



## **THE ELECTRIC RELIABILITY COUNCIL OF TEXAS, INC.** **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE CHARTER**

### **Purpose**

The Finance and Audit Committee (the “Committee”) of the Board of Directors of ERCOT (the “Company”) shall:

1. Oversee the ~~Company’s budget process~~development of and adherence to a Company budget;
2. Provide recommendations to the Board of Directors for ~~establishing levels of financing and in setting the Company’s fees~~Company needs, including ~~its administrative fee~~both debt and revenue financing;
3. Review and make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding investment and financial ~~standards~~guidelines for the Company;
4. Review and make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding credit standards, procedures, governance, ERCOT Protocols and other market rules which impact credit risk;
5. Ensure that the Company’s financial statements are timely audited by qualified accountants who are independent;
6. Assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its oversight responsibility with respect to the Company’s maintenance of an effective internal audit function;
7. Establish and maintain procedures for the receipt (including anonymous submission), retention and treatment of complaints regarding accounting, internal controls, and auditing;
8. Perform such other duties and responsibilities enumerated in and consistent with this Charter.

The Committee’s function is one of oversight, recognizing that the Company’s management is responsible for preparing the Company’s financial statements, and the independent auditor is responsible for auditing those statements. In adopting this Charter, the Board of Directors acknowledges that the Committee members (with the exception of ERCOT’s Chief Executive Officer) are not employees of the Company and are not providing any expert or special assurance as to the Company’s financial statements or any professional certification as to the external auditor’s work or auditing standards. Each member of the Committee shall be entitled to rely on the integrity of staff and external auditors to provide accurate, complete financial and other information to the Committee, absent actual knowledge to the contrary, and shall also exercise their fiduciary duties as Directors, including their duties of care, loyalty, and obedience.

While the Committee has the responsibilities, duties and powers set forth in this Charter, it shall be the responsibility and duty of the Company’s management and independent auditor, and not the responsibility or duty of the Committee, to plan or conduct audits, to make any determination that the Company’s financial statements are complete, accurate and in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, and to assure compliance with laws, regulations and the Company’s ethics policies. It is the responsibility of the Committee to conduct investigations and resolve disagreements regarding financial reporting, if any, between management and the independent auditor.

The Committee shall provide assistance to the Board in fulfilling its oversight responsibility relating to the Company’s financial statements and the financial reporting process, the systems of internal accounting and financial controls, the annual independent audit of the Company’s

financial statements and the legal compliance and ethics programs as established by management and the Board. In so doing, it is the responsibility of the Committee to maintain free and open communication between the Committee and the Company's independent auditors, internal accounting personnel and management.

### **Membership**

The Committee shall be comprised of at least five Board members, at least three of which are from ~~market~~Market Segments and two or more of which must be Independent Board members of the Company. Each Member must be able to read and understand fundamental financial statements, including the balance sheet, income statement and cash flow statement. ~~At least one Member~~At least one Member shall be designated a "financial expert" as such term may be defined from time to time by the Board of Directors consistent with definitions generally accepted by the accounting industry or other regulatory authorities (the "Financial Expert"). At a minimum, the Financial Expert must have past employment experience in finance or accounting, requisite professional certification in accounting or any other comparable experience or background which ensures the individual's financial sophistication, including a past or current position as a Chief Executive Officer ("CEO"), Chief Financial Officer ("CFO") or other senior officer with financial oversight responsibilities.

The ~~board~~Board members shall decide from among themselves who shall participate in the Committee. The term shall be for not more than one year.

The Chair of the Committee shall be selected through a majority vote of the Committee members. The Committee Chair shall not be the CEO of the Company and shall have accounting or related financial management expertise.

~~The~~Any member of the public may attend and participate in the open session of Committee meetings. For the executive session of Committee meetings, the Committee shall close the Committee meeting to the public to address sensitive matters such as confidential personnel information, contracts, lawsuits, competitively sensitive information, or other information related to the security of the regional electrical network. For such executive sessions of Committee meetings, the Committee may request that any officers or employees of the Company, or any other person, whose advice and counsel are sought by the Committee, attend any meeting of the Committee to provide such pertinent information as the Committee requests. In addition, for such executive sessions of the Committee meetings, the Committee may exclude any persons who are not Directors, the Directors' Segment Alternates or the Directors' Designated Representatives.

**Board members (other than Committee members) including Board member alternates may attend and participate in all Committee meetings but may not participate in Committee voting.**

~~Non-Committee members may attend Committee meetings at the discretion of the Committee. The Committee may exclude any persons who are not Directors, the Segment Alternate or the Director's Designated Representative from any meeting or portion of any Committee meeting~~

~~that the Committee determines, in its discretion, needs to be held in closed session to discuss personnel issues, confidential legal matters, negotiations or other business of the Committee involving confidential information.~~

### **Qualifications**

Each member of the Committee shall also meet any experience requirements as may be established from time to time by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall endeavor to appoint at least one member to the ~~committee who is a financial expert as such term may be defined from time to time by the Board of Directors, the accounting industry or other regulatory authorities~~Committee as the Financial Expert.

### **Authority**

In discharging its oversight role, the Committee is empowered to investigate any matter brought to its attention with full access to all books, records, facilities and personnel of the Company and the power to retain outside counsel or other experts for this purpose. All employees are directed to cooperate as requested by the Committee or any of its Members for Committee purposes. The Committee may request any officer or employee of the Company, the Company's outside counsel or the Company's independent auditor to attend a meeting of the Committee or to meet with any Member or any consultants to the Committee.

The Director of Internal Audit is the Chief Audit Executive at the Company. The Company's Chief Audit Executive shall report directly to the Committee. For administrative purposes, the Chief Audit Executive shall report to the CEO. The Committee shall approve an Annual Internal Audit Plan prepared by the Chief Audit Executive. The Chief Audit Executive shall (1) manage the execution of the Annual Internal Audit Plan, (2) conduct investigations at the direction of the Chair and the Committee, and (3) make periodic reports to the Committee at regularly scheduled Committee meetings and as otherwise directed by the Chair and the Committee.

The Committee may appoint workgroups or task forces to investigate issues defined by the Committee. Members of such workgroups or task forces need not be Directors. Such workgroups or task forces shall have no authority to bind the Committee or the Company.

### **Structure**

The presence of at least half of the members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum. At any meeting at which a quorum exists, the act of a majority of the members present at a meeting shall be the act of the Committee. For the purposes of voting, members who recuse themselves from voting on an issue shall not be counted as present for that vote.

The Chair, in consultation with the CFO, shall develop the agenda, the frequency, and length of meetings and shall have unlimited access to management and information for purposes of carrying out functions of the Committee. The Chair shall establish such other rules, as may from time to time be necessary and proper for the conduct of the Committee.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

The following shall be the prominent recurring duties and responsibilities of the Committee in carrying out its oversight functions. The duties and responsibilities are set forth below as a guide

to the Committee with the understanding that the Committee may alter or supplement them as appropriate under the circumstances to the extent permitted by applicable law, and by the Company's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws:

***With respect to budget oversight and financing:***

1. Annually, on a schedule to be established by the Board of Directors, the Committee shall review staff's proposed budget for the following year, including proposed staffing levels, proposed capital expenditures, and other proposed expenditures.
- ~~2. The Committee shall review the staff's estimate of revenues to support all proposed expenditures, including staff's recommendations for fee levels for the following year.~~
- ~~3.2.~~ The Committee shall review the staff's recommendation of the amount and type of financing ~~that may be needed, both revenue and debt financing,~~ to support the proposed budget, including the staff's proposed financial performance measures (e.g. ratios).
- ~~4.3.~~ Following the Committee's review of the above items, the Committee shall recommend to the Board of Directors a staffing level, a proposed budget, proposed fees, and proposed financial performance measures for the following year.
4. As needed, the Committee shall review staff's recommendations among debt financing alternatives and recommend to the Board of Directors a debt structure or facility that meets the Company's liquidity needs.

***With respect to maintaining investment and financial guidelines for the Company, the Committee shall:***

1. Establish standards by which the Company will invest funds and maintain its financial health/strength and review these standards at least annually, recommending updates to the Board of Directors as needed.

***With respect to the Company's credit policies and standards:***

1. Establish a standard by which the Board will seek to maintain the long-term financial integrity of the ERCOT market and review this standard at least annually, recommending updates to the Board of Directors as needed.
- ~~1.2.~~ The Committee shall review the Company's credit policies to consider:
  - a. Appropriateness of credit practices and creditworthiness standards established for market participants;
  - b. Compliance with existing creditworthiness standards by market participants;
  - c. Compliance with credit-related Protocols and market rules; and
  - d. Development of appropriate methods to evaluate and mitigate credit risk;
- ~~2.3.~~ In establishing or reviewing the standard under Item 1 above and in conducting the review under Item 2 above the Committee~~The Committee's review~~ shall consider the recommendations of staff and the Credit Work Group and the decisions and recommendations of the appropriate stakeholder groups, including the Technical Advisory Committee and the Market Credit Work Group.
- ~~3.4.~~ Following each such review, the Committee may, in its discretion, recommend to the Board of Directors any proposed changes to the previously approved standard or credit policies.

***With respect to the independent auditors:***

1. Annually, the Committee shall recommend to the Board of Directors the selection and engagement of the Company's independent auditor. The Committee shall fulfill the oversight responsibility of the Board of Directors with respect to the independent auditors' audit of the books and accounts of the Company and for the fiscal year for which it is appointed.
2. The Committee shall approve the provision of all auditing and non-audit services (in excess of \$5,000) by the independent auditor to the Company in advance of the provision of those services and shall also approve the fees for all non-audit services provided by the independent auditor.
3. Provision of non-audit services of less than or equal to \$5,000 by the independent auditor to the Company do not require pre-approval from the Committee, but shall be communicated in writing to the members of the Committee at the first meeting following the engagement for the non-audit services at issue.
4. In connection with the Committee's approval of non-audit services, the Committee shall consider whether the independent auditor's performance of any non-audit services is compatible with the external auditor's independence.
5. At least annually, the Committee shall obtain and review a report by the independent auditor describing:
  - a. the independent auditor's internal quality control procedures;
  - b. all relationships between the independent auditor and the Company, in order to assess the auditor's independence.
6. The Committee shall also review any report by the independent auditor describing:
  - a. significant accounting policies and practices used by the Company;
  - b. alternative treatments of financial information as required to be discussed by the independent auditors with the Committee; and
  - c. any other material written communication between the independent auditors firm and the Company's management.
7. Establish the Company's hiring policies for employees who are former employees of the Company's independent auditors.

***With respect to the Company's financial statements:***

1. The Committee shall discuss the annual audited financial statements with management and the independent auditor, including the Company's disclosures.
2. The Committee shall review disclosures made to the Committee by the Company's CEO and CFO about any significant deficiencies in the design or operation of the internal controls or material weaknesses therein and any fraud involving management or other employees who have a significant role in the Company's internal controls.
3. In connection with its review of the Company's financial statements, the Committee shall review and discuss with the independent auditor the matters relating to the conduct of the audit as they may be modified or supplemented, including, but not limited to, significant judgments, significant estimates, critical accounting policies, and unadjusted differences.
4. Review major changes to the Company's auditing and accounting principles and practices as suggested by the independent auditor, internal auditors or management.
5. Review with management and the independent auditor any correspondence with regulators or governmental agencies and any employee complaints or published reports that raise material issues regarding the Company's financial statements or accounting policies.

6. Review with management and the independent auditor the effect of regulatory and accounting initiatives as well as off-balance sheet structures on the Company's financial statements.
7. Review any and all press stories that relate to the Company's accounting and disclosure, require that management or the auditor explain any negative comments and determine whether these comments necessitate a change in the accounting structure of the Company.
8. Based on its review and discussions with management, the Chief Audit Executive and the independent auditor, the Committee shall provide a recommendation to the Board of Directors whether the Company's financial statements should be accepted.

***With respect to periodic reviews and reports:***

1. Periodically, the committee shall meet separately with senior management, the Chief Audit Executive and the independent auditors.
2. The Committee shall review with the independent auditor any audit problems or difficulties and management's response to them.
3. The Committee shall review the Company's policies with respect to risk assessment and risk management.
4. The Committee shall inquire of management and the independent auditors about significant risks or exposures to the Company and the Company's market and assess the steps management has taken to minimize such risks.
5. The Committee shall establish procedures for:
  - a. The receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by the Company regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters; and
  - b. The confidential, anonymous submission by the Company's employees of concerns regarding accounting or auditing matters.
6. The Committee shall review a summary of the Company's dealings with any financial institutions that are also market participants.
7. The Committee shall communicate to the Board of Directors the matters discussed at each meeting of the Committee, including any issues with respect to the quality or integrity of the Company's financial statements, the performance and independence of the Company's independent auditors or the performance of the internal audit function.
8. The Committee shall review and assess the adequacy of this Charter annually and recommend any proposed changes to the Board of Directors.

***With respect to Internal Audit:***

1. The Committee shall review with management and the Chief Audit Executive the charter, activities, staffing, and organizational structure of the internal audit function.
2. The Committee shall have final authority to review and approve the Annual Internal Audit Plan and all major changes to the Plan.
3. The Committee shall review, considering the recommendations of the independent auditors and the CFO, the scope of the Internal Audit Plan and the plan of work to be done by the Company's Internal Audit Department, and the results of such work.
4. The Committee shall review the significant reports to management prepared by the Internal Audit Department and management's responses.

5. The Committee shall ensure there are no unjustified restrictions or limitations, and review and concur in the appointment, replacement, or dismissal of the Chief Audit Executive.
6. The Committee shall, at least once per year, review the performance of the Chief Audit Executive and concur with the annual compensation and salary adjustment.
7. The Committee shall review the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal audit function, including compliance with The Institute of Internal Auditors' *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing*.
8. The Committee shall, on a regular basis, meet separately with the Chief Audit Executive in executive session to discuss any matters that the committee or Internal Audit believes should be discussed privately.

~~*With respect to the other matters:*~~

- ~~9. The Committee shall inquire of management and the independent auditors about significant risks or exposures to the Company and the Company's market and assess the steps management has taken to minimize such risks.~~
- ~~10. The Committee shall establish procedures for:~~
  - ~~a. The receipt, retention and treatment of complaints received by the Company regarding accounting, internal accounting controls, or auditing matters; and~~
  - ~~b. The confidential, anonymous submission by the Company's employees of concerns regarding accounting or auditing matters.~~
- ~~2. The Committee shall establish the Company's hiring policies for employees who are former employees of the Company's independent auditor's.~~
- ~~3. The Committee shall meet at least biannually with the independent auditor and the CFO in separate executive sessions.~~

**Meetings**

The Committee shall meet at least once during each fiscal quarter, and as many additional times as the Committee shall deem necessary or appropriate.

**Minutes**

The Committee shall designate a secretary, who may be a Committee Member or employee of ERCOT, who shall prepare or cause to be prepared the minutes of each meeting and file such minutes with the corporate records of the Company. The secretary shall send, or cause to be sent, copies of such minutes to each of the Members.

**Evaluation**

The Committee shall undertake an annual evaluation assessing its performance and, in light of this, consider changes in its membership, charter or procedures. The Committee shall report to the Board the results of its evaluation, including recommended charter, membership and other changes, if any.