



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 22, 2021 | 3:30 - 5:30 PM

Meeting conducted virtually using Zoom with additional audio conference capabilities

Members in attendance: Anthony Hubbard, Peter Gill Case, Matt Ray, Bill Riccio, Roberta Fagan, Karen Verrengia, Tom Magliocchetti, Kurt Teichert

Others Present: Nathan Cleveland, Dr. Becca Trietch, Mike Guerard, Crystal Johnson, Angela Li, Matt Chase, Daniel Tukey, John Tortorella, Hank Webster, Ashley Estrada, Dr. Carrie Gill, Rachel Sholly, Josh Kessler, Kai Salem, Joel Munoz, Laura Rodormer, Kevin Rose

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

1. Call to Order

Acting Chairman Hubbard called the meeting to order at 3:34pm

2. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

Acting Chair Hubbard asked for a motion to approve the March Meeting minutes. Mr. Gill Case made a motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting as written. Ms. Verrengia seconded and all approved by roll call vote.

3. Executive Director Report

Acting Chair Hubbard provided several updates on behalf of Commissioner Ucci, who was unable to make the meeting. First was a reminder to Council members about potential conflict of interest reporting, as referenced in Section 9 of the Council by-laws, which are included as a meeting material and linked in full on the Council's website.

He also brought up for discussion the possibility of moving the start time of Council meetings up from 3:30pm to 3:00pm to provide more flexibility for folks in the evening hours, particularly if meetings run over time as they have in the past.

Ms. Verrengia and Mr. Gill Case commented that they had no issues with the proposal to move meeting start times earlier and were supportive of the idea at the recent Executive Committee meeting as well. Mr. Magliocchetti, Mr. Riccio, and Mr. Teichert all were supportive of the idea as well. Mr. Riccio asked if we should put it on the agenda for next month's meeting to allow for public comment on the matter, since it may impact public participation?

Acting Chair Hubbard suggested that we have that change take effect for the June meeting to allow the public and others to adjust their schedules in advance.

Mr. Magliocchetti also brought up the point that as part of a conversation about adjusting schedules, it is important that presenters stick to their allotted time.

Acting Chair Hubbard then asked the Council about the process for meeting materials distribution and if they were comfortable being notified by email when materials are posted on the Council website rather than having them be emailed out as attachments?

Mr. Riccio commented that this was a great idea so long as the timeline of having materials available one week in advance is held to.

Mr. Teichert indicated that he is very supportive of that process change.

Ms. Verrengia asked that when the email notification is sent out that it links directly to the materials page on the website for ease of access and so new materials are easily identified.

4. Acting Chairperson Report

Acting Chair Hubbard reviewed the agenda for today's meeting, including the several votes taking place at today's meeting, and highlighted the materials that will not be discussed during the course of today's meeting but were made available for Council review.

He also called attention to the fact that the Public Utilities Commission has not ruled on the outstanding items from the 2021 Energy Efficiency plan yet, which includes the transfer of funds to the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank to support the Efficient Buildings Fund and the determination on the structure of the Performance Incentive Mechanism, but the hope is that a ruling will be made before next month's meeting.

Lastly, Acting Chair Hubbard mentioned to everyone that he will be monitoring presentation time and cutting presenters off once their time has been reached to keep the meeting on schedule. He will take into account any questions from Council members that may cut into that time though.

5. Council Business

a) Discussion & Vote on 2022 Council Energy Efficiency (EE) Priorities

Please refer to the [Consultant Team Presentation on 2022 Council Energy Efficiency Priorities](#)

Mr. Guerard outlined three overarching priorities that should always inform and guide the work being done in the 2022 planning process. Those three reference priorities are:

- 2021-2023 Three Year Plan
- Least Cost Procurement (LCP) Standards
- Stakeholder Priorities and Input

Mr. Guerard then reviewed the specific priorities included in the memo that the Council will be voting on, which are:

- Align with the Three-Year Plan
 - Target the "High" scenario for savings and identify and justify any barriers
 - Align with the Market Potential Study
 - Maximize savings and benefits achievement while maintaining cost-efficiency
- Comply with LCP Standards

- Apply clear, outcome oriented direction provided in the Standards section and include key metrics to be tracked and reported
- Incorporate Stakeholder Input
 - Reflect priorities put forward at the Technical Working Group Meetings
 - Include any findings and conclusions from the Equity Working Group
 - Include learnings from customer feedback activities and the annual Combined Heat & Power event for stakeholders
- Support Equity & Access
 - Fulfill and apply results from the 2021 Energy Efficiency Plan to the 2022 development process, including the non-participant study and multi-family housing census
 - Include clear, detailed remediation strategies to assure corrective action for underperforming programs
 - Have a clear, comprehensive list of tasks that will be added to quarterly reports to support full and transparent accountability on performance of achieving commitments on a regular basis
- Ensure Effective & Efficient Development and Review Process
 - Adhere to the Key Deliverables and Schedule outlined with the Council early this year to allow for sufficient review and discussion time for plan components prior to Council votes so that each member is confident that they can make an informed decision on whether or not to endorse the plan

Mr. Ray commented that because of the 5% maximum budget increase and the removal of supplemental workforce funding as part of the approval decision made by the Public Utilities Commission that the compliance filing National Grid made no longer includes the “high” scenario from the original filing.

Mr. Teichert responded by stating that the 5% limit was specific for the program budget, and not savings targets. Therefore, couldn’t the Council still indicate its desire to aim for the high target and then work to maximize savings we can achieve with the budget available?

Mr. Gill Case made a motion to approve the 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan Priorities of the Council as written in the memo from the consultant team. Mr. Teichert seconded the motion and all approved by roll call vote.

b) Discussion & Vote on the Council’s Report to the General Assembly

Please refer to the [EERMC Annual Report](#)

Ms. Sholly reviewed the 2021 Annual Report, highlighting the new sections in the 2021 report and noting the few areas in the text where final numbers from National Grid are still pending their annual report filing later this month.

Acting Chair Hubbard noted that the energy justice section references “proposed language”, which he didn’t see in the report – was that an intentional decision? He feels it’s important that the Council include that language around equity they proposed in the Least Cost Procurement standards discussion in its report. Mr. Teichert and Ms. Verrengia also support including that language.

Mr. Riccio noted that the posted version had a typo on the cover that needs to be corrected. Also pointed out another typo on page 34 for correction. He also asked if pages currently blank will remain that way, and if so, should text indicating that blank page is intentional be added?

There was discussion around the submission deadline of April 15th and whether it was possible to move that date since given the timing of final data from National Grid and the Council review process that they never meet that deadline.

Dr. Trietch noted that the April 15th submission date is in the legislation and so changing that isn't likely. While National Grid explores opportunities to get year-end data out of the quality assurance process sooner, the Office of Energy Resources has been able to communicate successfully to the General Assembly that the timing challenges we face are related to ensuring full data accuracy of the report and that hasn't been an issue for them.

Ms. Verrengia made a motion to approve the Annual Report document as written, with the only changes to include the correct of typographical errors and the inclusion of National Grid's year end data, the just voted upon Council priorities, and the energy justice language as suggested by Acting Chair Hubbard.

Mr. Teichert seconded the motion and all voted in favor with Mr. Riccio opposed.

c) Discussion & Vote on Review Committee Recommendations for Proposal Selection – educational video and event planning

Please refer to the review committee's [event planning recommendation](#) and the [educational video recommendation](#)

Dr. Trietch reviewed the process undertaken by the review committee in reviewing four proposals received for the Request for Proposals (RFP) for educational video production. After reviewing and scoring the proposals, the review committee has recommended Duffy & Shanley as the vendor to be selected for the award.

Mr. Riccio noted the recommendation by Duffy & Shanley of translation into multiple languages and use of closed captioning, but couldn't tell if that would be included as part of their proposal as written. If not included, what additional cost would those services be?

Acting Chair Hubbard asked what happens if in contract negotiations, adding services like translation and closed captioning bring the Duffy & Shanley cost above a competitor, could we come back as a Council and award another vendor rather than go back and issue another full RFP?

Dr. Trietch indicated that was the process that would be available to the Council in that scenario. If during negotiations cost becomes an issue the Council could seek to award a different vendor or issue another RFP. Also, while these proposals are higher than what the Council had estimated for this line item in the budget, there are plenty of unallocated funds in the Council budget should you wish to allocate them to this purpose.

Mr. Riccio noted that in the Quarter One budget summary, the estimated amount was only \$15,000.00 for this task, and this proposal is significantly higher than that number and asked if the Council has the funds to cover that in our budget?

Mr. Cleveland indicated that the Council indeed had sufficient funds to cover increasing the line item cost to award Duffy & Shanley at the proposed number should they so choose and indicated he would provide an updated budget document to the Council outlining the exact amount of available funds for the next meeting.

Mr. Riccio made a motion to approve Duffy & Shanley as the selected vendor for educational video production, with a budget not to exceed \$75,000.00 including translation and closed captioning services. Ms. Verrengia seconded the motion and all approved by roll call vote.

Dr. Trietch reviewed the process undertaken by the review committee in reviewing three proposals received for the Request for Proposals (RFP) for event planning. After reviewing and scoring the proposals, the review committee has recommended Duffy & Shanley as the vendor to be selected for the award, with a recommended contract length of one year, with the option for the Council to exercise up to two additional twelve month extensions based on performance.

Mr. Riccio stated that the RFP asks for services for one year, and asked if the Council is allowed to do option years if those were not included the proposal?

Dr. Trietch responded that there was a statement in the RFP, which allows for renewal options, so that is allowed under purchasing rules as long as the option periods are limited.

Ms. Verrengia made a motion to approve the recommendation of the review committee as written, and Mr. Gill Case seconded the motion.

Mr. Riccio proposed an amendment to Ms. Verrengia's motion to be more specific. His modified motion was "to choose Duffy & Shanley as the awarded vendor for this RFP based on the recommendation of the review committee to a one year contract with a budget not to exceed \$30,000.00. Ms. Verrengia accepted the modification and restated her original motion to include the language proposed by Mr. Riccio. Mr. Riccio then seconded the modified amendment and all approved by roll call vote.

Acting Chair Hubbard then requested that recommended vote language be provided to the Council for future meetings and for all votes.

d) Discussion on Council Retreat Topics

Please refer to the [Consultant Team Memo on the Member Retreat](#)

Ms. Sholly reviewed the recommendations in the consultant team's memo about the Council retreat, which is based on Council member responses to the survey questions. Based on those results, the consultant team is planning to have two, shorter retreat sessions this year. Ms. Sholly reviewed the proposed agenda for the first session, which would be conducted virtually, and include a regulatory oversight conversation with Public Utilities Commission staff should they be able to attend.

Acting Chair Hubbard reminded Council members that a link to indicate your availability for the Council retreats was circulated today, so please use that and respond as soon as you are able so the first session can be scheduled.

6. Special Topic

a) *Presentation on Rhode Island's 100% Renewable Electricity Initiative*

Please refer to the [Office of Energy Resources Presentation on the 100% Renewable Electricity Initiative](#)

Dr. Gill led off by informing everyone that there is a full webpage on the Office of Energy Resources (OER) website dedicated to this subject and report, including the full report and technical appendices at <http://www.energy.ri.gov/100percent/> and encouraged everyone to visit that site and read through the full materials if they would like additional details.

Dr. Gill began by highlighting the genesis of this work was Governor Raimondo's Executive Order 20-01, which established the goal for the economic and market analysis undertaken by OER and its consultants throughout 2020. She noted that this process included three community listening sessions to educate and engage the public along the way and ensure this was a comprehensive analysis and report.

There are four main components of the final report: foundational principles, technical analysis, stakeholder input, policy and programmatic recommendations, which Dr. Gill then went into more detail on.

She noted that the foundational principles were broken into three main categories – decarbonization principles, economic principles, and policy implementation principles and each of these principles had supporting themes to them, which include:

- Decarbonization Principles
 - Exemplify climate leadership
 - Create incremental power sector decarbonization
 - Facilitate broader decarbonization
- Economic Principles
 - Pursure cost-effective solutions
 - Improve energy and environmental equity
 - Create economic development opportunities
- Policy Implementation Principles
 - Ensure solutions are robust and sustainable beyond 2030
 - Build upon Rhode Island's existing renewable energy mechanisms
 - Be consistent with other Rhode Island priorities and policies

Dr. Gill then gave an overview of some of the technical details that went into the analysis, which includes forecasting demand. Energy efficiency is forecast to be a huge part of the equation in reducing energy usage at a rate of 150 gigawatt hours (gwh) per year, however that is below what these programs have achieved the previous five years and so it should be easily attainable over the long term to maintain that level of efficiency to support getting to 100% renewable electricity by 2030.

Dr. Gill noted that even with all this successful energy efficiency, load growth leads to a gap of 4600 gwh of energy that we need to fill with renewables to meet our 100% goal by 2030 and she then shared the analysis of what filling that gap with only a single type of resource would be like. That analysis demonstrates the scale and cost of using a single technology and provides helpful context and illustrates the tradeoffs inherent among these technology options, including Renewable Energy Credits (RECs).

Dr. Gill continued with a review of the economic analysis, which shows that regardless of which pathway we pursue, it will cost money and incrementally increase electric bills in Rhode Island. However, that analysis doesn't show any of the avoided costs that making these investments in renewable energy provides, like to health outcomes, for example. Moreover, she notes that it isn't realistic to fill this gap with a single technology and so six portfolio mixes were developed blending all the technology options in varying proportions that allows for comparisons of economic impacts, bill impacts, and local economic impacts among the various options.

Dr. Gill then briefly reviewed the policy and programmatic recommendations of the report, which include establishing a 100% renewable energy standard, extending Least Cost Procurement legislation, and to look for ways to incorporate and leverage emerging technologies as appropriate.

Mr. Gill Case stated that retail solar is a tricky option because of land-use concerns associated with it and noted that rooftop solar has been more prevalent in Rhode Island as a result and asked if the report factors these costs in?

Dr. Gill responded that yes, to the extent siting concerns has impacted pricing of installed projects then those factors appear in this analysis. Also, one of the principles is to be consistent with other state policies and so balancing these technologies is part of the planning as well.

7. Program Oversight

a. Update on COVID-19

Mr. Ray indicated that there have been no major changes resulting from COVID-19 in program operations.

8. Public Comment

None

9. Adjournment

Acting Chairman Hubbard called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Riccio moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gill Case seconded the motion and all approved. Meeting adjourned at 5:23pm.

Outstanding Council Member Questions Requiring a Written Response:

Mr. Cleveland to circulate an updated Council budget at the May meeting indicating the exact amount of unallocated funds available.

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