**

1. Provide a general overview of the financial relationship with, and services provided from, the General Fund (and vice versa).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30.