



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

## **EERMC FULL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, May 18, 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:** Joe Garlick, Brett Feldman, Tom Magliocetti, Sue AnderBois, Peter Gill Case, Kurt Teichert, Bob Izzo

**Others in Attendance:** William Owen, Toby Ast, Jake Curran, Sam Ross, Craig Johnson, Adrian Caesar, Steven Chybowski, Michael O'Brien Crayne, Rachel Sholly, Jordan Galluzzo, Kate Grant (virtual), Fara Oyenuga (virtual), Daniel Tukey (virtual), Nelson DiBiase (virtual) Spencer Lawrence (virtual), Ann Clarke (virtual), Jeremy Newberger (virtual), Karen Verrengia (virtual)

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

Vice Chair Gill Case called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

### **2. Chair Report**

Vice Chair Gill Case provided instructions for the public to provide public comments at the meeting. He also noted the additional meeting materials that were posted for Council review that will not be discussed at the May meeting. Vice Chair Gill Case introduced Jordan Galluzzo as the Mike Guerard Energy Fellow working with the Consultant Team this year.

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

Mr. Owen provided the executive director report on behalf of acting commissioner Kearns. He highlighted the recent Lead by Example awards ceremony hosted at the Statehouse and the new Lead by Example Executive Order signed by the Governor, establishing new goals for the Lead by Example program in line with the 2021 Act on Climate.

### **4. Meeting Minutes**

#### *a.* April 20, 2023

Council Member Teichert motioned to approve the April 20, 2023 meeting minutes. Council Member Garlick seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

#### *b.* May 1, 2023 LEAD Session

Vice Chair Gill Case proposed to table the LEAD session meeting minutes to allow the Consultant Team to add additional details to them. There were no objections, and this item will be revisited at the June Council meeting.

**5. Program Oversight (70 Min, 3:10 – 4:20 p.m.)**

*a. System Reliability Procurement Updates (15 min, 3:10 – 3:25 p.m.)*

Ms. Gill of Rhode Island Energy led a presentation on system reliability procurement (SRP). She began by providing a review of SRP as a concept. Ms. Gill gave an overview of the SRP technical working group and their schedule for the year. She also summarized the 2022 SRP year-end report and highlighted the Company's priorities for the next three-year plan. Rhode Island Energy's (RIE) priorities for the 2024-2026 three-year SRP plan is that it is readable, useful, actionable, and compelling. Mr. Ross noted that the priorities document approved by the Council earlier this year has been submitted to the Company for consideration in the development of the three-year plan.

*b. Presentation of 2023 Q1 Energy Efficiency Programming (25 min, 3:25 – 3:50 p.m.)*

Mr. Caesar of the Consultant Team presented on the Commercial and Industrial (C&I) program results for the first quarter of 2023. He noted that C&I programming typically starts slow at the beginning of the year and ramps up in later periods. To date, the small business programming is slightly lagging expectations so that will require monitoring.

Mr. Johnson presented on the income-eligible programming. He noted that the income-eligible single family is starting well in the first quarter of 2023, partly due to the CAP agencies referring work to other CAPs as needed based on capacity. Multifamily programming is starting slowly in Q1, but projects are expected to increase in the warmer months.

The EnergyWise single family home energy assessments have high demand to start the year, but uptake on weatherization services has decreased compared to recent years. The HVAC and new products programs are also having a slow start in 2023. The Company has launched a new online product marketplace and there are a lot more products now available. New construction is also off to a slow start to begin the year, but there are 200 units of affordable housing in the pipeline seeking passive house certification.

Mr. O'Brien Crayne presented Q1 program highlights from RIE and highlighted the Zero Energy for the Ocean State (ZEOS) round three program and partnership with RIHousing and the Office of Energy Resources (OER). The large commercial new construction program is up in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the end of 2022, and the Company has additional leads for more projects. RIE presented on their strategic energy management partnership (SEMP) to the Quonset Development Corporation and Council Member Magliocchetti commented that he will be publishing an article on his positive experience with the SEMP program.

*c. Rhode Island Energy Updates on the 2024-2026 Energy Efficiency Plans (20 min, 3:50 – 4:10 p.m.)*

The Company received comments on their plan outline from the Council, Council Member AnderBois, and Green Energy Consumers Alliance, along with priorities

from OER. Many of these comments regarded aligning programming with the Act on Climate, phasing out gas appliances, and placing equity at the forefront of program design. RIE would be interested in having some specific conversations about concrete steps for phasing out gas appliance incentives and how equity could be incorporated into the PIM. The draft narrative is due June 1st. Overall, the feedback seemed to indicate that the Company is on the right track so far with some areas for improvement and modifications. The 2024 Annual Plan will have a level of specificity and detail that the 3-Year Plan will not.

RIE is also moving forward with community listening sessions to provide input on the plan development. These sessions are tentatively scheduled for June. The Company believes that they will receive feedback in time to be incorporated into the plan this year.

Vice Chair Gill Case asked how the future of gas docket will align with the 3-Year planning process.

Council Member Teichert noted that he hopes that gas and wire SRP is integrated, so that the electric system can provide results for gas constraints.

Council Members discussed their priority to phase out gas incentives. Council Member Izzo noted that for large C+I customers, gas is still the most affordable and practical way to fuel services and that this area may still need gas opportunities for now.

*d. Overview and Discussion of Proposed Updates to the Least Cost Procurement Standards (10 min, 4:10 – 4:20 p.m.)*

Mr. Johnson presented an update on the least cost procurement standard updates and reviewed the docket timeline.

**6. Council Business (35 Min, 4:20 – 4:55 p.m.)**

*a. Council Discussion of 2024 Budget Proposal (20 min, 4:20 – 4:40 p.m.)*

Mr. Ross presented to the Council on the Council budget planning process. The Council will continue with their 2024 budget planning through July when the full budget proposal is expected to be voted on. Mr. Ross walked through the Council's spending in 2023 to date and discussed some of the budget items that the Council considered for 2023, but did not move forward with for consideration.

Council Member Teichert stated that the Council is in a different budgetary environment now, so the longstanding public education initiatives should be reviewed for consideration moving forward. Mr. Ross noted that Optimal Energy has helped other jurisdictions with the energy efficiency administrator procurement process. Council Member AnderBois noted that she would want the Council to have a robust role in the administrator evaluation process. Vice Chair Gill Case requested that Optimal Energy provide an estimate on what it would cost them to take on the oversight role with third-party program administration.

Council Member AnderBois suggested that the gas pruning study could be removed because the future of gas docket is already covering much of that topic. She also thinks the Farm Energy Fellow should be reconsidered as it is not entirely focused

on energy efficiency. Council Member Magliocchetti asked what the energy efficiency and climate awareness campaign could look like, and Mr. Ross noted that it would include bringing on a vendor to implement outreach, connecting energy efficiency as a pathway for decarbonization. He would like to see the climate awareness campaign provide a hopeful message as so much on this topic is doom and gloom. Vice Chair Gill Case also does not feel strongly that the Council needs to pursue the market-based solutions study. Council Member Teichert would like to see the EE and climate awareness campaign focus on actionable items and targeted outcomes.

- b. Review and Vote on the Draft 2023 EERMC Annual Report (15 min, 4:40 – 4:55 p.m.)*  
Ms. Sholly presented the second draft of the Council’s 2023 Annual Report. She noted that we are still waiting on a few final numbers from the Company before the report can be published, but should otherwise be complete. Ms. Sholly has updated some of the introductory sections and infographics to make them easier to read and understand. Council Member Teichert motioned to approve the EERMC Annual Report as presented, pending the inclusion of the final numbers from RIE. Council Member AnderBois seconded.

**7. Public Comment**

Ms. Gallazzo commented that climate anxiety is a large problem for her age group, and that climate messages with hope are appreciated, in reference to the pending EE and climate awareness campaign.

**8. Adjournment**

Council Member AnderBois motioned to adjourn the meeting. Council Member Teichert seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 4:49 p.m.