



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

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 27, 2022 | 3:30 - 4:30 PM

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

Members in Attendance: Peter Gill Case, Anthony Hubbard, Karen Verrengia

Others in attendance: Nathan Cleveland, Steven Chybowski, Anika Kreckel, Sam Ross, Marisa Desautel, Brett Feldman, Hank Webster, Joe Garlick (joined at 4:10 pm)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:36pm

2. Acting Chair Announcements

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 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 Council Members and attendees of the meeting.

3. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – January 2022

Mr. Gill Case made a motion to approve the January 2022 Executive Committee meeting minutes as written. Ms. Verrengia seconded the motion, and all voted to approve.

4. Executive Director Report (5 min, 3:40 - 3:45pm)

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 Act on Climate (AoC) goals and that those interested can go to 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.

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 purchase or lease of new or used EVs. Those interested in more details or to make a public comment can visit drive.ri.gov.

Lastly, on behalf of Commissioner Ucci and the Office of Energy Resources, he thanked Acting Chair Hubbard for his years of service to the Council and for his leadership.

5. Council Business (40 min 3:45 - 4:25)

a) Executive Committee Discussion of 2022 Council Activities (15 min, 3:45 – 4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Gill Case stated that the last few months were difficult. He felt that the Council was presented an energy efficiency plan that the Council felt it couldn't endorse, in part because of process concerns, and therefore made a difficult decision to not endorse the plan.

Mr. Gill Case commented that energy efficiency is one of, if not the most, important component of meeting the 2021 Act on Climate goals.

He noted that the EERMC, OER, and the Consultant Team has worked hard, including with legal counsel, to get their 2022 budget organized and address issues and improve processes, and as a result feels well positioned for success in calendar year 2022.

As a final thought, Mr. Gill Case indicated that he felt like energy efficiency programs at National Grid were understaffed last year and expressed concern about staffing levels this year. As a result, he would love to see an organizational chart from National Grid to ensure the Council and other stakeholders are comfortable that enough people are available to put together a great plan for 2023.

Ms. Verrengia noted that she also noticed a change in staffing at National Grid, which she felt left the energy efficiency plan vulnerable.

She noted that she feels strongly about the quality of the consultant team and is glad that she supported them continuing to serve the EERMC and felt that they have done a great job and remains impressed with their work.

Acting Chair Hubbard commented that what felt different about the 2022 planning process to him was that prior plans felt more collaborative, and this time, it felt more like National Grid ended up putting forward what they wanted to present in the plan, and this led to Council members taking a stance that this plan as presented was not in best interest of the constituencies they serve. He mentioned that he was glad the Council has taken the time to delve into the budget in more detail and take a closer look internally at EERMC expenditures and budgeting. He stated that he feels good about systems and accountability being put in place to position the EERMC for success moving forward.

Mr. Gill case stated that budget discipline is important and wants to ensure that enough is budgeted to cover important support functions to advance council business.

b) Review & Discuss 2023 Budget Planning Timeline (10 min, 4:00-4:10 p.m.)

Mr. Chybowski reviewed the 2023 budget planning timeline and process for when the 2023 EERMC budget needs to be developed and approved by, which will be much earlier than past years since it now needs to be included in the 2023 energy efficiency plan filing in October.

Mr. Gill Case commented that unallocated funds for 2022, as presented in draft budgets prior to the PUC hearings and stemming from the budget increase change in LCP legislation, were taken away because there was not time to properly and judiciously determine best course of action for prudent spending of those funds. As a result, he is excited to have a more proactive discussion about the budget to better dial in the spending and allocations of Council funds and requests for 2023.

Acting Chair Hubbard stated that an organization's budget tells its story and tells its values.

c) Update on 2022 Council Budget and Transfer of the Client Fund (10 min, 4:10-4:20 p.m.)

Mr. Chybowski provided an update on the transfer of the Council's client fund to National Grid, indicating that OER has provided account details to National Grid, and that they are in the process of working that transfer through their internal processes. Mr. Feldman noted that they have a meeting on Friday to discuss that very issue.

Mr. Chybowski then reviewed the updated budget for the EERMC for calendar year 2022, which includes the updated consultant team budget number that will be discussed at the Full Council meeting later today, and that all these budget allocations are inclusive of already paid invoices in 2022 as well.

Ms. Verrengia indicated that, related to Council travel, she would like to explore reimbursement for incurred parking expenses. Additionally, with meetings now being held in-person, she would like to bring back refreshments for meetings.

Mr. Gill Case discussed a desire to allocate additional funds to legal services to ensure we are properly supported, especially if we have another contested hearing this year, floating \$20,000 as a possible increase.

He then asked both the consultant team and legal counsel if current budgeted amounts are sufficient to support the EERMC should we have a similar process to last year.

Ms. Desautel indicated that she was comfortable with the budget number represented as a guidepost for what to expect in 2022.

Mr. Ross agreed and noted that the budget presented should support the EERMC in a similar process to calendar year 2021 and that is what they sought to achieve in revising their scope of work.

d) Discuss Scheduling Additional Executive Committee Meetings (5 min, 4:20-4:25 p.m.)

Mr. Chybowski asked the Executive Committee if they want to set aside time for additional meetings besides the quarterly meetings scheduled?

Ms. Verrengia feels that they should have additional meetings if schedules can allow it; used to meet monthly a number of years ago. She indicated a strong preference for having them the same day as Full Council meeting.

Mr. Gill Case indicated that the quarterly meeting structure was good for him, but would be open to meeting bi-monthly. He noted a preference for having a meeting in September aligned with the 1st full Council meeting that month.

6. Public Comment

None.

7. Adjournment

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm