



## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Wednesday, February 10, 2021**  
Virtual Meeting: Zoom

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**Executive Committee Members Present:** Greg Abbe, JoAnn Bodemer, Amy Boyd, Emmett Lyne, Maggie McCarey, Dennis Villanueva

**Other Attendees:** Marie Abdou, Eric Belliveau, Adrian Caesar, Maggie Downey, Audrey Eidelman, Rachel Evans, Frank Gundal, Jodi Hanover, Charlie Harak, Elliott Jacobson, Paul Johnson, Emily Powers, Danielle Winter, Patrick Woodcock

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

McCarey, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM.

### **2. Executive Committee Updates and Business**

Commissioner Woodcock thanked new and existing Executive Committee members for their contributions to the 2022-2024 planning process and program oversight during the past year. Powers presented the Executive Committee charter, which outlined the group's responsibilities, meeting policy, and meeting cadence. McCarey said Executive Committee meetings are public meetings, but they are generally much smaller than full Council meetings since the primary role of the Executive Committee is administrative, not deliberative.

### **3. Draft EEAC Resolution: 2022-2024 Three-Year Plan Recommendations**

McCarey said the Consultant Team (C-Team) and Department of Energy Resources (DOER) are finalizing the list of Three-Year Plan recommendations based on Council feedback in the last Planning Workshop. McCarey suggested the Council put forth a resolution that summarizes 2022-2024 priorities, to which the full set of Plan recommendations is attached, similarly to what was produced during the previous planning cycle

Bodemer supported this approach, but suggested the recommendations are ranked to some extent based on priority within each sector or topic to guide the program administrators (PAs) effectively. Boyd said there is typically a natural prioritization that occurs in drafting the

recommendations, so the Council can modify sequencing during the final review process. Boyd recalled that providing recommendations to the PAs without a Council Resolution proved to be inefficient during a previous planning cycle. Abbe said this approach seems to lay out the motivation behind individual recommendations as a point to reference during implementation of the Plan.

McCarey indicated that ranking each recommendation based on priority level would be a time-consuming exercise, so there should be agreement on high-level priorities to highlight in the Resolution. Bodemer agreed that this would be a better alternative to ranking each recommendation.

Belliveau said the April Plan Draft will include some of the recommendations listed in the Resolution, so the feedback process will provide another iteration of making Plan recommendations.

Abbe said there would be value in prioritizing recommendations to some extent within topics since there are many of them, but it would be painstaking to rank each and then agree on the ordering. Abbe wondered if there was a reasonable way to highlight critical recommendations.

Lyne noted that any kind of prioritization among the recommendations would be helpful, especially given the quantity of recommendations. Lyne said that strategic electrification, equity, and workforce development have been flagged as critical for the PAs, but any other key areas should be highlighted as well. Boyd recommended providing the PAs guidance on important outcomes in addition to the individual recommendation. McCarey said the Resolution will list priority outcomes and key recommendations tied to those outcomes. McCarey added that DOER would support drafting this resolution for the February Council meeting and encouraged interested Executive Committee members to help. Boyd, Bodemer, and Johnson offered their assistance.

#### **4. 2021 EEAC Budget Request to DPU**

Powers presented the 2021 Council administrative budget to be filed with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) after a February Council meeting vote. Powers noted the breakout for Electric and Gas PA budget was currently based on the 2020 distribution. McCarey said the 2021 calendar year budget is higher than 2020, but this is to be expected since 2021 is a three-year planning year.

Johnson asked if the budget carryover from 2020 was reflected in 2021. McCarey said this was not reflected in the consultant budget presented for 2021 since inter-year budget reallocations do not need DPU approval. Johnson asked what was included in the operating budget. McCarey said the operating budget just included spending on Three-Year-Planning Workshop facilitation.

#### **5. Behavior Presentation: Follow-Up**

Belliveau listed questions the C-Team had in response to the PA Behavior Program presentation during the January Council meeting. Belliveau said these questions related to Behavior program

cost-effectiveness, budget, savings results, and savings calculation approaches. Hanover indicated 2020 fourth quarter data would likely be available today.

Lyne said the PAs are willing to discuss Behavior programs and share all pertinent information, so it would be helpful to see the C-Team's questions in writing. McCarey suggested a follow-up presentation on Behavior program changes for the February Council meeting agenda. Lyne indicated the PAs could provide updates based on the C-Team's questions. McCarey noted that Liberty and Unitil filed to cancel their Behavior programs, so these filings should be included in the February meeting materials. Winter noted that Liberty filed for cancellation due to negative savings for Behavior programs, and a full update would be provided to the Council. Winter also clarified that the Unitil filing did not include immediate intent to cancel Behavior programs.

Downey said Cape Light Compact anticipates their Behavior program will not be cost-effective in 2021, just as it was not cost effective in 2020 and 2019. Downey added that low claimed Behavior savings relative to costs is not only an issue for smaller Gas PAs. McCarey indicated a deemed savings approach to quantifying Behavior program savings might be a better method. Winter clarified that the majority of Unitil customers that were participating will continue to receive Behavioral reports for National Grid, while Liberty is transitioning to a new customer engagement platform that may be done in-house.

Johnson asked what methods for increasing cost-effectiveness of Behavior programs were considered. Belliveau said cost-effectiveness considerations are embedded in the questions posed by the C-Team, and it will be key to understand the program administrators' decision-making process. Johnson asked for a description of the deemed savings approach. Belliveau replied that deemed savings involves the assumption of savings for simple measures above a baseline condition which is studied and evaluated over time for accuracy. For Behavior programs, Belliveau noted that vendors estimate savings across certain populations, attribute them to participants, and evaluate the results. Villanueva said the Council needs more information to understand economies of scale and savings quantification methods for each PA to determine the appropriate path forward.

McCarey asked what questions were directed toward Eversource's new approach to Behavior programs. Belliveau said the parameters around the new program, such as technical reference manual (TRM) values, net-to-gross ratios, and current participation and savings numbers, will be requested. Gundal indicated that the need to innovate was a motivator for Eversource, but they will be forthcoming with any information the Council needs. McCarey appreciated the spirit of innovation, but noted that new approaches should be tested at small scales before cancelling programs proven to generate savings. McCarey added that the proposed changes would reduce the size of the program, which is essentially leaving out cost-effective savings.

Villanueva asked when the last evaluation study on Behavior programs was conducted. Belliveau said Eversource engaged with the evaluation, measurement, and verification (EM&V) group for their program, but there is an ongoing evaluation process. McCarey said Behavior programs are not evaluated as frequently since savings are already measured on a regular basis, but evaluating other benefits of Behavior programs might help with cost-effectiveness screening. Villanueva asked what method is used to evaluate Behavior programs. Lyne said there was an independent

evaluation framework established in the first Three-Year Plan the PAs continue to use in collaboration with Ralph Prah, the C-Team's EM&V lead. Lyne said that the evaluation studies are posted on the Council website. Abdou added that the studies are done by third-party contractors independent from the PAs.

## **6. Mass Save Program Update: Implementation efforts during COVID-19**

Lyne said a fourth contractor engagement survey was administered with help from RISE. Lyne indicated the key findings were that contractors have mostly returned to pre-pandemic employment levels, there is desire for additional hiring, and another seminar on the Paycheck Protection Program would be helpful. Lyne noted these findings are encouraging, despite the fact that they may not be representative of the full contractor population. Lastly, Lyne proposed the elevation of EE contractors in the COVID-19 vaccination queue as essential personnel.

Belliveau asked for clarification on whether pre-pandemic employment meant pre-pandemic production. Abdou said enhanced incentives in 2020 created a healthy backlog that will come to bear this program year. Jacobson indicated LEAN is at about 50-60% production, but getting staff vaccinated will be important to assuage customer concerns about COVID.

Johnson asked how removal of enhanced incentives will impact production and how current home energy assessment numbers compared to pre-COVID levels. Lyne said he would follow-up with PA staff to see if this exact data is available.

Jacobson commented that there was a 20% increase in arrearages for just income eligible customers, indicating that many customers in the Commonwealth are struggling to cover utility bills.

## **7. February EEAC Meeting – Agenda Finalization**

McCary announced that the February Council meeting agenda will include a vote on meeting minutes, Planning Workshop summaries, Council Resolution on Three-Year Plan recommendation, and 2021 Council budget. McCary said the C-Team and PAs may present on HVAC systems in schools during the February meeting.

## **8. March EEAC Meetings – Draft Topics**

McCary said the March Council meeting agenda would include the C-Team Assessment of Potential, Avoided Energy Supply Cost study, and PA market potential study, and 2020 fourth quarter results.

Hanover said the PAs, except for National Grid, are behind on the potential studies due to data model errors. Belliveau indicated the National Grid results deviated from what was included in the original potential study scopes since there were separate studies for energy efficiency and energy optimization. Belliveau noted that this may cause difficulty in interpreting results, especially as it relates to heat pumps.

McCarey asked how the studies were separated. Abdou said the results are not additive, but National Grid can follow up with specific questions for Guidehouse to work around this issue. Abdou said the efficiency portion only deals with electric baselines for heat pumps, but the energy optimization study includes fossil fuel baselines, so it is harder to assess how changing electric load impacts the energy optimization study. Abdou added that the PAs are using different potential study models, so aggregating results will require additional work.

## **9. Adjournment**

McCarey, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:35 AM.