



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EERMC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 25, 2021 | 3:00 - 4:00 PM

Meeting conducted virtually using Zoom with additional audio conference capabilities

Members in attendance: Anthony Hubbard, Karen Verrengia, Peter Gill Case, Nick Ucci

Others Present: Nathan Cleveland, Dr. Becca Trietch, Mike Guerard

All meeting materials can be accessed here: <https://rieermc.ri.gov/meeting/eermc-executive-committee-meeting-march-2021/>

1. Call to Order

Acting Chairman Hubbard called the meeting to order at 3:03pm

2. Executive Director Report

Commissioner Ucci stated that he was looking forward to addressing the Council in April on the 100% renewable electricity by 2030 effort. He also noted that the legislative session is in full swing with a bill introduced recently seeking to extend Least Cost Procurement. He closed by sharing that at the Energy Efficiency Technical Working Group meeting this morning the Office of Energy Resources and other stakeholders began sharing their priorities for the 2022 Energy Efficiency plan with national Grid.

Acting Chair Hubbard asked if Commissioner Ucci had discussed appointments with the new Governor or his team?

Commissioner Ucci responded that appointments are something that is on OER's priority list. We'd like to move the forward, not just for this Council but for others boards and commissions as well and hopefully with continued conversations in the coming weeks we may get more clarity on a timeline for appointments.

Mr. Gill Case asked that even if all reappointments go through, would there still be vacancies to fill?

Commissioner Ucci replied that is the case and OER is working to identify candidates to fill vacant seats as we speak.

3. Council Business

a) *Review Council Member Performance, Attendance, and Codes of Conduct*

Please refer to the [Council Member Attendance Chart](#)

Dr. Trietch shared the Council attendance sheet from the past year and the Executive Committee reviewed the attendance records as well as the open seats and members needing reappointment.

b) Review Council By-Laws

Please refer to the [Council Bylaws Document](#)

Dr. Trietch shared the Council bylaws which the Executive Committee then reviewed and discussed.

Mr. Gill Case asked if we have the tools in these by-laws to set/adjust meeting lengths and form sub-committees?

Dr. Trietch indicated that yes, the Council currently has the flexibility to adjust meetings and form committees as needed.

Acting Chair Hubbard asked if there was anything in the by-laws about conflicts of interest disclosures that would need to be kept on file somewhere?

Dr. Trietch replied that there was nothing in the by-laws requiring that, but conflicts of interests are part of the ethics requirements from State law.

Acting Chair Hubbard asked if there would be value in having the by-laws have a provision that Council members file something with the Office of Energy Resources regarding any potential conflicts of interest, in case someone were to question a vote for example?

The Executive Committee reviewed existing bylaws Section 9 on conflicts, and it is not a formal requirement to file anything with OER and the onus is on the individual Council member to announce and manage any potential conflicts of interest.

Ms. Verrengia suggested it was likely a good idea to reiterate this point to the full Council to make everyone aware and remind everyone of this policy.

Commissioner Ucci made the recommendation that we share a copy of the bylaws at the next full Council meeting for everyone to review, especially Section 9, and then circulate for review/reminder every year going forward.

c) Discuss 2021 Council Meetings, Deliverables, & Council Member Education Efforts

Please refer to the [Council Meetings Special Topics list](#)

Mr. Gill Case stated that he had filled out the Council member survey and his opinions were shared there, with his expectation being that the topic list will get filled out once those results are tabulated.

He noted that he still had serious concerns about information overload at each meeting, which is only going to be compressed as we get into the swing of planning season. One issue is presenters often go over their allotted time. He suggested that the Council consider processing some of the information or topics through sub-committees. Or perhaps we could look to extend meetings or

add in additional meetings? Mr. Gill Case is very concerned that the compressed meetings could lead to losing a Council member over time-constraint and process issues. Therefore, Mr. Gill Case would like to move forward with some process improvements.

Ms. Verrengia recommended we extend meetings to 2.5 hours with a short break and start meetings earlier so we can end around 5pm and allow for some other time for discussion.

Acting Chair Hubbard suggested that it is likely going to need to be a multi-level approach – less topics on the agenda, more meeting time, stricter presenter adherence to time limits. He felt that sub-committees are likely an easier sell once we have a full roster of Council members appointed, otherwise we risk overburdening those currently seated. Once there is a full roster he likes the idea of trying to utilize sub-Committees more.

Ms. Verrengia asked if we should consider limiting the number of slides allowed per presentation to some number, perhaps 7 or 10?

Commissioner Ucci suggested that rather than having a presentation on something like the program Quarterly Reports, the Council simply have a meeting material on it and leave it to the Council's consultant team to call out any areas of concern.

Mr. Gill Case shared that he was discouraged to hear that few Council members are taking advantage of the opportunities to engage in one-on-one meetings with the consultant team. He also stated that he was very appreciative of getting meeting materials one week in advance. He asked if the Executive Committee or some other sub-committee/task force could help to set the agenda for Council meetings to streamline things?

Ms. Verrengia wondered if the Executive Committee had served that function in the past? She also reiterated that she didn't really think it was a huge ask to extend meetings by 30 minutes, especially if a break was provided.

Mr. Gill Case asked if the Council could test out the Executive Committee working to set the agenda for the next meeting and, if so, what would the logistics of that look like? Or as an alternative, could we add 15 minutes of "unprogrammed time" to each agenda to allow Acting Chair Hubbard to have more discretion over time allocation?

Commissioner Ucci volunteered that the Office of Energy Resources and Council's consultant team could work to scope of the next few meetings and then meet with the Executive Committee quarterly to discuss meeting topics, set agendas, and check-in on process.

Acting Chair Hubbard indicated his support for meeting quarterly as it would give the Executive Committee the opportunity to better understand the upcoming topics, help prioritize, and make more informed determinations as to what can or cannot be fit into agendas.

Mr. Gill Case said that he consistently finds that the consultant team reports/presentations are typically more valuable and actionable than materials that come from the Company and would prefer less time from National Grid – is that possible or is there a requirement about equal presentation time?

Commissioner Ucci indicated that there are no requirements about who does or does not present at any given meeting.

Acting Chair Hubbard asked if we could instead structure things with National Grid sharing materials on some topics, and then have the consultant team review and present as needed and then allow National Grid to comment or answer questions on the topic rather than give a full presentation?

Commissioner Ucci indicated that it would also be helpful to have feedback from the full council on both meeting start/end times and meeting length in case there was appetite for adjustments.

Ms. Verrengia noted that virtual meetings have been very helpful in saving commuting time and might help justify meeting time extensions.

Dr. Trietch asked for clarification as to what the expectations for the quarterly meetings with the Executive Committee were. Would the Executive Committee be looking to review draft full council agendas? Would the Committee like to review specific presentation materials? Or should the Executive Committee agendas be more broad than that?

Mr. Gill Case voiced that his hope was to use those as an opportunity for open discussion and to think about what's going well and what to adjust moving forward.

Acting Chair Hubbard noted that we could use those meeting to also check in on the overall planning timeline and make adjustments as needed.

Mr. Gill Case then asked if we can we keep meeting virtually once COVID is over, given the efficiencies Ms. Verrengia mentioned?

Dr. Trietch indicated that we are only able to do this as a result of an Executive Order from the Governor, so its currently unclear if virtual meetings will be allowed once it is safe to meet in person again.

Acting Chair Hubbard noted that for his schedule, earlier start times would be better because he has standing obligations right after our Council meetings and so running over is a challenge.

Commissioner Ucci posited that if we have consensus on moving meeting start times earlier, we could bring that to the full council as a consideration for an adjustment down the road to allow for some advance notice for scheduling purposes.

d) Discuss Potential Policy Recommendations for Annual Report

Dr. Trietch stated that the Council has already seen a draft of these policy recommendations at the last meeting and she asked that members simply review those and share any feedback.

Acting Chair Hubbard commented that program accessibility is linked to equity and he'll plan to provide some feedback on that since making sure we are forceful on equity issues is important.

e) Discuss Frequency of Executive Committee Meetings

Acting Chair reiterated that as discussed earlier in the meeting, the Executive Committee would like to schedule quarterly meetings. Dr. Trietch will coordinate scheduling those via email with Executive Committee members.

4. Public Comments

None

5. Adjournment

Acting Chair Hubbard called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gill Case moved to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Verrengia seconded the motion and all approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:00pm.

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