



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

## **EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, October 21, 2021 | 3:00 - 5:00 PM**

Conference Room A, 2nd Floor Department of Administration One Capitol Hill Providence, RI 02908

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**Members in attendance:** Tim Roughan, Joe Garlick, Commissioner Nicholas Ucci, Angelia Li, Karen Verrengia, Kurt Teichert, Acting Chair Anthony Hubbard, Sue AnderBois

**Others Present:** Marisa Desautel, Nathan Cleveland, Dr. Carrie Gill, Anika Kreckel, Sam Ross, Craig Johnson, Rachel Sholly, Crystal Johnson, Josh Kessler, Kai Salem, Margarita Robledo-Guedes, Jamal Lewis, Hank Webster, Joel Munoz, other attendees

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

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

Acting Chair Hubbard called the meeting to order at 3:03pm and noted there was not currently a quorum.

### **2. Meeting Minutes**

A vote on meeting minutes was not taken due to lack of quorum.

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

Commissioner Ucci updated council members about future work related to the 2021 Act on Climate, and summarized the Facility Equity Initiative on which a recent press release was based. Upon Council Member Verrengia's request, council members will be added to the Act on Climate email distribution list.

### **4. Acting Chairperson Report**

Acting Chair Hubbard summarized the meeting agenda and pointed council members to materials to review that are not on the meeting agenda today. Acting Chair Hubbard reminded council members that the consultant team is working to schedule a council retreat. He then directed attendees who would like to make public comment to sign up, and reminded attendees public comment can be submitted online at [www.rieermc.ri.gov](http://www.rieermc.ri.gov).

### **5. Program Oversight**

#### **2022 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan**

a) *Regulatory Updates on the 2022 Annual Energy Efficiency Plan*

Please refer to [PUC Procedural Schedule for the 2022 Energy Efficiency Docket #5189](#)

Council Attorney Desautel reviewed the procedural schedule for Docket 5189 and noted her firm had already submitted a motion to intervene on behalf of the Council. She and Mr. Ross also discussed the separation of the CHP project from the 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan; the CHP project is now on a parallel review track by the Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Ross noted the consultant team has already started drafting data requests for Docket 5189 and offered one-on-one conversations with council members, as desired.

*b) National Grid Presentation on the 2022 Provisional Energy Efficiency Plan*

Please refer to [National Grid's Presentation on the Provisional 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan](#)

Mr. Kessler summarized the purpose of the Provisional Plan as reallocating the proposed incentive for the CHP projects to non-CHP measures. National Grid proposes reallocating all funding to large commercial and small business programs, including increased incentives for target measures, increased implementation staff and vendor support, an air source heat pump program for displacing electric resistance heat for small business, and an HVAC early retirement program. Mr. Kessler summarized expected energy savings and costs and benefits of the Provisional Plan. Mr. Kessler noted the Provisional Plan results in a better benefit-cost ratio of the large commercial new construction program but a smaller benefit-cost ratio for large commercial retrofit and small business direct install programs (all benefit cost ratios are greater than 1.0).

Council Member Teichert asked about modeling customer adoption of measures. Mr. Kessler noted the difficulty in modeling participation.

Mr. Johnson asked for more information related to the HVAC early retirements program and how that program was integrated into the benefit-cost assessment model. Mr. Kessler noted impacts would be incorporated as 'other HVAC measures' in the benefit-cost model.

*c) Consultant Team Presentation and Discussion on the 2022 Provisional Energy Efficiency Plan*

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

Mr. Ross and Mr. Johnson summarized the Provisional Plan and related background context. They also presented some comparative analysis between the 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan as filed and the Provision Plan. Mr. Ross further discussed the benefit-cost ratios of the two plans, and noted the greater macroeconomic impacts of the Provisional Plan relative to the 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan, which is due to increased use of local vendors and utility savings across customers resulting from the Provisional Plan.

Mr. Johnson further described the reallocation of the CHP incentive and other shifts in the budget of the Provisional Plan. Mr. Kessler clarified National Grid's budget planning model automatically allocates administrative and overhead costs to individual programs, and therefore

these other shifts in budget were an artifact of National Grid's budgeting process and not necessarily a manual reallocation of spending.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Ross described the expected gas savings of the Provisional Plan relative to the 2022 Energy Efficiency Plan.

Mr. Teichert asked about some of the costs of the HVAC early retirement program. Mr. Kessler described staffing and vendor needs for the HVAC early retirement program relative to the staffing and vendor needs of the CHP project as originally described in the 2022 Energy Efficiency Program.

## **6. Special Topics**

### *a) Equity Working Group Facilitator Presentation*

Please refer to [GHHI Presentation on the Equity Working Group](#)

Mr. Lewis summarized the background leading up to the Equity Working Group and objectives of the Working Group this year. He described the Green and Healthy Homes Initiative and their interest in the Equity Working Group and qualifications for facilitating the Equity Working Group. Mr. Lewis discussed their objectives for and process to recruit for the Equity Working Group.

Mr. Lewis reviewed the topics for discussion at each meeting over the course of May through August 2021, culminating in draft recommendations delivered to National Grid in September 2021. Mr. Lewis further detailed each meeting for council members, as well as the process they used to facilitate Equity Working Group members in prioritizing recommendations for improving equity in marketing/outreach, data tracking/metrics, workforce development/training, and budgeting. Mr. Lewis also reviewed the overall top recommendations and summarized National Grid's proposed actions on those recommendations.

Ms. Li asked which meetings generated the most interesting discussion – Mr. Lewis responded that the first introductory meeting and the final meeting to review recommendations and proposed actions were the most interesting. Council Member Verrengia noted the interest in this topic and asked about next steps. Ms. Robledo-Guedes told council members that the Equity Working Group suggests the group continues into the future and hopes National Grid can continue to connect the group with facilitation support. Acting Chair Hubbard noted that his perspective is that the Equity Working Group would like to see actions through to implementation, as often members are asked to support planning but are then removed from the implementation process. Council members and GHHI facilitators confirmed that GHHI's scope of work is now officially complete.

### *b) Consultant Team Presentation on Council Education Activities*

Please refer to [Consultant Team Presentation on Council Education Activities](#)

Ms. Sholly summarized public education activities and budgets – energy education and outreach, educational energy videos, and energy training for K-12 teaching, in addition to a student Energy Fellow.

Ms. Sholly updated council members on the EERMC Annual Public Forum and noted the theme is “Grid Resilience: How investments in sustainability and environmental justice will shape our future.” The format for the event will include a keynote speaker with two panels and will take place virtually.

Ms. Sholly described the EERMC Energy Lecture Series, a series of three virtual lectures on October 28, November 8, and December 13 focused on energy efficiency. Ms. Sholly asked council members to help advertise for the lecture series and asked for recommendations for speakers from council members.

Ms. Sholly reviewed topics for energy education video and updated council members that the consultant team has kicked off work with their selected vendor in early September. She also summarized the status of efforts related to energy training for K-12 teachers.

Ms. Sholly updated council members that the second session of the EERMC retreat will likely be November 8, 2021 and will be in person (in accordance with the Open Meetings Act). Ms. Sholly asked council members for input on topics to be covered at the retreat. Council Member Verrengia suggested holding the retreat outdoors at Verde Vineyards (the focus of a recent farm energy video).

Mr. Ross noted that the consultant team will be able to update and discuss Docket 5189 proceedings with council members at their regularly scheduled November meeting, so the retreat did not need to reserve time for those discussions. Mr. Ross reminded council members that they may ask the consultant team for one-on-one conversations and updates on the Docket 5189 proceeding at any time.

Council Member Verrengia noted she’d like to further discuss workforce development and the HVAC early retirement program at the retreat.

Council Member Roughan noted a recent opinion article in UtilityDive from Commissioner Anthony regarding electrification and suggested council members may be interested in reviewing it. Mr. Ross clarified the argument made was related to the funding mechanism for incentivizing electric heating and electric transportation. Council Member Li added Commissioner Anthony supported driving down the cost of electricity as a way to encourage electrification.

Council Member Verrengia reminded council members that council budget is being spent on educational materials and events, so council members should help with outreach to maximize impact and reach of the educational efforts.

## **7. Public Comment**

None

## **8. Adjournment**

Acting Chair Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm without a vote.

### **Outstanding Council Member Questions Requiring a Written Response:**

None