



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 16, 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, Sue AnderBois, Kate Grant, Kurt Teichert, Joe Garlick

Others in Attendance: Karen Bradbury, Sam Ross, Craig Johnson, Hank Webster, Steven Chybowski, William Owen, Michael O'Brien Crayne, Toby Ast, Priscilla de la Cruz, Adrian Caesar (virtual), Rachel Sholly (virtual), Maggie Hogan (virtual), Daniel Tukey (virtual), Spencer Lawrence (virtual), Seth Handy (virtual), Kathryn Cleary (virtual), Fara Oyenuga (virtual), Jon Erickson (virtual)

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Oakley called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

2. Chair Report

Chairperson Oakley delivered the chair report providing meeting participation instructions and an overview of the agenda.

3. Executive Director Report

Mr. Chybowski delivered the Director's report on behalf of Interim Commissioner Kearns. He noted that the Office of Energy Resources has received proposals for the High-Efficiency Heat Pump Program administration which will be evaluated and scored over the coming weeks.

4. Meeting Minutes - January 19, 2023

Chairperson Oakley motioned to approve the January 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

5. Special Topics (15 min, 3:10 - 3:25 p.m.)

a. Office of Energy Resources Updates on Federal Funding (15 min 3:10 - 3:25 p.m.)

Ms. Bradbury from the Office of Energy Resources (OER) provided an update regarding federal funding for energy initiatives including new details for energy efficiency and conservation block grant funding and home energy rebate programs. She noted that OER staff recently attended a NASEO conference to learn more about how rebates, incentives, and tax credits can potentially stack together to benefit

homeowners, along with the requirements of the Justice40 initiative. The Council discussed how these efforts can be coordinated to serve disadvantaged communities and how the upgrades in energy efficiency and clean heat targets could be accelerated.

6. Program Oversight (55 min, 3:25 – 4:20 p.m.)

a. Council Discussion of 2023 Policy Recommendations (10 min, 3:25 – 3:35 p.m.)

Mr. Chybowski presented the Council's 2022 policy recommendations for review and led an initial discussion about the Council's policy priorities for 2023. The Council discussed the addition of staying apprised of potential legislative changes to energy efficiency programs and how it can contribute to the discussions of these potential changes.

The Council discussed its role in protecting ratepayers, how mitigating climate change and decarbonization protects ratepayers, and noted that energy efficiency implementation is a significant factor in achieving emissions reductions and the mandate of the 2021 Act on Climate. The Council then discussed the Future of Gas docket at the Public Utilities Commission and the invitation for stakeholder participation. Vice Chair Gill Case nominated Council Member AnderBois to be the Council's representative and Mr. Ross noted the process for making that nomination.

b. Regulatory Updates on 2023 EE Plan Docket Proceedings (5 min, 3:35 – 3:40 p.m.)

Mr. O'Brien Crayne presented on the final rulings of the 2023 Energy Efficiency Plan docket noting the compliance filing on January 21st and outlined the final amendments and changes to the Plan. The Public Utilities Commission approved the compliance filing on January 31st, 2023.

c. Discussion and Potential Vote on Updated Draft Council Priorities for the 2024-2026 Three-Year and 2024 Annual Plans (25 min, 3:40 – 4:05 p.m.)

Mr. Caesar of the Council's Consultant Team led a discussion of the Council's priorities for the 2024 Annual Plan and the 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan, noting that the C-Team has continued to work with the Council and RIE to update the priorities. Council Members discussed the timing of a vote on priorities and the impacts it would have on planning, reviewed some of the history of the procedural requirements of the Three-Year and Annual Plan filing, the actionability of priorities, and considerations from RIE on whether the Council should move forward with a vote. Chairperson Oakley requested that the Council wait to vote on the priorities until March. Mr. Caesar suggested that the Council could rank the priorities based on importance and Vice Chair Gill Case requested that the C-Team create a ranking survey for the Council before the March meeting.

d. Discussion of Targets for the 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan and Potential Vote for Requesting a Target Filing Deadline Extension (15 min, 4:05 – 4:20 p.m.)

The Council discussed their program targets for the 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan facilitated by the Consultant Team. Mr. Johnson outlined the target development process, including the potential for changes to the Least-Cost Procurement (LCP) standards and the effect that this would have on the plan targets, the purpose of the targets, and next steps. Council Members discussed the timing of the extension and the impact on the target utilization in the planning process. Council Member

Teichert motioned to direct EERMC legal counsel, Desautel Law, to file a request with the Public Utilities Commission to extend the 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan target filing date to align with the results of the Council's market potential study data refresh and Council meeting timeline. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

7. Council Business (25 min, 4:20 – 4:45 p.m.)

a. Market Potential Study Data Refresh Update (10 min, 4:20 – 4:30 p.m.)

Chairperson Oakley elected to hold the discussion on the market potential data refresh until the March Council meeting.

b. Review of the Council's 2023 Budget and Potential Vote for Reallocations (15 min, 4:30 – 4:45 p.m.)

Mr. Chybowski outlined the budget process and the statutory funding formula from the LCP standard resulting in the shortfall of the Council's budget for 2023. The Council discussed how the budget can be reallocated, timing of deferred action on Council initiatives, and the possibility of seeking additional funding sources to overcome the shortfall. Chairperson Oakley noted that the budget in previous years was notably higher and that there is now a constraint on Council activities. Vice Chair Gill Case raised the question of the Council's capacity to operate at a deficit. He also noted line items which could be reduced following discussion by the Education Committee including the 2023 public forum and lecture series, the EE and climate awareness campaign, and the market-based solutions study, while preserving the K-12 energy education funding. Chairperson Oakley outlined the remaining shortfall and potential reallocations from the Consultant and Legal services line items.

Due to the \$89,616 shortfall of the Council Budget allocation, Chairperson Oakley motioned to set the 2023 budget allocation for 2023 public forum and lecture series, the EE and climate awareness campaign, and the market-based solutions study line-items to \$0, in addition to reducing the 2023 consultant services budget allocation by \$36,694.23, and the 2023 legal counsel services budget allocation by \$3,838.17 in the Council's budget. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

8. Public Comment

Hank Webster – The Acadia Center

Mr. Webster commented that RIE could use the maximum potential study targets from the previous market potential study to begin setting targets. He encouraged the Council to work to advocate for energy efficiency programs, working with the Administration to increase funding for the EC4 and EERMC, and avoid the elimination of the performance incentive mechanism. He noted that this would be his last meeting at the EERMC as he prepares to join the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

9. Adjournment

Chairperson Oakley motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed, and the meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.