



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

EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, January 20, 2022 | 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Meeting conducted virtually using Zoom with additional audio conference capabilities

Members in Attendance: Commissioner Nick Ucci, Anthony Hubbard, Joe Garlick, Karen Verrengia, Sue AnderBois, Peter Gill Case, Kurt Teichert, Tom Magliocchetti

Others Present: Nathan Cleveland, Steven Chybowski, Craig Johnson, Angela Li, Jessica Darling, Joel Munoz, Greg Caggiano, Sam Ross, Anika Kreckel, Marisa Desautel, Hank Webster, Kai Salem, Margaret Hogan, Rachel Sholly, Adrian Ceasar, Alan Nault, John Harrington, Emma Rodvien, Audio participant

All meeting materials can be accessed here: <https://rieermc.ri.gov/meeting/eermc-meeting-january-2022-2/>.

1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Hubbard called the meeting to order at 3:02 pm.

2. Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2021

Council Member Garlick motioned to approve the December 2021 Meeting Minutes. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor; none opposed via roll call vote. The motion passes and meeting minutes are approved.

3. Executive Director Report

Commissioner Ucci introduced Steven Chybowski, a new employee with the Office of Energy Resources. Commissioner Ucci described the announcements made by the Governor's Office for proposed funding for climate and energy work in the proposed State budget. Commissioner Ucci stated to offset the impacts of the funds going to the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) on ratepayers, the Governor's Office is proposing to eliminate performance incentive mechanisms from the Energy Efficiency Plan. The Governor's Office has also proposed that the EERMC, in collaboration with the Office of Energy Resources, start to explore third-party administrators for energy efficiency programs, which is a model used in some other

states. Commissioner Ucci also noted that the “Electrifying Transportation” report has been released to the general assembly and it is available on the OER website to review.

4. Acting Chairperson Report (items 1-4: 10 min, 3:00 - 3:10pm)

Acting Chair Hubbard provided reminders for virtual meeting participation, reviewed the agenda for today’s meeting, and noted that a minor adjustment was made to the December Meeting Minutes.

5. Program Oversight (45 min, 3:10 – 3:55 pm)

a) Administrative Announcement from Optimal Energy (10 minutes, 3:10-3:20pm)

Mr. Ross updated the Council that Optimal Energy was acquired by NV5 at the end of December. Mr. Ross stated that Optimal Energy is excited by the acquisition as NV5 brings even more building professionals from around the country to the team and that the staff in Rhode Island shouldn’t change and that the service provided to the Council would be the same, if not better, as a result of this acquisition. He says that the corporate name will remain Optimal Energy, but that the contract may need to be updated to “LLC,” instead of “Inc” as they may change legal structures with no other changes needed.

b) Regulatory Update on Conclusion of 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan Hearings (25 minutes, 3:20 – 3:45pm)

Mr. Ross provided an update on the PUC hearings. He noted that there were 28 data requests and 17 record requests directed to EERMC. Council Attorney Desautel explained that the Council will be able to provide materials in response to the queries and that she and Mr. Ross have started on that work. Commissioner Ucci requested to see a draft of the response and noted that the PUC made several good observations for the consultant team to consider moving forward. Mr. Ross stated that the consultant team has started looking into the observations made during the hearings. Council member AnderBois inquired if the Performance Incentive Mechanism reduction will be a scoop to the EERMC budget in the future and if there is another mechanism to consider for funding the EC4.

c) Update on 2023 Energy Efficiency Planning Timeline and Potential Vote on 2022 July Council Meeting Date (10 minutes, 3:45-3:55pm)

Mr. Johnson briefed the Council on updates to the planning timeline as some dates were pushed back. The Technical Working Group monthly meetings have been removed and dates are still to be decided by National Grid. Mr. Johnson noted that the July Council meeting could be problematic as there are only two days available for the Consultant Team to review and develop the meeting materials. Council Member Gill Case motioned that the July meeting be moved to July 28th. Council Member Verrengia seconded. All in favor; none opposed via roll call vote. The motion passes and the July meeting is changed to July 28th.

6. Council Business (30 Minutes, 3:55 – 4:25pm)

a) Discussion & potential vote on 2022 Farm Energy Fellow Funding Opportunity (10 minutes, 3:55-4:05pm)

Mr. Cleveland led a discussion of the Farm Energy Fellow program which would support a URI Energy Fellow to assist with education and outreach to the agricultural community. Commissioner Ucci suggested to either wait on this item until after the ruling from the PUC, or to include contingency options on a vote today. Council Member Teichert made a motion to allocate an amount not to exceed \$7,500 so long as it is available in the EERMC's budget, from the Council's '22 public education funds to support a Farm Energy Fellow this year. This funding will be leveraged with \$2,500 in additional funding from OER, and the Council directs OER to manage the Energy Fellow and ensure completion of the deliverables as defined in the justification document. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor; none opposed by roll call vote.

b) Discussion & Vote on 2021 Budget Increase for Legal Services (10 minutes, 4:05pm - 4:15pm)

Council Attorney Desautel noted that there is an overage of \$14,271.80 for budgeted counsel work and a budget increase is requested. This budget increase is to fulfill obligations to services that have already been provided in representing the Council in Docket 5189. Council Member AnderBois motioned to approve the requested \$14,271.80 increase to the 2021 Legal Services budget allocation in order to cover larger than expected costs incurred at the end of 2021 in association with the proceedings in Docket 5189. Council Member Magliocchetti seconded. All in favor; none opposed by roll call vote.

c) Discussion & Vote on 2021 Budget Increase for Consultant Services (10 minutes, 4:15pm - 4:25pm)

Mr. Ross explained that there is an overage for consultant team services of \$24,420.90 which was a result of new workstreams this year resulting from the contested case filing in Docket 5189 as compared to previous years. This is a budget increase request for work that has already been completed. Council Member Verrengia motioned to approve the requested \$24,420.90 increase to the 2021 Consultant Team budget in order to cover larger than expected costs incurred at the end of 2021 in association with the proceedings in Docket 5189. Council Member Gill Case seconded. All in favor; none opposed by roll call vote.

7. Special Topics (25 Minutes, 4:25 – 4:50pm)

a) Office of Energy Resources Presentation on Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) Work Relating to Act on Climate (25 minutes, 4:25pm – 4:50pm)

Commissioner Ucci presented an overview of the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) and the Act on Climate Legislation. He noted that energy efficiency projects are the most cost-effective solutions for achieving Act on Climate goals and that mitigation strategies can help alleviate emissions from frontline communities where they are felt the most. His presentation also clearly outlined next steps for the EC4 work being implemented and responding to the Act on Climate legislation and the important role energy efficiency would play in meeting those ambitions.

8. Public Comment

Kai Salem, Green Energy Consumers Alliance:

Today we heard updates on the energy efficiency docket and updates from the Governor's office. The Green Energy Consumers Alliance (GECA) believes that we will need to implement programs to decarbonize at a vast scale and that we can learn from energy efficiency programs that these need to be well-designed. The PUC has legitimate suggestions about how this funding is used, but the GECA wants to see bigger budgets and more energy efficiency savings. GECA is supportive of third-party energy efficiency administrators and is waiting to see what (Pennsylvania Power & Light) PPL would bring to the table. GECA is concerned with how the EC4 would be funded as the money would be scooped from energy efficiency budgets.

Hank Webster, Acadia Center:

Quantifying health benefits is an important discussion piece. There are schools of public health that evaluate climate health benefits such as the Transportation and Climate Initiative which was evaluated by Harvard. Budget provisions and investments are exciting from the State, and it's great to see the EC4 getting funding, but it is concerning that the proposed funding for the EC4 is from energy efficiency programming. It would be better to tie the funding to the things that cause the pollution. And wants to express gratitude for everyone that works on this program, including the Council and the consultant team.

Council Members Teichert, AnderBois, and Acting Chair Hubbard thank the consultant team and acknowledges Mr. Ross's support in particular for the Council over the past few months.

9. Adjournment

Council Member Gill Case made a motion to adjourn. Council Member AnderBois seconded. There was no discussion. All in favor; none opposed. Acting Chair Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 4:56 pm.