



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Full Council Meeting | 4:30 - 6:30 PM

Department of Administration Conference Room 2B, Providence, RI 02908 with additional audio/video participation available through Zoom

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**Members in Attendance:** Anthony Hubbard, Sue AnderBois, Peter Gill Case, Karen Verrengia, Joe Garlick, Tom Maggliochetti

**Others in Attendance:** John Richards, Nathan Cleveland, Jesse Duroha, Sam Ross, Steven Chybowski, Brett Feldman, Nelson DiBiase, Craig Johnson, Rachel Sholly, Adrian Caesar, Eric Belliveau, Jessica Darling, Josh Kessler, Anika Kreckel, Kai Salem, Hank Webster, Amy Boyd, Angela Li, Ben Rivers, Greg Caggiano, Kate Grant

All meeting materials can be accessed at: <https://rieermc.ri.gov/meeting/eermc-meeting-april-2022/>

#### 1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Hubbard called to order at 4:43 p.m.

#### 2. Executive Director Report

Mr. Chybowski provided the Executive Director report in place of Commissioner Ucci. He shared that the Office of Energy Resources (OER) is drafting a Consultant Services RFP that will be available for review at the next meeting.

He noted for everyone that the Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council (EC4) will have three sharing sessions in May on the transportation sector to help determine how to meet the 2021 Act on Climate (AoC) goals and that those interested can go to [climatechange.ri.gov](https://climatechange.ri.gov) for more details.

All Council members should have recently received a copy of the 2021 reconciliation of all EERMC payments made by National Grid on the Council's behalf.

Lastly, Mr. Chybowski noted that the DRIVE-EV rebate program is now open for public comment online, and OER plans to launch it this summer to provide incentives for the purchase or lease of new or used EVs. Those interested in more details or to make a public comment can visit [drive.ri.gov](https://drive.ri.gov).

#### 3. Meeting Minutes – March 17, 2022

Mr. Garlick made a motion to approve the March 2022 meeting minutes as written, which was seconded by Ms. AnderBois. All voted to approve.

#### **4. Acting Chairperson Report (5 min, 4:35 - 4:40 p.m.)**

Acting Chair Hubbard reviewed the agenda for today's meeting, reminded everyone about the logistics of operating in a hybrid public meeting, and provided instructions for public comment for both those attending online and in person.

Acting Chair Hubbard closed his remarks by announcing that at the conclusion of today's meeting he would be stepping down from his position on the Council. He stated that while he has enjoyed his service on the Council immensely, his growing work commitments have made continued, fully representative service impossible and so after much long and careful consideration he has decided to step down. This will ensure someone can be appointed to serve the income-eligible sector with the time to dedicate to representing that important demographic.

Acting Chair Hubbard was thanked for his service and leadership by Councilmembers and attendees of the meeting.

#### **5. Program Oversight (5 Minutes, 4:40 – 4:45 p.m.)**

##### *a) Review 2023 Energy Efficiency Plan Development Process (5 minutes, 4:40-4:45 p.m.)*

Mr. Johnson provided some brief updates on upcoming work for 2023 Energy Efficiency planning, which includes scheduling deep dive meetings for each sector, as well as cross-sector work like workforce development and equity. He also noted that the Plan Outline Memo for the 2023 EE plan will be coming in June, followed by the first draft of the 2023 EE plan in July from the National Grid.

Ms. Sholly quickly reviewed the results of the Councilor survey and presented potential options for Councilor retreats in 2022:

Option 1 – A half-day retreat in late May and another in early November

Option 2 – a half-day retreat in late May and another in early August

Mr. Gill Case indicated his preference for option 1; Ms. AnderBois agreed and there were no objections from others about pursuing the retreat timing laid out in option 1.

#### **6. Council Business (75 Minutes, 4:45 – 6:00 p.m.)**

##### *a) Review and Potential Vote on Consultant Team Revised Scope of Work and Budget (15 minutes, 4:45-5:00 p.m.)*

Please refer to the [Updated Consultant Team Scope of Work \(Revised\)](#).

Mr. Ross reviewed the memo discussing the 2022 scope of work (SOW) and budget for the consultant team and highlighted the changes in this SOW compared to the prior version. Those changes include reorganized tasks and subtasks to clearly align with how work is conducted and will be billed and a reduction of the overall budget down to \$659,529 for calendar 2022.

Mr. Ross then reviewed the new work plan structure, containing 7 tasks reoriented around key work areas for the consultant team, which are:

Energy Efficiency Program Planning and Implementation Oversight

System Reliability Procurement

Regulatory Proceedings

Council Sponsored Meetings and Materials

Research, Analysis, and other Council Support

Administrative

EERMC Intern

Mr. Gill Case requested that Chairperson be cc'd on each invoice when it comes into the Office of Energy Resources (OER) for payment, from all vendors. He noted that the Council and OER are two different entities and so someone on the Council should have visibility into the invoicing process.

Mr. Ross noted two additional minor changes from prior scopes of work, which are that the consultant team will not be taking meeting minutes and that they are also transitioning some website-related maintenance and update tasks to OER.

Ms. Verrengia asked if the EERMC Intern was fully supporting Council work tasks or if they would be supporting Optimal Energy broadly.

Mr. Ross made clear that the inaugural Mike Guerard Energy Fellow would be exclusively supporting Council business and that Mr. Duroha, the 2022 Fellow, was part of the URI Energy Fellow program.

Mr. Garlick made a motion to approve the modified 2022 scope of work for the Consultant team, led by Optimal Energy, and the associated budget for that scope of work as presented at the April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Council Meeting. Further to direct the Office of Energy Resources to incorporate this approved scope of work and budget into the current consultant services contract. Ms. Verrengia seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

*b) Review and Vote on 2022 EERMC Budget (10 minutes, 5:00-5:10 p.m.)*

Please refer to the [2022 EERMC Budget Proposal](#).

Mr. Chybowski reviewed the 2022 Council budget proposal, noting the significant change from last month is the new, lower consultant team budget that was just approved

Ms. Verrengia asked if the Council should allocate some money, perhaps within the education budget, towards some website improvements and Council branding work in 2022.

Mr. Gil Case suggested adding an additional \$20,000 to the legal budget from unallocated funds to ensure that the Council has enough to cover legal expenses should another contested case arise.

Mr. Feldman wanted to clarify that all the proposals being made are for calendar-year 2022 work using 2022 income, which Mr. Cleveland confirmed is the case.

Ms. Sholly noted that the last time annual reports were printed in 2020, the cost was approximately \$1,500 for 100 reports, and asked if that line item should be increased.

Ms. Verrengia suggested increasing the allocation to \$2,000 and Mr. Gill Case proposed increasing it to \$3,000, noting that budgeting that amount allows us to cover those expenses but does not commit us to spending that full amount.

Mr. Gill Case made a motion to adopt the 2022 EERMC budget as presented by the Office of Energy Resources (OER) on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with the following amendments: to allocate an additional \$20,000 to legal services from the unallocated funds and to allocate an additional \$2,000 to annual report printing from unallocated, and to further direct OER to continue providing regular updates on Council spending throughout the year. Ms. AnderBois seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

*c) Discussion and Potential Vote on Priorities for 2023 Energy Efficiency Annual Plan (20 minutes, 5:10-5:30 p.m.)*

Please refer to the [Consultant Team EERMC 2023 Plan Priorities Presentation](#).

Mr. Johnson reviewed the reasoning for why the Council develops priorities for the upcoming energy efficiency plan and outlined the suggested priorities for the 2023 plan.

Mr. Ross highlighted that the process to collect stakeholder priorities, including the Council's, is different this year as National Grid issued a survey to stakeholders instead of having stakeholders present at a Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting as in the past.

Mr. Garlick indicated that he is hoping that these forthcoming non-participant and multi-family studies will help broaden National Grid's equity focus beyond workforce-related equity.

Mr. Ross then reviewed recommended priorities for System Reliability Procurement (SRP), noting the emphasis on robust methodological development to programs and screening tools.

Mr. Gill Case asked if the Council could add something that is explicit about addressing climate as a priority.

Ms. AnderBois stated that she also felt we should incorporate climate as a priority, using it not only as a lens as we review plans but also because energy efficiency is a foundation to meeting the 2021 Act on Climate goals and we need to be supportive of it and sufficiently aggressive enough with our efforts in order to reach those mandates.

Mr. Feldman asked about the timing of the potential study update.

Mr. Ross replied that with budget approval for that work just coming today, the consultant team will now start to discuss and engage stakeholders and begin that procurement process, with an aim towards getting a vendor onboarded such that their output can serve as a reference for the next target setting process and upcoming planning cycles.

Mr. Gill Case made a motion to adopt the Priorities for the 2023 Energy Efficiency Annual Plan as presented by the Consultant team, led by Optimal Energy, on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, with the following amendment: to add consideration of climate goals, particularly the 2021 Act on Climate, as a part of the Council priorities going forward. Ms. Verrengia seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

*d) Review and Potential Vote on Draft of 2022 EERMC Annual Report (10 minutes, 5:30-5:40 p.m.)*

Please refer to the [Consultant Team 2022 EERMC Annual Report Presentation \(Revised\)](#).

Ms. Sholly reviewed the draft of the 2022 EERMC Annual Report, highlighting what is still needed to finalize the document. She also noted that some substantive feedback from several council members had recently been received about areas to enhance and add to the report that improve narrative around EERMC activity, priorities, and positions. She then reviewed the timeline for finalization of the report ahead of the May meeting.

Ms. AnderBois noted that she was one of the people providing recommendations recently and felt that the policy recommendations could use some additions.

Mr. Gill Case suggested that the Council might have one additional meeting, perhaps as a one-off task force meeting, to provide additional feedback on the report before the next full Council meeting. Mr. Gill Case and Ms. AnderBois volunteered to be a part of that meeting and the consultant team indicated they would connect with all Councilors to ensure all who want to participate in that conversation are able.

Ms. AnderBois asked if this additional meeting could this go through the education working group, rather than a new sub-committee.

Acting Chair Hubbard asked about virtual participation of Council members at this annual report meeting and if no votes are being taken, would that be allowed?

Mr. Cleveland responded by first deferring to legal counsel for a formal position, but indicated that his understanding is that listen-only attendance would be allowed by a Council member at that meeting so long as open meeting act requirements followed.

Ms. Sholly noted that she would follow up with counsel to confirm before scheduling.

*e) Review and Potential Vote on 2022 Lecture Series and Public Forum Request for Proposals (10 minutes, 5:40-5:50 p.m.)*

Please refer to the [2022 Lecture Series and Public Forum RFP \(Draft\)](#).

Ms. Sholly recapped the past work that has been completed in putting together the public forum and lecture series as well as the energy-focused K-12 educator training. She noted that the Council is looking to do that work again in 2022 and that requests for proposals (RFPs) have been drafted, with some revisions, to provide additional clarity to respondents and review committee around expectations of Council for this work.

Acting Chair Hubbard asked if the education committee had reviewed the RFPs already.

Ms. Sholly indicated that they had also recommended these items as specific inclusions in the budget that was approved earlier in the meeting.

Acting Chair Hubbard made a motion to approve the 2022 Lecture Series and Public Forum RFP as presented by the Consultant team, on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and to direct the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to issue the request for proposals. Ms. AnderBois seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

*f) Review and Potential Vote on 2022 K-12 Education Request for Proposals (10 minutes, 5:50-6:00 p.m.)*

Please refer to the [2022 K-12 Education RFP \(Draft\)](#).

Ms. AnderBois made a motion to approve the 2022 K-12 Education Request for Proposals RFP as presented by the Consultant team, on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and to direct the Office of Energy Resources (OER) to issue the request for proposals. Acting Chair Hubbard seconded the motion.

Mr. Garlick asked if the training offered is restricted to schoolteachers. He indicated that he would like to make sure this is open to after-school programs/community organizations and other educators outside just schools.

Ms. Sholly indicated that while titled and focused on K-12 educators, the trainings are indeed open to all types of educators.

Ms. Verrengia had concerns about language in the RFP, specifically around “enhancements from GBRI” as it relates to the curriculum being used to conduct the trainings. She noted that she is not sure what those enhancements are and is a little wary of including that language mandating that version of the curriculum be used in future trainings.

Ms. AnderBois modified her motion, to include an amendment stating that the RFP be modified to not restrict curriculum being used by winning bidder to the GBRI curriculum. Mr. Gill Case seconded the modified motion, and all voted to approve.

**7. Special Topics (25 Minutes, 6:00 – 6:25 p.m.)**

*a) Acadia Center Presentation on the RESPECT Proposal (25 minutes, 6:00pm – 6:25p.m.)*

Ms. Boyd from the Acadia Center walked through their policy idea about reforming the existing energy regulatory framework into a new model, Reforming Energy System Planning for Equity and Climate Transformation (RESPECT), to better align system planning with climate and equity goals. Their research into regulatory systems led them to believe that this system was no longer working in concert with broader climate goals – utilities are charged with the three key functions of planning, owning, and serving – which gives them lots of power and planning and owning are often in conflict.

Therefore, Ms. Boyd noted that the Acadia Center feels that utility planning, as currently structured, is insufficient to meet the climate challenge given inherent conflicts in the current model. She stated that this flawed system leads to real, negative impacts in communities as a result as the incentives are aligned for siloed and not holistic, solutions.

Ms. Boyd indicated that their RESPECT framework proposes two key reforms to solve this power imbalance and conflicts of interest.

1. Conduct “all in” energy system planning considering all resources, as well as climate and equity impacts; and
2. Create statewide planning entities that can look for solutions beyond utility boundaries and take that function off the plate of utilities, eliminating one conflicting of interest between planning and owning – their proposal splits planning, owning, and serving functions across three distinct entities.

Ms. Boyd stated that as a result of this systemic reimagining, holistic solutions are identified and informed by community input, which are procured competitively and address comprehensive needs all in one package as opposed to siloed, individual investments. Owning entities can meet this comprehensive need and get new business opportunities and create jobs. The serving entity can then serve the area more efficiently and lower their costs.

Ms. Verrengia stated that she liked a lot of these ideas and asked if the Acadia presentation is educational or is there a specific ask of the Council. She also asked what the plan is to bring these ideas to Rhode Island.

Ms. Boyd responded that this presentation is part of Acadia's education roadshow getting this idea and framework out there and indicated that Mr. Webster will be leading the efforts here in Rhode Island on this policy idea.

Mr. Feldman noted that it can be hard to decouple planning from operation entirely, and that safety and reliability issues in particular need to be considered.

## **8. Public Comment**

Hank Webster, Acadia Center

Mr. Webster stated that he and the Acadia Center appreciate including climate as a priority for energy efficiency by the EERMC. He would encourage the Council to be bold with their recommendations, as advocates can use those in other forums to advance these broader goals.

He also flagged for everyone that the electrification of heating and cooling is a big topic and that the June EC4 sharing sessions are all about the decarbonization of buildings. Having a strong climate recommendation from the EERMC that the Acadia Center could refer to would be very useful there as well.

Lastly, he noted that Washington State just passed a new building code that will require all electric buildings and asked, if they can do that there, why not here in Rhode Island as well?

## **9. Adjournment**

Acting Chair Hubbard adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.