

Memo



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY &
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

To: RI Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council
From: Consultant Team
CC: Becca Trietch
Date: May 18, 2020
RE: 2020 Annual CHP Public Meeting Summary

CONSULTANT TEAM

2020 Annual CHP Public Meeting Summary

On Thursday, May 14, 2020, the EERMC hosted the Annual Rhode Island Combined Heat and Power (CHP) Public Meeting. Due to COVID-19, this year's meeting was held virtually through GoToMeeting. As a legislative mandate, this meeting gives stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback on the state's CHP programs and policies. The meetings also serve to inform developers and potential customers about program details and updates for the upcoming year. The meetings are timed to allow for any recommendations to be incorporated, as appropriate, into the Three-Year and Annual Energy Efficiency Program Plans.

Invitations were distributed to National Grid's database of CHP vendors as well as past and potential program participants. The Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources also sent the invitation to a variety of contacts, including potential Efficient Buildings Fund borrowers as well as legislative, municipal, quasi and school contacts. There were over 50 participants, the majority of which were CHP developers or vendors that provide related technical assistance or financing. Representatives of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers (DPUC), National Grid, the EERMC and its Consultant Team, and the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) were also present.

EERMC Chair Chris Powell welcomed attendees and introduced the Council and its purpose. He also invited ongoing participation in the energy efficiency conversation through monthly Council meetings. Rachel Sholly of the consultant team briefly summarized the results of the CHP survey (see below). Next, Sam Ross of the consultant team presented the CHP-related results of the Rhode Island Market Potential Study as well as the three-year energy savings targets for CHP.

John Karlin and Daniel Tukey discussed the details of National Grid's CHP program in Rhode Island. The current program direction includes increased focus on leveraging renewable natural gas and small/micro CHP systems.

Toby Ast from the RI Infrastructure Bank presented on financing opportunities available through RIIB, which include the Efficient Buildings Fund, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and C-PACE. Finally, Richard Weare, from the Greater Lawrence Sanitary District in Massachusetts described their Organics to Energy project – a 3.2 MW biogas CHP facility.

Overall audience participation was limited, probably in large part due to the virtual format of this year's meeting. However, some insights were gained through a survey that was distributed in advance of the meeting.

CHP Survey Results

This year, for the first time, a survey was distributed in advance of the meeting in an attempt to learn more about the CHP landscape in Rhode Island from those “on-the-ground.” There were 11 respondents, most of whom were CHP developers.

We asked respondents about barriers to installing CHP in RI. No single barrier stood out as clearly the most significant. Rather, respondents indicated that there are several moderate barriers, including incentive levels, interconnection and policy support from the state. Customer interest, cost-effectiveness, and potential project sites were also considered to be notable barriers.

When asked about opportunities to address barriers, the clear leader was increasing incentives, followed by utilizing packaged systems and pursuing more small and micro projects.

Almost all respondents agreed that there are state-level policies that might encourage CHP projects. Most of the policy suggestions related to addressing previously identified barriers, including increasing incentives, offering a gas rate subsidy and addressing interconnection and network challenges.

The full results and complete slide deck from the CHP meeting can be found on the EERMC’s website at www.rieermc.ri.gov.