



**Community Advisory Panel
Meeting Minutes for March 2, 2023**

Members attending the meeting:

Christina Bouler, Tiki Dixon, Erin Gill, Terry Ledford, Amy Midis, Kent Minault, Haseeb Qureshi

Others in attendance:

Facilitator: Dawn Ford

KUB Staff: Jamie Davis, Susan Edwards, Elba Marshall, Tiffany Martin, Mark Walker, John Williams

KUB Board Members: Kathy Hamilton

New Business

The Community Advisory Panel met at 3:00 p.m. on March 2, 2023 at KUB's Hoskins Operations Center (4505 Middlebrook Pike).

Dawn Ford welcomed the panel members and acknowledged Kathy Hamilton, KUB Commissioner, who was in attendance.

Ms. Ford asked if anyone had corrections to the January meeting minutes. There were no corrections, and the panel approved the minutes.

Ms. Ford explained the purpose of today's meeting was to discuss KUB's customer notifications, with a focus on outage notifications. Before that discussion started, she discussed with the panel the item that had been put on their "parking lot" list related to the panel's input being presented to the KUB Board at their regular meeting. She noted she recently sent for the panel's review the summary of their recent input, and that it will be on the Board's March 23rd meeting agenda. She asked the panel to submit any updates or changes to the summary by March 6th.

Ms. Ford explained KUB is working on a project to improve the outage notification system and the feedback the panel provides will be used by the staff who are working on that project. She recognized Tiffany Martin, Vice President and Chief Customer Officer, to share an overview of the customer notification process. Ms. Martin described KUB's effort to improve the outage notification system, and she shared an overview of the types of customer notifications KUB currently utilizes, including social media and the mobile application. She noted KUB realizes all customers do not use social media and need to

receive information in other ways. She described the option for customers to sign up for an online account with KUB and the benefits of that. Ms. Martin described examples of direct notifications KUB provides to customers. She described recent direct mailings sent by KUB to customers who may benefit from the time-of-use rates. She noted KUB also sends direct mailings or automated phone calls when the customer's consumption seems unusual and there may be a leak, for example. She provided an overview of information that is included with customer bills.

Erin Gill asked about online account information for commercial and industrial customers. Ms. Martin explained these customers have options for online accounts. They sometimes have multiple accounts and multiple online account users to manage the accounts.

Haseeb Qureshi asked about usage related to fiber. KUB staff explained there is no consumption related to fiber service.

Christina Bouler asked how detailed is the consumption data that is available online for customers. Ms. Martin explained customers are able to view consumption data for each utility service, and they can choose to view it monthly, daily, or hourly.

Mr. Qureshi asked about text and voice messaging. Ms. Martin explained texts are used primarily to let customers know their bills are available and when a due date is approaching. She noted text messaging is also used to some extent for outages, however, this is the project for which KUB wants input from the panel before expanding this. She explained text messaging and emails are also available for customers who want to be notified when their usage exceeds limits they set.

Kent Minault noted these kinds of communications are exciting and he feels it will enhance KUB's relationship with younger people. He said the Sierra Club has said that potentially the relationship between environmentalists and utilities is one of the most important factors for making a difference on climate change. He noted the importance of these kinds of communications to promote things like the time-of-use program, for example. He feels these kinds of efforts are great for enhancing these relationships.

Mr. Qureshi said he feels it would be great if KUB can have a relationship with customers similar to financial institutions where customers can be notified in cases where they reach a certain usage amount and other things that help convey KUB knows its customers well and can help provide helpful information.

Ms. Martin provided more information about KUB's notifications for outages, including the online outage map. She explained customers can call KUB, use the mobile application, or check information on the outage map when it becomes available for the estimated restoration time. She explained the project KUB is working is to push the estimated restoration time out to customers via text, email, and mobile application messages, and KUB is seeking input from the panel related to these messages and what would be most helpful for customers.

Mr. Qureshi asked about educational information for customers. He noted for the tree trimming program, he feels it's important to share information pro-actively. Ms. Martin shared examples of construction and vegetation management notifications that are sent directly to customers before work begins in their areas.

Ms. Bouler asked how customers can request more information about their consumption when needed. Ms. Martin explained there is an online option for customers to request information and they can also call and speak with a customer service representative.

Ms. Ford explained the panel would break into small groups to discuss their input for outage notifications. The following groups were formed:

- Kent Minault, Erin Gill, Amy Midis
- Christina Bouler, Haseeb Qureshi, Tiki Dixon, Terry Ledford

Tiki Dixon shared suggestions from his group, which were:

- KUB's outage map is good.
- A suggestion to improve the map is to see if there is a way for the screen resolution to adjust based on the user's device or for the customer to have an easy way to search for their community and find information about impact in their community.
- Text message is the preferred notification type for an outage.
- If the customer may need support from a family member or friend (such as if the person is elderly), have an option for information to be sent to a secondary contact and for the secondary contact to clearly see the address the notification is for.
- It is best to notify customers as soon as possible.
- For how often to notify customers, the group had mixed input. Some said 5 minutes and some said they don't want it too soon. When it is known there will be a delay in restoration, notify the customer as soon as that is known and not when the original estimated time is approaching.
- When an unplanned outage occurs, a general statement about the outage including a range of time the customer may be out is appropriate for the first message. Once a more precise time is known, send a new message about the estimated restoration time. The last message should be that service is restored.
- Two hours seems like a good frequency for updates, but there is a balance with consideration of getting accurate information.
- If you hit "stop" to indicate you don't want outage notifications for one event, you don't stop receiving notifications of other kinds or for future events.
- It is okay / preferred if KUB over-performs on the estimated restoration time. If KUB estimates it will be 10 – 12 hours and then it is 2, that is great.
- For planned work, notification by text or a social media post is preferred at least 24 hours ahead of time.

Erin Gill shared suggestions from her group, which were:

- It may be helpful for customers to know how "real time" the outage map is.
- It would be helpful to have an option to temporarily stop notifications during a specific event but not stop outage notifications permanently.
- It would be good to have an option to toggle notifications on and off.

- KUB being able to share information in social media neighborhood groups would be helpful.
- Helping people understand the restoration strategy and how long will it take to be restored based on the symbols on the map, such as the “black dots” versus the “red dots” that represent outages affecting larger groups of customers.
- For planned outages, let people know a week ahead but remind them close to the time of the work.
- Remind people where to find out when fiber service will be available in their areas.

Ms. Ford asked the panel members if they had experience with other utilities that may be helpful to share. None of the members had other experience they felt would be helpful.

Ms. Ford noted the next meeting would be on May 4, 2023 from 3:00 – 4:30 pm. She explained KUB is continuing its work to evaluate funding opportunities related to the Inflation Reduction Act, as the panel suggested, and findings from this work would likely be ready to discuss at the May meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 4:11 p.m.