



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

### EERMC LEARNING, EDUCATION, AND ADVANCEMENT DISCUSSION SESSION DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 30, 2023

LEAD Meeting | 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Donovan Dining Center, Rhode Island College with remote participation via Zoom

**Members in Attendance:** Harry Oakley, Sue AnderBois, Brett Feldman, Bob Izzo, Kurt Teichert, Priscilla De La Cruz (arrived at 1:28 p.m.), Chris Kearns, Peter Gill Case, Jordan Day (arrived at 2:10 p.m.)

**Others in Attendance:** Emma Rodvien, Craig Johnson, Adrian Caesar, Sam Ross (virtual), Emily Koo, Rachel Sholly, Georgia Cheney, Steven Chybowski, William Owen, Michael O'Brien Crayne, Sara Sultan (virtual), Rebecca Foster (virtual), John Harrington (virtual), Jordan Galluzzo (virtual), John Bell (virtual), Maggie Hogan (virtual), Joel Munoz (virtual)

#### **Introductions & Icebreaker**

Ms. Sholly from the Council's Consultant Team opened the meeting outlining the agenda which included a presentation and Q&A with Emma Rodvien from the Public Utilities Commission and a presentation on Rhode Island Energy's Advance Meter Functionality. She commented that this meeting is an opportunity for the Council to delve deeper into the subjects that cannot always be covered within a monthly meeting.

All attendees introduced themselves, and Chairperson Oakley led the session's icebreaker.

#### **Opportunities for Council Process Improvements**

Ms. Sholly and Mr. Johnson introduced some discussion questions related to meeting logistics to give the current Council members the opportunity to review their meeting schedule.

Council Member Teichert noted that any scheduled meetings before 3 p.m. would pose a challenge for him and likely any members in academia. Vice Chair Gill Case spoke about the scope of effort required of Council Members beyond the Council meetings themselves, which includes reviewing the meeting materials, self-education of the subject matter, and possibly monthly check-in calls with the consultant team. Council Member AnderBois noted the limitation for those with children to engage with the Council at the current schedule, and Council Member De La Cruz noted the overall difficulty for working individuals. Council Members discussed how to select a potential time and

location change via a poll, and whether a change would increase public participation. Member attendance and how absences might be handled was also discussed.

Then, the discussion moved to the Council meeting agendas and ways that the agenda could be streamlined. One proposal was to add a reports section to the agendas to provide Council Members with updates on recently received or pending information, and how a more set schedule might address some of time constraints felt during the Council's meetings. Council Member Teichert asked whether posted agenda topics had to be discussed, and Acting Commissioner Kearns noted that any topic could be tabled with a vote. Council Member Teichert addressed the benefit of making up time when particular topics went over, either through having 'as time allows' subjects or some scheduling capacity to provide that flexibility. Chairperson Oakley opened up a topic on additional learning opportunities and how more concise preparatory materials could be delivered or made available for the Council.

### **PUC Regulatory Process for Energy Efficiency Plans**

Ms. Rodvien, Senior Economic and Policy Analyst from the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) provided an overview of the Least-Cost Procurement Standard, the principles established by the standard for review during the annual and three year plan filings, how the cost-effectiveness and less than the cost of supply principles provide the measures for evaluation the Commission uses, and how the Docket 4600 or the "Rhode Island Test" uses a social benefit analysis to incorporate elements such as the cost of carbon and public health considerations. The annual filing is seeking the approval of 4 elements of the plan – a budget, a savings target, a rate for cost recovery, and an earnable incentive.

The Commission's approval of the budget sets spending benchmarks, not specific incentive levels – those measure levels must be managed and achieved by the Company in their administration of the Plan. Commission dockets are initiated by specific Company plans with additional participation by interested and invested parties who can have a particular view or broad consideration of the subject of the plan. The EERMC specifically is a statutorily invested party in the Energy Efficiency filing and can submit testimony, data requests, and involve themselves in the docket. PUC staff in other states can function as advocates for a particular stance on the plan, but in Rhode Island, PUC staff focus on raising and clarifying the important points in the formal record for consideration by the Commissioners.

Chairperson Oakley asked how the Commission viewed the approval or disapproval from the Council on filed plans. Ms. Rodvien said that the Commission would look to understand what the specific deficiencies were that the Council identified and how those might represent attributes which did not comply with Least-Cost Procurement. Ms. Rodvien called attention to the Commission's ordered reallocation of funds from the 2023 Annual Plan to the Electric Resistance Heating replacement program as an example of modifications from the Commission.

Council Member Teichert asked about the time horizon on efficiency measures. Ms. Rodvien replied that the Commission's review was based on the arguments put forward by the Company and which are founded on the Avoided Energy Supply Cost benefit used widely in the New England area, and that the Commission did not perform its own analysis on how lifetime savings were reflected in particular measures.

### **Advanced Metering Deep Dive**

Mr. O'Brien Crayne presented the Rhode Island Energy presentation of the Advance Meter Functionality (AMF) plan approved by the PUC in September 2023, with the Certification and Compliance filing to come by the end of 2023. He provided an overview of the timing of the filing, the regulatory review process, and the intersection with the Infrastructure, Safety, and Reliability annual filings.

Council Member AnderBois asked how dual-meter customers with distributed generation would be handled and Mr. O'Brien Crayne offered to follow up on that question for more information.

Council Member Izzo asked whether customers would need to be notified in advance of the meter replacement. Mr. Owen noted that the pre-sweep process was intended to identify what meter placements would require additional communication and coordination.

Mr. O'Brien Crayne reviewed the system and customer benefits, and the Council discussed how AMF would intersect with time-of-use rates, the timing of time-varying rate (TVR) deployment, and demand response technologies.

### **Public Comment**

*Emily Koo, The Acadia Center*

Ms. Koo noted Acadia's support for accelerating TVR deployment to align customer costs with access to the benefits of the AMF systems. She also commented that increasing the means and frequency of public comment engagement is a valuable form of communication with the Council.