

Welcome to The PUB Post – Vol.1

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter, The PUB Post, a new initiative we started to help us connect with Manitobans and keep everyone informed on different things we do throughout the year.

Do you have ideas for newsletter items? Are there PUB matters you would like to learn more about? This is YOUR newsletter and we want to make sure you enjoy it. We invite you to share your ideas with us at engagethepub@gov.mb.ca.

Knowledge is Power

DID YOU KNOW that all regulatory decisions made by the PUB are posted on our website? If you would like to learn more about those decisions, we invite you to visit us at <http://www.pubmanitoba.ca/v1/proceedings-decisions/orders/index.html>



At the PUB, we know it's never too late to learn something new. We continually strive for new, efficient, innovative ways to enhance our work. [The PUB 2020-2023 Strategic Plan](#) specifically talks about these key priorities.

PUB education begins almost immediately after joining the Board. The Board Chair and Board Secretary provide an overall briefing, and each of the Associate Secretaries assigned to the various regulatory portfolios organizes specific portfolio training sessions. These initial training events take approximately seven full days; however, members receive additional, ongoing training as issues arise, circumstances change, and/or advancements occur.

Board Members need to understand more than just the technical aspects of utility rate regulation. The decisions they make affect every Manitoban, in one way or another. To assist the Board and staff in developing a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of, and the relationships between, PUB and key stakeholders and related organizations, we have started meeting with stakeholders outside of the regulatory process. We identify our stakeholders as being consumers of services provided by utilities the PUB regulates, as well as the actual utilities, Crown Corporations, and governments. That is a lot of Manitobans. This is a new, ongoing initiative, which not only builds upon our [vision, mission and values](#); it further supports the priorities outlined in our Strategic Plan. Did I mention there are a lot of Manitobans for us to hear from, and that this is an ongoing project?

If your stakeholder group would like to help educate the PUB on the impact our decisions have on your members, we want to make sure you are included in our discussions. Please reach out to us at engagethepub@gov.mb.ca

New Kids on the Block

Cabinet (Ministers at the Legislature on Broadway) appoints PUB Board Members. Our Chair, Robert Gabor, K.C., is the only full-time Board Member; the others are part-time. We recently said a fond (but sad) farewell to a few Members who retired, and welcomed in five new Members (George Bass, Carol Bellringer, Susan Boulter, Hamath Sy and Jack Winram). This means we now have [one full-time and ten part-time Members!](#) (We could form a soccer team!)

Board Members bring with them a variety of skillsets (and schedules) and serve as members of panels to address matters before the Board. Currently, there are six working panels reviewing matters relating to the PUB regulatory portfolios: Manitoba Hydro Electricity, Centra Gas, Gas Safety/Propane, Manitoba Public Insurance, Efficiency Manitoba, and Water & Wastewater.

The staff at the PUB (small in number but mighty in skill and dedication) play a key role in supporting the Board. We are an integral part of the regulatory process, and are responsible for policy analysis, stakeholder relations, public records, daily case management of regulatory portfolios, and maintaining the overall long-term continuity and stability of PUB operations.

In addition to PUB staff, we also hire external advisors to support the work of the Board, primarily during hearings. Regulatory information is extremely complicated stuff, not as complicated as figuring out the federal *Income Tax Act*, but complicated nonetheless. The external advisors help everyone navigate through volumes of technical data by providing legal, IT, accounting, actuarial and engineering advice, as well as expertise on utility practices.

DID YOU KNOW that board members aren't the only thing that's new at PUB? To help us reach a larger and broader audience of Manitobans, we launched a Facebook page! You can now find, like and follow us on Facebook to stay connected.

A New Regulatory Landscape

[Bill 36 \(The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act\)](#) is the most significant piece of legislative reform since the 1990s for PUB, and it will considerably change how we do things. It's complicated, and has been split into two actionable parts:

- **Part I** (changes to the Manitoba Hydro Act) IS currently in effect, and deals with setting electricity and natural gas rates
- **Part II** (changes to the Public Utilities Board Act) IS NOT currently in effect, but will deal with how the PUB operates

Clear as mud? Let's see if we can clean that up a bit....

Part I (rate setting) started the day it was assented to in the legislature (November 3, 2022). It says that until the end of business on March 31, 2025, we continue regulating electricity and

natural gas rates under The Manitoba Hydro Act, The Public Utilities Board Act and Part 4 of The Crown Corporations Governance and Accountability Act.

Starting April 1, 2025, how we regulate electricity and natural gas changes. At this time, we move into three-year rate applications, a rate cap based on a formula (the lesser of 5% or the Consumer Price Index, which reflects the rate of inflation), and debt-to-equity ratios (with built-in timeframe targets) for electricity. The Act says that Regulations will be established to tell us how to regulate natural gas, but they haven't been developed yet.

Part II (operations) won't start until Bill 36 is proclaimed in the legislature, and we don't know when that will be. Since there are not many working days left this year, best guess is sometime in 2023. There is still a lot of work required before it can be proclaimed, such as the development of Regulations. Remember, the Act (Bill 36) tells us WHAT we are going to do and the Regulations tell us HOW we will do it.

Our regulatory landscape may be changing, but PUB will continue working as a trusted, respected regulator that contributes to fair rate determinations and long-term, reliable utility services for Manitobans, making evidence-based decisions in efficient and transparent regulatory processes.

We have been doing it since 1913, so why stop now!

Things to Look Forward to

2023 is coming soon and the New Year brings with it some exciting things to look forward to:

- More issues of The PUB Post – don't forget to send your newsletter ideas to engagethepub@gov.mb.ca
- Board decisions relating to the Manitoba Public Insurance 2023 General Rate Application (the hearing was held October 17 - November 9, 2022)
- The PUB Annual Report – our annual publication detailing our activities throughout the year, which we [post on our website](#)
- The PUB Spotlight Series – a new initiative we are launching, designed to help educate Manitobans about our regulatory portfolios
- A regulatory hearing for the Manitoba Hydro 2023/24 and 2024/25 General Rate Application ([the application](#) was filed with the Board on November 15, 2022)