



## FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, April 18, 2024 | 3:00 - 5:00 PM

Department of Administration Conference Room 2A, Providence, RI 02908

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### **Members in Attendance:**

Harry Oakley, Brett Feldman, Peter Gill Case, Sue AnderBois, Bob Izzo, Joe Garlick, Chris Kearns, Kurt Teichert, Priscilla De La Cruz, Thomas Magliocchetti

### **Others in Attendance:**

Steven Chybowski, Craig Johnson, Rachel Sholly, Georgia Cheney, Katie Critelli, Toby Ast, Emily Koo, Carinel LeGrand, Alison Donovan, Rebecca Foster, Conor MacDonald, Ariel McCord, Kaeley Skakalski, Liam Van Vleet, Spencer Lawrence, Brendan Dagher (virtual)

#### **1. Call to Order**

Chair Oakley call the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

#### **2. Chair Report**

Chair Oakley previewed the meeting agenda. He also reminded attendees that any public comment must be made during the public comment period. Attendees on Zoom can use the raise hand function during the public comment period to make their comments. Chair Oakley also flagged to attendees that all meeting materials are available online. Lastly, he reminded the Council Members that the EEC LEAD session will be held Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup> from 1 - 4 p.m. at Rhode Island College.

#### **3. Executive Director Report**

Acting Commissioner Kearns from the Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources (OER) updated the Council Members on recent program activities. Mr. Kearns introduced a new member of the OER staff, Katie Critelli, to the Council. OER has posted the latest Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative allocation proposal to the OER website and Council Members, and the public are welcome to provide feedback on the proposal. The RFI responses to the Home Energy Rebate programs have also been posted to the website. Also under the Home Energy Rebates section of the website is the straw proposal for the Home Energy Electrification and Appliance Rebates (HEAR) program, which has been posted and stakeholder feedback is welcomed. Details for a public meeting on the straw proposal for the HEAR program will be posted on the website shortly. OER is hoping to submit the HEAR application to DOE in May. The Home Show hosted in April was a success, attendance seemed to be up, and OER got several questions about solar and heat pump installations. Finally, preparing Council Member badges to enter the Department of Administration (DOA) is underway.

#### **4. Meeting Minutes – March 21, 2024**

Chair Oakley motioned to approve the March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, Meeting Minutes. Council Member De La Cruz seconded. All in favor, none opposed, and the meeting minutes were approved.



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### 5. Public Comment

None.

### 6. Program Oversight

#### *a. Presentation and Discussion of the 2025 Energy Efficiency Plan Outline Memo*

Mr. Ast from Rhode Island Energy presented on the Company's memo for the 2025 energy efficiency plan and the corresponding development timeline. The current comment period for the 2025 Plan ends April 26<sup>th</sup> and all comments should be sent to Mr. Ast. He noted that cost of supply calculations will be considered in the 2025 plan. At the PUC's request, Rhode Island Energy has also completed an Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) analysis which was recently submitted to the PUC. Rhode Island Energy is looking to coordinate with OER for effectively implementing these two sources of funds. Mr. Feldman highlighted the recent efficiency program budget reduction in Massachusetts where they are starting to focus more specifically on electrification in their programming. The Future of Gas hearings and EC4 planning also have policy implications that Rhode Island Energy is monitoring for 2025 program planning. Vice Chair Gill Case asked about the recent building code changes and would like to know more about the implications of that and how he can communicate programs within the real estate community. Council Member Teichert asked for an overview of the IRA analysis findings. Mr. Ast described that Clean Heat Rhode Island and the upcoming IRA programs from OER are expecting to focus on customers that Rhode Island Energy cannot readily serve due to fuel source constraints, so it increases the pipeline for customers in efficiency and electrification programming overall.

#### *b. Rhode Island Energy Presentation and Discussion on Updates from the Equity Working Group*

Mr. Dagher presented updates from the Equity Working Group's efforts to date in 2024. The equity metrics and strategies were selected by the Equity Working Group in quarter one of 2024 and they are based on the results in their year-three report. The Equity Working Group selected 10 strategies and 16 total metrics to track in 2024. This includes Justice40 and census tract data reporting to better understand discrepancies between communities served. Workforce metrics are also being built out with the hopes of reporting more on those in 2025. Council Member Teichert asked what resource demands are needed to build out this data tracking system. Mr. Dagher responded that some metrics were already being collected like barriers to participation, number of audits completed, and number of weatherization projects completed, but other metrics needed more resources to be included in the tracking system. For example, the Justice40



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level tracking is requiring quite a bit of resources because data is not currently tracked at the census level. Council member Garlick asked how Justice40 tracking may differ from HUD low-income tracking. Mr. Dagher commented that the Justice40 communities should also capture low-income communities. Chair Oakley emphasized the importance of Rhode Island Energy sending detailed information of the Equity Working Group as soon as possible to give Council Members time to review it. The Council Members are looking forward to seeing the new data from Rhode Island Energy.

Ms. LeGrand introduced herself to the Council. She is managing the single-family income eligible energy efficiency program for Rhode Island Energy. Ms. LeGrand collaborated with the Equity Working Group and Health Equity Zones to better understand barriers to program participation for the energy efficiency programs. Ms. LeGrand will be working with Central Falls to pilot an outreach program to increase participation in energy efficiency programs in the coming months.

### 7. Council Business

*a. Discussion and Vote on the Council Review Committee's Recommendation for Legal Services*

Mr. Chybowski gave an overview of the current legal services timeline and next steps. The Council's Technical Review Committee shared their scoring and recommendation for legal services for the Council. There were two vendors that responded to the legal services request for proposals (RFP). The recommendation of the Council's Technical Review Committee is to pursue a contract with Handy Law. Chairperson Oakley motioned to approve the Technical Review Committee's recommendation to select Handy Law to serve as the Council's legal services vendor and representative as described in the submitted proposal and associated work plan and to direct the Office of Energy Resources and the Council's Consultant Team to prepare and execute a contract with the chosen vendor. Council Member Garlick seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

*b. Presentation and Discussion of the Council's 2025 Budget Planning Process*

Mr. Chybowski and the Council's Consultant Team facilitated a discussion on the outlined timeline for the 2025 budget planning process. Mr. Chybowski presented the Council Budget Spending to date. Chairperson Oakley asked how the change in legal services will affect the budget and Mr. Johnson responded that the budget set aside for legal services will not change as it was set at a dollar amount for the calendar year, regardless of the vendor. Chairperson Oakley pointed out that the EEC Executive Committee will review the state of the budget in quarter three. Mr. Johnson will work



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with the Consultant Team to create a budget forecast for the Council and the Executive Committee.

*c. Presentation of the First Draft of the EERMC 2024 Annual Report and Policy Recommendations Discussion*

Ms. Sholly provided an update on the development of the first draft of the 2024 EERMC Annual Report. The new EEC branding will be added as well as relevant data for the year. Ms. Sholly requested councilor feedback before a final draft is developed in May. Mr. Johnson highlighted the updated policy recommendations added to the draft. Council Member De La Cruz suggested that PivotPath look at the draft and provide their opinion on the digestibility of the information provided for this years and future annual reports.

*d. Discussion and Potential Vote to Update Council Bylaws*

Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the proposed updates to the Council's bylaws. Council Member AnderBois motioned to approve the council bylaws as presented in the meeting and to direct the Office of Energy Resources and the Council's Consultant Team to publish the updated bylaws to the Council's website. Chair Oakley seconded the motion. All in favor, none opposed.

### 8. Adjournment

Chair Oakley adjourned the meeting at 4:48 p.m.