



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

## **EERMC FULL COUNCIL DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday, November 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, Joe Garlick, Peter Gill Case, Jordan Day, Kurt Teichert, Bob Izzo, Brett Feldman, Chris Kearns

**Others in Attendance:** Jessica Reno, Allison Archambault, Michael O'Brien Crayne, Mark Siegal, Brendan Dagher, Ben Smith, Emily Koo, Adrian Caesar, Craig Johnson, Sam Ross, Rachel Sholly, Steven Chybowski, William Owen, Dr. Carrie Gill (virtual), Mark Thomson (virtual), Mike Sullivan (virtual), Nelson DiBiase (virtual), Jordan Galluzzo (virtual), Taylor Yeager (virtual), Stephen Lasher (virtual), Kristin Dupre (virtual), Daniel Tukey (virtual), Carinel LeGrand (virtual), Ann Clarke (virtual), Dana Goodman (virtual), Spencer Lawrence (virtual), Angela Li (virtual), Karen Verrengia (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 noting the meeting details and participation requirements for the public and an overview of the agenda.

**Chairperson Oakley made a motion to move Agenda Item 5c, the *Presentation and Potential Vote on Rhode Island Energy's 2024 Electric Demand Response Program Proposal* to the start of the Program Oversight portion of the agenda. Vice Chair Gill Case seconded. All in favor, none opposed.**

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

Acting Commissioner Kearns from the Office of Energy Resources (OER) delivered the Executive Director report. He shared that the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) published the State's 2020 Greenhouse Gas inventory, which showed a 20.1% reduction in emissions since 1990, meeting the target set by the Act on Climate, but commented that it does include reductions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. He also shared the details for the upcoming Climate Justice Hour co-hosted by OER and DEM, progress updates on heat pump rebates from the Clean Heat Rhode Island program, and a

status update on the applications to the Home Energy Rebates federal funding.

**4. Meeting Minutes –**

- a. Chairperson Oakley motioned to approve the October 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Council Member Teichert seconded. All in favor, none opposed.
  
- b. Chairperson Oakley motioned to approve the LEAD Session meeting minutes from October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Council Member Day seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

**5. Program Oversight (75 Minutes, 3:10 – 4:25 p.m.)**

**Agenda Item 5.c → 5.a**

- a. *Presentation and Potential Vote on Rhode Island Energy's 2024 Electric Demand Response Program Proposal (20 min, 4:00 – 4:20 p.m.)*

Dr. Gill presented Rhode Island Energy's (RIE) electric demand response (DR) program proposal and commented that a final version of the investment proposal is still under development. Mr. Ross explained the filing timeline for the investment proposal and the Council's role in the process. Dr. Gill described the development of the plan, the screening criteria for System Reliability Procurement, and the purpose for reducing regional coincident peak demand. She also discussed participation pathways for residential, small business, and commercial and industrial customers, and the program incentive structures.

Mr. Chybowski asked whether the filing would be part of the Infrastructure, Safety, and Reliability plan filing (ISR) or an independent filing. Dr. Gill clarified that the DR program will be its own separate docket, but that it would be filed at the same time as the ISR filing. Mr. Chybowski also asked whether solar inverters were still part of the program, and Dr. Gill noted that the power factor correction incentives were not cost effective and would be discontinued.

Dr. Gill confirmed that battery dispatch was no longer tied to solar installation, as a megawatt reduction was the same regardless of the source.

- b. *Rhode Island Energy Presentation and Discussion on 2024 Equity Goals and Metrics (40 min, 3:10 – 3:50 p.m.)*

Mr. Dagher presented on equity metrics that the Company intends to track in 2024, and reviewed the recommendations provided by the Equity Working Group (EWG) in 2023. He explained the Company's metric selection, scoring, and next steps. Mr. Dagher shared a review of the metrics tracked from prior years reported in the Q2 and Q4 energy efficiency quarterly reports and the areas that the new metrics proposed to measure. Mr. Dagher clarified that these assessments are scored on the feasibility of tracking within the utility's current data and reporting capabilities.

Chairperson Oakley suggested Council discussion and questions begin with a review of the appendix and take each sector one by one, and noted feeling positive toward progress even while still feeling that some of the metric descriptions lacked detail. Vice Chair Gill Case noted the Massachusetts efficiency plan was adopting all 70 of the Massachusetts EWG metric recommendations and that the 3-5 proposed for Rhode Island would not work for the Council. He also commented that metrics need to also be ranked by expected impacts in order to determine which metrics should be pursued. Council Member Day noted the volume of acronyms was itself

inequitable since it created a barrier to understanding. Council Member Garlick recommended using census tract data instead of zip codes for additional granularity. Mr. Dagher noted the current tracking system uses zip code level tracking. Council Member AnderBois suggested using Energy Fellows as an option to help expand capacity in this space. Mr. Ross noted an added comparison of level of effort would help to understand what currently untracked metrics could be worked toward.

Council Member Teichert asked for clarity on whether the rankings were specific to the Company's access to a particular data point and Chairperson Oakley commented that there may be metrics tracked within the state but which the company may not necessarily have. Mr. Ross suggested assessing a prioritization of metrics to include important metrics early, and still be able to add year-to-date analysis later for those to-be-added metrics. Council Member Izzo agreed that making an assessment of the available data and applicable metrics was a helpful first step, and Chairperson Oakley noted the effort to reach this point in the equity metrics discussion was commendable and made further investigation and discussion possible. Mr. Ross recommended the capacity for additional discussion through a variety of forums.

*c. Presentation and Vote on the System Reliability Procurement Cost-Effectiveness Report for the 2024-2026 Three Year Plan (10 min, 3:50 – 4:00 p.m.)*

Mr. Ross from the Council's Consultant Team presented on the 2024-2026 System Reliability Procurement (SRP) Plan Cost-Effectiveness Report, which will be submitted to the Public Utilities Commission. Mr. Ross noted the Council's obligations for this reporting based on the Least-Cost Procurement Standard, and the way the Consultant Team analyzed the SRP plan which did not have any cost proposals. As a result, the Consultant Team's review focused on the methodologies of the benefit-cost models and the technical reference manual for cost-screening. Review of specific investments will occur at the time those investments are proposed in separate plan proposals. Council Member AnderBois asked how the SRP filing differed from the functioning of the EE plan filing. Mr. Ross responded that this process is a change from prior filings and could be an opportunity for additional clarification within the standard in the future. Mr. Ross explained that the Company's responsibility is to identify SRP opportunities, and then solicit potential alternative pathways to bring forward investment proposals for those alternatives.

Vice Chair Gill Case motioned to approve the cost-effectiveness report as currently written and require the Consultant Team to file the report with the Public Utilities Commission by the filing deadline. Council Member Day Seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

*d. Energy Efficiency Docket 23-35-EE Regulatory Updates (5 min, 4:20 – 4:25 p.m.)*

Mr. Johnson provided updates on the current status, data requests, and timeline for the energy efficiency docket proceedings, noting the dates of the hearings, the filing of the Council's budget materials, and data request activity to date.

**6. Council Business (30 Minutes, 4:25 – 4:55 p.m.)**

*a. Council Branding and Communications Development Update and Discussion (20 min, 4:25 – 4:45 p.m.)*

Mr. Smith from Advocacy Solutions presented on progress to date on the Council's branding initiative and next steps, highlighting the need to key in on the logo and

color schemes. Mr. Smith showed the preferred logo from the Education Committee, how the new website initial image would function and lead visitors to the EE video series, the transition to the program details, and the inclusion of an easier comment submission button to increase public engagement.

The Council offered their preferences for the color schemes. Mr. Smith stated that Advocacy Solutions would share the theme proposals in a pdf for the Council to review, and to try to get a color scheme selected by the end of the following week. Council Member Teichert asked for clarity on the sequence from the first link to incentives information and Mr. Smith clarified the link transferred visitors to the video series and the program links would be below the opening video. Chairperson Oakley suggested the need for more direct language to guide visitors to the program details. The Council discussed how to make the page more effective and where it should direct visitors to get them the most effective information. Ms. Sholly asked for Council feedback on the logo, discussed what the color palate should be for the logo and website, and whether the other lighthouse designs were still favored. Mr. Smith confirmed revised designs for the landing page would be provided, and Council discussed the timeline for providing feedback by 11/23.

**Chairperson Oakley motioned to reorder the agenda to move Public Comment before agenda item 6.b. Council Member Day seconded. All in favor, none opposed.**

#### **Public Comment (Formerly agenda item 7)**

Dana Goodman, NEC Solar

Ms. Goodman wanted to make a comment on the demand response solar incentive, citing the proposed reduction of incentive payments from 5 years to 3 years. Ms. Goodman noted that this is not the information installers have conveyed to consumers and customers with systems being installed through the end of 2024, creating inconsistent messaging about the scope of the incentives. She also felt that the drop in battery storage incentives is not right-sizing just because states nearby are setting incentives at those levels and that does not reflect the appetite from customers for higher incentive levels.

Ms. Goodman also shared that the Investment Tax Credit is still not widely known and understood, and that inspectors do not necessarily always know how to inspect batteries.

Emily Koo, The Acadia Center

Ms. Koo asked for a stakeholder notification list be created to provide stakeholders with Council updates and that the frequency of reporting on equity metrics should be made quarterly from its biannual tempo. Lastly, she would like to see further progress on the equity metric tracking development.

#### **Council Business**

*6.b. Energy Efficiency and Climate Public Awareness Campaign Proposal Discussion, Recommendation, and Potential Vote (10 min, 4:45 – 4:55 p.m.)*

Council Member AnderBois motioned to move the Council into Executive Session for the discussion of the Energy Efficiency and Climate Public Awareness Campaign Proposal Discussion. Chairperson Oakley seconded. All in favor, none opposed, and the Council entered into Executive Session.

The Council returned from Executive Session and Chairperson Oakley summarized that the Council voted unanimously to reissue the RFP for the Energy Efficiency and Climate Public Awareness Campaign with amended language to allow for ISBE certifications from states other than Rhode Island to receive ISBE points in the scoring. Specific language amendments are to be made with the guidance and approval of EERMC Legal Council and that the RFP can be reissued once the language is finalized.

**7. Adjournment**

Chairperson Oakley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 5:26 p.m. Council Member AnderBois seconded. All in favor, none opposed.

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