



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, August 17, 2023

Full Council Meeting | 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Department of Administration Conference Room 2A, Providence, RI 02908 with remote participation via Zoom

**Members in Attendance:** Harry Oakley, Peter Gill Case, Kate Grant, Dave Caldwell, Jordan Day, Brett Feldman, Priscilla De La Cruz, Tom Magliocchetti (arrived at 3:10 p.m.)

**Others in Attendance:** Rachel Sholly, Michael O'Brien Crayne, Toby Ast, Spencer Lawrence, Carrie Gill, John Marcantonio, Sam Ross, Craig Johnson, Steven Chybowski, Emily Koo, Karen Bradbury, Mark Thomson (virtual), Lee Gresham (virtual), Adrian Caesar (virtual), Daniel Tukey (virtual), Nelson DiBiase (virtual), Ann Clarke (virtual)

#### 1. Call to Order

Chairperson Oakley called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

#### 2. Chair Report

Chairperson Oakley provided guidance on virtual participation instructions. He also gave an overview of the meeting agenda, noting that Advocacy Solutions will plan to join us at the September 14<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting to provide marketing and branding updates. Lastly, Chairperson Oakley let the Council know that the lecture series sponsored by the EERMC is now scheduled and that attendees can register for the events online.

#### 3. Executive Director Report

Mr. Chybowski provided the Executive Director report on behalf of Acting Commissioner Kearns. Mr. Chybowski informed the Council that the latest Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative plan proposal is available for public comment. He also noted that the Clean Heat RI program was expected to launch in 2 weeks and that the least-cost procurement standards were also finalized by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Mr. Chybowski stated that energy stakeholders held a technical session at the PUC to discuss federal funding and to start the work of coordinating these funding sources. He let the Council know that the fall round of the Efficient Buildings Fund has been posted for applications and that the Council's public forum was hosted at the August Health Equity Zone event.

#### 4. Meeting Minutes

a. July 20, 2023

Vice Chair Gill Case motioned to approve the July 20, 2023, Meeting Minutes. Council Member De La Cruz seconded. Council Members Gill Case, Caldwell, De La Cruz, and Magliocchetti voted in favor, Chairperson Oakley and Council Member Day abstained, and none opposed. The meeting minutes were approved.

**5. Special Topic (15 min, 3:10 – 3:25 p.m.)**

- a. *Office of Energy Resources Presentation on Federal Funding (10 min, 3:10 – 3:20 p.m.)*  
Ms. Bradbury with The Office of Energy Resources presented updates on federal funding for state energy programming. This included formula funding that will help the state update its energy security plan and add vehicle chargers along roadways. She also highlighted the funding that will be available directly to municipalities and noted that the home energy rebate programs are not expected to become available to customers until the second half of 2024.

Vice Chair Gill Case commented that microgrid programming could have energy efficiency components and that the home energy rebates will have a lot of overlap with the Council's work on efficiency and that he hopes the Council will stay up-to-date on those developments.

**6. Council Business (15 Min, 3:20 – 3:35 p.m.)**

- a. *Review and Potential Vote to Amend the Energy Efficiency and Climate Public Awareness Campaign Request for Proposals (10 min, 3:20 – 3:30 p.m.)*  
Ms. Sholly presented on the request for proposals (RFP) for an energy efficiency and climate public awareness campaign. She recommends that the Council extends the RFP submission deadline by about a month to September 18<sup>th</sup> to give vendors more time to prepare proposals.

Chairperson Oakley motioned to update the EE and Climate Public Awareness Campaign with the amendment to push the closing of the RFP deadline to September 18<sup>th</sup>. Council Member Day seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

- b. *Vote to authorize payment for 2023 Home Show Poster (5 min, 3:30 – 3:35 p.m.)*  
Chairperson Oakley motioned to approve the payment for the 2023 Home Show Poster at a cost of \$75 from the Council's Annual Report Printing and Distribution line item. Council Member Day seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

Related to the Council's Home Show partnership, Chairperson Oakley invited Mr. Marcantonio to speak for a few minutes about the Rhode Island Builders Association's efforts to develop curriculums for the 2024 building code. Mr. Marcantonio explained that they plan to have a code curriculum available by spring 2024 and that they are looking to expand capacity to have dedicated staff to building codes. He stated that he hopes that it will include in-person educational opportunities and fieldwork. Council Member Caldwell commented that this is a great foundation for training builders in the state and that successfully adopting the 2024 building codes will make Rhode Island a national leader.

**7. Program Oversight (80 Min, 3:35 – 4:55 p.m.)**

- a. *2024-2026 System Reliability Procurement Three-Year Plan Draft Presentation (15 min, 3:35 – 3:50)*

Ms. Gill with Rhode Island Energy led the presentation providing an overview of the system reliability procurement (SRP) plan and review process. She stated that any SRP cost recovery proposals will be included in future SRP investment proposals, and not the SRP three-year plan. Mr. Ross commented that it is typical for there to be no cost recovery proposed in a three-year plan and that SRP is only filed as three-year plans and does not have an annual plan component. Ms. Gill discussed the changes to the three-year plan from the previous SRP plan. Mr. Gresham highlighted the updates to the gas SRP programming.

Chairperson Oakley commented that he is excited about the gas demand response programming. Ms. Gill further explained that the SRP procurement process would be technology-neutral and that vendors are able to propose a variety of solutions that may be able to meet their system needs.

*b. Presentation of 2023 Q2 Energy Efficiency Programming (20 minutes, 3:50 – 4:10 p.m.)*

Mr. Caesar presented on the portfolio performance noting that the electric performance is largely in line with recent years and that the gas performance had a slightly downward trend in spending, but a relatively good performance in terms of savings through the portfolio. He discussed the program performance of the commercial and industrial programming through the second quarter of 2023.

Mr. Johnson presented on the residential programming, which he noted is largely on track with performance of previous years, but noted that the year-end forecast of performance may be higher this year. He explained that savings are counted once payable activity is paid out, so there is a lag between project implementation and the claimable savings.

Mr. O'Brien Crayne provided highlights from the programs in 2023. This included the strong pipeline of projects in the residential new construction program and the high demand for home energy assessments.

*c. Rhode Island Energy Presentation on Updates to the Draft 2024 Energy Efficiency Program Plan (15 minutes, 4:10 – 4:25 p.m.)*

Mr. Ast with Rhode Island Energy presented on the development of the 2024 efficiency plan, which is estimated to have about \$600 million in total net benefits. Lighting will no longer be an opportunity on the residential side of programming, so other areas will have a greater focus. Mr. Ast noted that federal funding coordination will be an area of focus moving forward and that OER and the Company have a good track record of working together on programming. The Company is currently testing weatherization and appliance replacement projects as a combined process for income-eligible customers, which could be a streamlined approach rolled out more broadly for 2024. Overall, both program portfolios are cost effective.

Vice Chair Gill Case asked Mr. Ast how the Company thinks about incorporating federal funding. Mr. Ast replied that the hope is that the federal funds are complimentary to the existing programming, much like RGGI or other outside funds have been in the past. Chairperson Oakley provided feedback that he would like to see more specific savings goals with the proposed initiatives and goals for

determining success. Council Member Magliocchetti supported the Chairperson's remarks and noted that quantitative results help track progress.

*d. Consultant Team Presentation on Updates to the Draft 2024 Energy Efficiency Program Plan (15 minutes, 4:25 – 4:40 p.m.)*

Mr. Ross began the presentation on the Consultant Team's review of the 2024 Annual Plan. He noted that some attachments are still outstanding including the rate and bill impacts analysis and the equity working group recommendations. He also stated that this Annual Plan is consistent with the level of detail expected of a plan. Mr. Caesar noted that some references to the market potential study are made in the plan, but that the Company could elaborate more on why there are some gaps between the study and the plan and the opportunities to close them. He also raised a potential concern that expanding the small business program qualifications could shift the focus to the larger customers in that category and deemphasize serving the smaller businesses. Mr. Johnson requested additional details on the equity pilot being proposed in the updated 2024 Annual Plan. He would also like to see gas incentives focus on making existing equipment operate more efficiently rather than incentivize the installation of new gas equipment.

*e. Council Discussion on of the 2024 Energy Efficiency Annual Plan Draft (15 min, 4:40 – 4:55)*

Vice Chair Gill Case commented that based on the presentations of the Company and the Consultant Team, he feels that the Council and the Plan are in good hands and that the Plan is developing in the right direction. Mr. Ross commented that if any Council Members have specific metric ideas for programs, that he would be happy to incorporate those as feedback to the Company.

**8. Public Comment**

*Emily Koo, The Acadia Center*

Ms. Koo echoed the comments about the importance of metrics and timelines, especially around equity topics to be able to track program progress.

Council Member Feldman noted that the ACEEE utility scorecard will be released next week for anyone interested.

**9. Adjournment**

Chairperson Oakley motioned to adjourn the meeting and Council Member Day seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.