



MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, May 26, 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Councilors Present: Greg Abbe (for Jennifer D Maddox), Cindy Arcate, Jo Ann Bodemer (for Maura Healey), Amy Boyd, Cindy Carroll, Hammad Chaudry (for Jane Lano), Justin Davidson, Avadhish Dewal (for Tim Costa), Maggie Downey, Michael Ferrante, Paul Gromer, Frank Gundal, Charlie Harak, Elliott Jacobson, Paul Johnson, Deirdre Manning, Cammy Peterson, Chris Porter, Robert Rio, Dennis Villanueva, Mary Wambui, Sharon Weber, Commissioner Patrick Woodcock

Councilors Absent: Andrew Newman

Consultants Present: Eric Belliveau, Adrian Caesar, Adam Jacobs, Margie Lynch

DOER Staff Present: Rachel Evans, Maggie McCarey, Ian Finlayson, Emily Webb

1. Call to Order

McCarey, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

2. Public Comment

McCarey noted there are additional public comment sessions scheduled for June

Bill Stevens (NEGPA)

Stevens indicated the April Plan Draft mentioned heat pumps nearly 150 times, but ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) were omitted entirely. Stevens recommended the program administrators (PAs) establish benchmarks for GSHP adoption in accordance with the Massachusetts Climate Act. Stevens also recommended the PAs address incentives and HEAT Loan financing for GSHPs, as they provide significant summer and winter peak reduction benefits.

Chris Roshier (Sunrun)

Roshier praised the ConnectedSolutions program as the best customer-facing active demand program in the country. Roshier encouraged increased transparency around material changes

during the Planning process, in addition to opportunities for stakeholder input. Rosher referenced the decision to implement baselining in the summer of 2021, and indicated this action was detrimental due to lack of stakeholder feedback and advance notice.

Steve Cowell (E4theFuture)

Cowell was impressed by data systems presented during the April Special Meeting, and asked how the data would be used to track and improve programs. Cowell recommended that provisions in the newly passed Climate Roadmap are mapped to the 2022-2024 Plan to determine necessary Plan changes. Cowell added that E4theFuture is working with the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) to explore national best practices, including the definition of environmental justice communities and potential methods to leverage ARPA funding.

Todd Olinsky-Paul (Clean Energy Group)

Olinsky-Paul complimented ConnectedSolutions as a nation-leading program and provided four potential areas of improvement. Olinsky-Paul suggested there was a lack of equity provisions around storage in the Plan, which is counter to the Commonwealth's commitment to clean energy equity. Olinsky-Paul added that the Connecticut Public Utility Regulatory Authority released a straw proposal that included sound equity provisions for the clean energy transition. Second, Olinsky-Paul suggested the program is limited in budget and scope relative to the Commonwealth's climate goals. Third, Olinsky-Paul indicated storage incentives rates are insufficient for making storage accessible, adding that storage is becoming increasingly valuable for winter peak demand reduction. Lastly, Olinsky-Paul noted a lack of public reporting and transparency around ConnectedSolutions program performance.

Aaron Gunderson (Passive House Massachusetts)

Gunderson appreciated the inclusion of many Passive House Massachusetts recommendations in the Draft Plan, and highlighted a specific recommendation for expanding Passive House incentives into 1-4-unit buildings. Gunderson added that Passive House Institute US has a new prescriptive path for smaller buildings to mitigate higher cost premiums for smaller buildings. Gunderson supported the Path to Zero program, as well as deep energy retrofits in the Low-Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN) program.

3. Council Updates & Business

Virtual Meeting Procedure Review

McCarey reviewed the virtual EEAC meeting procedures, which included the following:

1. The Council meetings would be recorded.
2. All attendees except for Councilors and presenters would remain muted for the duration of the meeting.
3. Councilors would hold comments until the end of presentations, but Councilors and other participants should speak instead of using any chat functionality.
4. Councilors who disconnect from meetings need to announce when they rejoin.
5. All Council votes would be taken by a roll call for accuracy.

April Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Bodemer motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Boyd seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed. Abbe and Commissioner Woodcock abstained. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Executive Committee.

April Special EEAC Meeting Minutes

Manning motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Peterson seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed. Arcate, Boyd, Commissioner Woodcock, Villanueva, and Weber abstained. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Council.

April EEAC Meeting Minutes

Peterson motioned to approve the minutes as submitted. Bodemer seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed. Commissioner Woodcock and Weber abstained. The minutes were approved, as submitted, by the Council.

Climate Act

McCary reminded Councilors that the Climate Act called for a GHG reduction goal for Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plans, the inclusion of the Social Cost of Carbon in benefit cost analysis, and an annual \$12 million funding transfer from the Mass Save budget to the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center for workforce development. McCary said the Climate Act also featured language directing the PAs to prioritize projects that reduce GHG emissions.

Energy Efficiency Guidelines

McCary said the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) order on updated Energy Efficiency Guidelines would be discussed at a future Council meeting.

4. April Draft Plan Review

McCary indicated the April Draft Plan review would begin with a summary from the program administrators (PAs), Plan metrics overview from the C-Team, followed by Council discussion on priority topics and other Plan elements. McCary said that the Council would work toward developing the July Resolution on the Draft Plan, which is statutorily required by July 31st. McCary added that the Executive Committee determined an additional Council meeting would be needed during July to facilitate completion of the July Resolution and Plan comments.

Program Administrator Overview

Porter, on behalf of the PAs, presented a high-level summary of 2022-2024 Plan benefits, annual savings, GHG emissions reductions, and statewide budget. Porter also highlighted Plan priorities set forth by the Council and other stakeholders in the Commonwealth.

Consultant Team Metrics Overview

Belliveau, Lynch, Jacobs, and Johnson, on behalf of the C-Team, presented an overview of the April Draft Plan spending, savings, and benefits metrics across each sector. Belliveau suggested that the changing energy efficiency landscape would require realignment of Plan metrics with new State and Council priorities around equity, climate, active demand management (ADM), and workforce development. Lynch noted the Council priorities were fairly well incorporated into the

Residential sector, but a substantial portion of Income Eligible (IES) investment would be directed toward fossil fuel efficiency instead of electrification. Jacobs noted C&I budget benefits, budget, and savings were substantially lower compared to the 2019-2021 Plan largely due to a decrease in lighting and continued reliance on upstream and midstream approaches. Johnson described planned workforce development spending and activities included in the 2022-2024 Plan. Lynch and Jacobs also summarized equity-specific metrics for IES, moderate income, and small business customer segments.

Council Discussion by Topic

Overall Comments on the April Draft Plan

Commissioner Woodcock commented that the Draft Plan successfully established the destination for the Mass Save programs, but expressed concern about three categories: the Climate Bill, electrification, and lower C&I spending. Commissioner Woodcock said the C-Team's Assessment of Potential identified achievement levels consistent with the Climate Bill mandate, of which the Draft Plan fell short. Commissioner Woodcock also said that more emphasis was needed for near-term electrification results. For the C&I sector, Commissioner Woodcock stressed the need to pursue savings opportunities that can compensate for lost claimable lighting savings. Commissioner Woodcock also noted that equity was reflected as a priority in the budget, but more granularity is needed to illustrate how equitable outcomes will be achieved.

Johnson thought the Draft Plan was extremely well-written and demonstrated a good understanding of the programs and stakeholder priorities. Johnson appreciated the increased weatherization budget and targeted marketing to delivered fuel customers. Johnson noted that more detail and data would be required to understand program delivery strategy. Johnson recommended that the PAs bolster their staff since significant customer engagement will be needed to increase program participation. Johnson disagreed with the Plan Text that the market for weatherization was saturated, and added that audit measures still motivate program participation.

Wambui asked how much of the Plan budget would be dedicated to customers who have been underserved in the past, how benefits would be equitably distributed across the Commonwealth, and why fossil fuel investments were increased in the Income Eligible sector. Wambui stated that Income Eligible customers reliant on fossil fuels would suffer once the market transitions to electricity. Wambui said including equity targets in the Term Sheet and addressing stakeholder questions on equity would make for a good Plan, but inequity would continue without these elements.

Boyd was pleased to see commitments to equity, fuel switching, and workforce development, but fully agreed with previous comments that more detail was needed to illustrate the path to achieving desired outcomes. Boyd understood that lost lighting savings have decreased benefits, and suggested new benefits could be captured by reaching underserved populations. Boyd added that fossil fuel incentives comprised too much of the budget, while heat pump investments needed to be increased, particularly in water heating and New Construction.

Arcate praised the inclusion of many Equity Working Group (EWG) recommendations in the Draft Plan. Arcate supported comments from Councilors regarding the path to and measurement of equitable outcomes. Arcate appreciated the C-Team's explanation of changing metrics of success, and emphasized that creative ideas need to be integrated into all future Plans. Based on the Draft Plan data, Arcate speculated that stakeholder priorities would not be achieved.

Abbe agreed with Wambui that the Council has specific objectives that have a sense of urgency, unlike previous planning cycles. Abbe said there are elements of the Draft Plan that respond to this sense of urgency, but much of the content felt like business-as-usual strategy.

Weber recommended that the core of the Plan should be driven by available customer data, noting that more advanced tools will be needed for future planning efforts.

Jacobson caveated his support for electrification by indicating the cost of heat pumps is higher and would reduce the amount of homes served.

Electrification

Peterson stressed the urgency of fuel switching efforts to meet climate goals. Peterson indicated that significantly increased heat pump and water heating spending would be required to meet the 2030 carbon reduction target.

Manning was concerned about reductions in combined heat and power (CHP) incentives given the benefits of onsite generation, such as resilience. Manning wondered if the benefits of CHP were considered before the reduction of CHP incentives. Commissioner Woodcock said deeper CHP discussion could be included with other C&I topics.

Villanueva said the large reduction of C&I spending opposes state climate goals. Villanueva suggested streamlining the technical analysis process and expanding financing opportunities in order to capture C&I savings potential. Villanueva also suggested new pilots, demonstrations, and technologies would be needed to push market transformation.

Rio agreed with Manning's comments on CHP, and added that hydrogen and renewable natural gas could be integrated into CHP moving forward. Rio added that fossil fuel incentives should be divested from to support electrification, which will be extremely labor and time intensive. Rio was concerned the workforce may not be sufficient to meet electrification goals.

Commissioner Woodcock asked the PAs if the high fossil fuel incentives for IES customers reflective of LEAN trying to serve as many customers as possible. Formica replied that the PAs and LEAN will continue discussion of Plan goals, but differences in IES and market rate project delivery contribute to the disparity in heating electrification investment. Formica indicated the IES process is much more involved since community assistance programs (CAPs) provide full assessments of all systems and perform weatherization, as opposed to the rebate process for market rate customers. Woodcock reiterated Wambui's comments regarding equitable electrification, and suggested the IES fossil fuel incentive levels should be reconsidered.

Abbe was disappointed by the reliance on fossil fuel efficiency in the income eligible sector. Abbe noted the Department of Housing and Community Development Division of Public Housing plans on wholistic electrification beginning with fossil fuel homes. Abbe said the climate crisis is an existential threat that will require independence from fossil fuels.

Peterson was concerned by the flat weatherization investment and modest increase in HVAC incentives for IES customers. Peterson suggested that ARPA-E funding would support increased investment in heat pump installations.

Bodemer said electrification is critical to achieving climate goals, but spending on low- and moderate-income customers is equally important to ensure they are not left behind. Bodemer said as much budget as possible needs to be allocated to this customer segment whenever appropriate.

Equity

Weber indicated that strategies to increase language isolated customer access to programs were not included in the Plan. Formica responded that research on the language isolated customer journey was included in the Strategic Evaluation Plan, along with plans for proactive marketing and outreach. Jacobson said most customers come through a portal that has four languages. Formica added that language isolated customers cut across all programs and measures, so there is not a dedicated budget allocated to them. Commissioner Woodcock said goals will be required to indicate progress is being made on increasing program access for language isolated customers.

Wambui opposed the claim that equity for language isolated customers could not be tracked, since there are entities like the Energy Trust of Oregon that have language-based equity targets and baselines.

Peterson supported the overall increase in low- and moderate-income spending, but noted the 80% incentive for electric and 70% incentive for gas heating systems would leave a substantial remainder for the customer which would lower participation. Peterson suggested a turnkey process would be simpler and reduce customer dropout. To Wambui's point, Peterson requested more detail and data transparency, especially on program budgets, workforce development, and municipal partnerships.

Bodemer emphasized that benchmarks and data are needed to demonstrate equitable program outcomes. Bodemer agreed that more detail on specific efforts like municipal partnerships is needed. Bodemer asked if the 12-15 partnerships were with municipalities or municipalities and community organizations. Georges replied that this includes both, and they can work together or separately but need to coordinate participation. McCarey said the C-team will be digging into data during Key Drivers process.

Commissioner Woodcock asked how existing data like participation or benefits by zip code could serve as a benchmark. Commissioner Woodcock said the overall budget seems to align with priorities on equity, but data will be needed to understand outcomes.

Johnson recommended the PAs conduct a participant study to understand why people unlikely to participate chose to participate in programs.

Wambui noted the EWG explored equity targets and data collection methods employed in other jurisdictions the PAs need to adopt in Massachusetts. Wollenburg said determining the best tracking method for each demographic will be a challenge since the methods need to vary. Wambui responded that this will be an iterative process that needs to begin somewhere, but the PAs need to be flexible. Commissioner Woodcock said the PAs need to first establish what data they can track at first, and then work with the Council to determine the benchmark for success.

5. Mid-Term Modifications

Consultant Team Recommendations for Mid-Term Modifications

Calcagni, on behalf of the C-Team, outlined each 2019-2021 mid-term modification (MTM) submitted by the PAs. Calcagni indicated that the C-Team worked with the PAs to understand each MTM and recommended that the Council approve all MTMs as submitted.

Council Discussion

Johnson asked what happened to the MTMs that the C-Team opposed during the May Executive Committee meeting. McCarey indicated the MTM requests the C-Team opposed were pulled back, but they may be brought forth later in the year. McCarey noted that they were primarily budget reduction requests from Eversource.

Resolution on Mid-Term Modifications and Vote

Manning motioned to approve the Resolution as submitted. Harak seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed. Commissioner Woodcock and Weber abstained. The Resolution was approved, as submitted, by the Council.

McCarey announced that Stephan Wollenburg would be leaving National Grid, and thanked him for his contributions to National Grid's program. Wollenburg indicated he would be transitioning to the renewable energy space.

6. Public Comment (Continued)

Andrew Yarrows (CLF – Conversation Law Foundation)

Yarrows commented that the Draft Plan includes most of the Council and EWG priorities, but successful implementation will require targeted investments, equitable goals, and data transparency. Yarrows added that the Plan should focus on achieving equitable outcomes and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with the Climate Roadmap.

Eugenia Gibbons (Healthcare Without Harm)

Gibbons encouraged meeting participants to review written public comment, submitted in collaboration with A Better City. Gibbons said the Draft Plan failed to meet ambitions required to drive market transformation and fulfill climate goals. Gibbons noted that the C&I budget reduction was unjustifiable given the sector's remaining potential savings, so the C&I customer process needs improvement. Gibbons also expressed support for the EWG's recommendations, as well as more robust data reporting, benchmarking, and health benefits in benefit-cost analysis.

Paulina Casasola (Green Justice Coalition)

Casasola noted that the Plan needs to specify budgets for landlords and renters, particularly in small buildings, and specific actions to encourage participation for this customer segment. Casasola added that goals and budgets tied to reaching underserved customers, such as language isolated customers, need to be specified in the Plan.

Mariama White-Hammond (City of Boston)

White-Hammond indicated the previous Planning Cycle was extremely demoralizing since the DPU rejected key Plan elements. White-Hammond emphasized that net zero emissions by 2050 would not be achievable unless bold transformational shifts are incited by the 2022-2024 Plan. White-Hammond said the timing of the anniversary of George Floyd's tragic murder was not a coincidence, as decisions made during Plan development will determine whether people continue to suffer from energy burdens and other consequences of social injustice. White-Hammond urged the Council to reject any Plan that fails to include equitable goals, tracking metrics, and innovations to move the Commonwealth toward climate goals.

7. Adjournment

Commissioner Woodcock, as chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:05 PM.