

Memo



To: The Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council (EERMC)

From: EERMC Consultant Team

Date: December 21, 2023

Subject: EERMC LEAD Session #2 – Follow-Ups and Action Items

The Energy Efficiency and Resource Management Council (EERMC or Council) hosted its Fall Learning, Education, Advancement, and Discussion (LEAD) Session on October 30, 2023 which focused on the following objectives:

- Council members will share, brainstorm, and discuss potential ways to improve Council operations and processes to increase Council efficiency and effectiveness.
- As a follow-up to the EERMC’s approval of the Annual and Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plans, the RI Public Utilities Commission will walk through its regulatory process for reviewing and approving the Plans. Council members will have the opportunity to discuss the process with PUC staff to ensure understanding of the PUC’s responsibilities, steps, and timeline.
- Rhode Island Energy will present a deeper dive on the concept of advanced metering and recent activity related to the RI Public Utilities Commission’s ongoing advanced metering docket to improve Council member familiarity with the subject and its implications for Rhode Island

This memo summarizes action items, follow-ups, and key takeaways from the LEAD Session.

FOLLOW-UPS AND ACTION ITEMS

Assignee	Action Item/Follow-Up	Status
C-Team	Administer a survey to determine potential dates and times for recurring Council meetings.	In Progress – Results of survey are being reviewed and considered for discussion at January Council Meeting
C-Team	Update Council handbook and/or job descriptions to describe estimated time commitments for Councilors, including time spent on self-education and meeting preparation.	In Progress – C-Team proposing an update to the Council handbook as part of its 2024 SOW
C- Team/ OER	Develop and release draft meeting agenda topics for the upcoming month during the previous month.	Complete – This process began at the November meeting and will continue in the future
OER	Share notifications with Councilors when OER posts meeting materials.	Ongoing
C-Team	Publish a Councilor Briefing Document 2-3 weeks in advance of EERMC meetings which directs Councilors to resources and materials to review.	In Progress – C-Team proposing to develop briefing documents for Council meetings to go along with Agendas starting in 2024.
C-Team	Implement a scheduling tool that enables Councilors to reserve time for briefing discussions with the C-Team	In Progress – C-Team contemplates this in 2024 proposed SOW.
RI Energy	Respond to Council questions on Advanced Metering Functionality posed during the LEAD Session.	Complete – See responses below.

KEY TAKEAWAYS AND OPEN QUESTIONS

Council Process Improvements

- The current schedule for Council meetings, 3:00PM-5:00PM on the third Thursday of every month, often conflicts with other obligations including childcare and the Council may want to adjust the scheduling.
- Preparing for EERMC meetings requires a significant time commitment, so the C-Team and OER should share draft agenda topics well in advance of meetings.
- Is there recorded content that the C-Team and OER can make available to facilitate self-education for Councilors?
- Meeting agendas should not fit in too much content, but presenters need to adhere to the prescribed time allotments to enable full coverage of meeting materials and EERMC business.

Additional Learning Opportunities

- Publishing a one-page Councilor Briefing Document 2-3 weeks in advance of EERMC meetings which directs Councilors to resources and materials to review.
- The C-Team should implement a live scheduling tool that enables Councilors to reserve time for briefing discussions.

PUC Regulatory Process

- The PUC reviews EE Plans through the lens of compliance with Least-Cost Procurement.
- The Council can take positions on EE Plans if it identifies that specific elements are deficient and noncompliant with the LCP Standards. The Council position should include justification and evidence, which the PUC will consider during the regulatory review process.
- While energy efficiency programs have increased in cost due to several market factors, changes to the market have not changed the fundamental application of the LCP Standards.
- The Company ultimately presents EE Plans with proposed budgets, then determines how to achieve savings and deliver program benefits within the approved budgets.

Deep Dive – Advanced Metering Functionality (AMF)

- By the end of 2023, the Company will submit its compliance filing for the AMF Business Case.
- Between 2024-2026, the Company will propagate advanced meters throughout the state and deploy pilots leveraging AMF to generate energy savings for customers.
- A Customer Portal will provide personalized insights, energy-saving tools, and recommendations to participate in energy efficiency and demand management programs.
- In 2027-2029, the Company will launch full programs building on lessons learned from pilots, given the anticipated territory-wide deployment of advanced meters.
- Other strategies to maximize the utility of AMF, such as time-of-use rates, will require separate regulatory-review processes, but the Company will prepare to discuss such strategies as soon as possible to prevent future delays.
- Q: How will customers get notified if they are getting an advanced meter?
 - RI Energy Response: It's important to note that these new meters will not be in the field in the immediate future. The earliest deployment is estimated to occur in late 2024/early 2025, but as we get closer to that time frame customers will receive a series of letters and a phone call informing them of the upcoming meter exchange. For those

customers we have emails for, we will also provide broader communications about the deployment as the timeline progresses. Customers will also have the ability to schedule an appointment for the meter exchange at a time that is convenient for them. The technician will also perform a door knock prior to exchanging the meter.

- Q: What is the customer experience of scheduling their meter replacement?
 - RI Energy Response: Customers will receive a series of letters and a phone call informing them of the upcoming meter exchange. Customers will also have the ability to schedule an appointment for the meter exchange at a time that is convenient for them. The technician will also perform a door knock prior to exchanging the meter. The meter exchange can take up to 15 minutes during which the customer will experience a brief interruption of power.
- Q: Will there be different languages available in the AMF Customer Portal?
 - RI Energy Response: Our plan is to have communications materials available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese as these languages constitute the largest demographics. These communications materials will include content on the website as well as letters sent to customers in advance of the meter exchanges.
- Q: Will the Customer Portal have an app, or will it be solely web-based?
 - RI Energy Response: Customers will have access to the Customer Portal via the web, which can also be accessed on a mobile device.
- Q: What is the estimated bill impact associated with the AMF investment?
 - RI Energy Response: The appropriate AMF costs will be recovered through a customer charge but the specific impact to the RIE customer bill (separate line item or note on the bill) has not yet been determined. RIE will be submitting a tariff addendum that will require Commission approval. Our forecasts showed that during the first couple years of the program, bill impacts for average residential customers would be less than \$1 a month from current rates with the highest impacts in years 4 and 5 being between \$3 and \$4 a month increase from current rates.