



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, April 6, 2022
Virtual Meeting: Zoom

Executive Committee Members Present: Greg Abbe, Amy Boyd, Emmett Lyne, Maggie McCarey

Executive Committee Members Absent: Jo Ann Bodemer, Dennis Villanueva

Other Attendees: Eric Belliveau, Adrian Caesar, Emily Webb, Paul Johnson, Rachel Evans, Elliott Jacobson, Maggie Downey, Jerrold Oppenheim, Jodi Hanover, Frank Gundal, Alyssa Vargas, Audrey Eidelman Kiernan, Kate Peters, Martijn Fleuren, Sarah McDaniel, Wesley Couture, Bob Eckel

1. Call to Order

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

2. Executive Committee Updates and Business

McCarey indicated that Zoom Webinar is being tested as the new platform for Executive Committee and EEAC meetings.

McCarey announced that DOER is working on updates to the EEAC Bylaws to allow for continued virtual meetings in a hybrid fashion. McCarey said the updated EEAC Bylaws will be shared for the May Executive Committee Meeting. Evans indicated that current Open Meeting Law does not allow for fully remote meetings, but a quorum of the EEAC could be present at a physical meeting location to enable virtual participation by additional councilors and the public.

Hanover asked if there is pending legislation to allow fully remote meetings. Evans was unaware of any such legislation, but believed that virtual meeting participation is very beneficial for some councilors and members of the public.

3. Home Performance Contractor Home Energy Audit Pricing Update

Peters noted that the weatherization pricing request for quotes (RFQ) is open, and the program administrators (PAs) have extended the timeframe for responses until April 11th. Peters said that the results of the RFQ and decision-making process can only be disclosed with the Council once the RFQ is closed. Peters indicated that a notification would go out to winning bidders on May 2nd, so the PAs could share results with the Council thereafter. Peters said that all questions and answers related to the RFQ have been posted publicly.

McCarey asked if the pricing proposals and differences in home performance contractor (HPC) and independent installation contractor (IIC) pricing would be provided in May. Peters said the PAs would commit to providing an overview of results to preserve bidder confidentiality, while still communicating key findings to facilitate transparency. Peters expressed willingness to work with DOER to determine the best method for reporting results.

Peters said the PAs are working on the Quality Assurance/Quality Control process-related data request that Abbe put forth previously.

Johnson announced that cellulose and spray foam prices would increase within the next few weeks. Johnson recalled a contractor survey was administered two years ago when COVID-19 struck and asked if all submitted questions would be shared since they were not all posted previously. Peters replied that questions are screened to ensure they actually pertain to the bid, but contractors can reach out if they believe their questions have not been shared. Johnson said that the RFQ states that the PAs and the vendor CLEAResult are not required to reveal any bid results or consider certain bids, so they could theoretically discard bids and decide on prices themselves. Johnson believed this provision would not lead to transparency and suggested that all bids should be shared with names redacted. Peters noted that the PA procurement and legal staff could only commit to sharing an overview of the bid results at the present, but people are welcome to ask additional questions at the end of the bid process. Johnson suggested that contractors would not be comfortable with the level of transparency that has been described, and the results need to be public since Mass Save is a public program. Johnson would not be surprised if contractors went on strike in response to a lack of transparent RFQ results. Peters acknowledged this concern and said the RFQ results could be discussed once the RFQ closes.

McCarey agreed that transparency is essential, so the results should be discussed when available to determine if the level of transparency is appropriate, particularly on any differences in IIC and HPC prices. Johnson believed that releasing results with redacted names should not violate the confidentiality agreement in the RFQ. Johnson added that if program performance fails due to a contractor strike, the Council and PAs may have issues with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). Johnson asked if year-to-date weatherization and home energy audit (HEA) data could be shared next month. Johnson said that HEA and weatherization numbers for January and February did not disaggregate jobs performed by HPCs, who likely completed most of the weatherization projects. McCarey recalled Johnson made this request in March, so the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) can follow-up with the PAs.

4. Mass Save Program Update – Implementation Efforts During COVID-19

Lyne indicated that the PAs are actively engaged with health and safety experts and are prepared to share an update on program health and safety protocols during the April EEAC meeting. Lyne was encouraged by the lack of reported COVID-19 transmissions during March.

Abbe asked what impacts the enhanced weatherization incentives had on program cost-effectiveness and whether the PAs have considered continuing enhanced incentives. Peters indicated that the PAs want to balance incentives and cost-effectiveness to maximize customer uptake. Peters said the 2022-2024 Plan goals warrant high incentives for underserved populations like moderate-income customers and renters. Peters said the PAs have rolled back the standard weatherization incentives to 75% of project costs, which has been generally effective for driving market-rate weatherization. Peters added that heat pump incentives should encourage the co-delivery of heat pumps and weatherization within target segments.

5. Consultant Team 2022 Q2 Workplan

Belliveau summarized primary tasks in the Consultant Team (C-Team) 2022 Q2 Workplan including review of 2022-2024 Plan Compliance Filings, Q1 results review, EEAC subcommittee support, EM&V, and EEAC website updates. Belliveau noted that a particular emphasis will be placed on supporting implementation of expanded elements of the 2022-2024 Plan.

Webb indicated the full C-Team Workplan Memo would be shared following the Executive Committee meeting.

Johnson asked if EEAC website updates could be shared with council, and what evaluation, measurement, and verification (EM&V) studies would impact the 2022-2024 Plan. Belliveau replied that the PAs originally removed the majority of lighting savings from the Plan until the DPU directed them to evaluate whether there was a market for direct install lighting within renter and low/moderate-income customer segments. McCarey thought the study would look at whether renter and low/moderate-income customers purchasing habits are different, which would require extending lighting offerings for all customers to determine if any differences exist. Belliveau said the evaluation is meant to determine a pathway to effectively reach customers. McCarey said there is a minority/women-owned business enterprise (MWBE) participation study for Mass Save to understand their participation in programs. Johnson suggested that Council input should be solicited as it relates to EM&V studies. Belliveau noted that the EM&V group submitted the Strategic Evaluation Plan with each draft of the 2022-2024 Plan, so councilors could provide comments there. Belliveau also noted that Ralph Prael, the EM&V subject matter expert, would likely be providing an update during the summer.

McCarey committed to following up with Webb and the C-Team to consider soliciting Council feedback on the EEAC website updates.

Lyne expressed great appreciation for the C-Team, including Jeff Schlegel and Griffith Keating, and the support they provided in the compliance filing process.

6. April EEAC Meeting –Agenda Finalization

McCarey announced that the April Council meeting would include a C-Team presentation on Q4 2021 results, workforce development update regarding collaboration with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), an update on the moderate-income delivery model, and an overview of the 2022-2024 Plan DPU Compliance Filings due in April and May.

McCarey suggested that the PA update on the health and safety protocols could be posted as a meeting material and accompanied by a brief PA update as opposed to a formal presentation. Webb indicated that the April EEAC meeting is on April 27th due to conflict with school vacation.

Abbe suggested that the C-Team presentation on Q4 results and the PA April Compliance Filing overview should be high-priority items on the agenda.

Boyd recommended that the workforce development update could be moved to the May EEAC meeting agenda.

Hanover clarified that enhanced moderate-income heating system incentives would not be available until May, so the moderate-income updates may be better suited for the May EEAC meeting. Boyd said that covering workforce development in April would make more sense then.

Johnson said that an update on the weatherization pricing RFQ should be presented during April. McCarey said that bidder notifications would be shared May 2nd, so a detailed update could be added to the May EEAC meeting agenda. Peters stated that bids and results cannot be discussed until the respondent notifications are released on May 2nd.

Abbe wondered if the Council could streamline editing and review of documents that complies with Open Meeting Law, since editing the EEAC Priorities document in March was very tedious. McCarey responded that DOER tries to incorporate all written comments prior to meetings, but there was a large amount of feedback on the proposed changes which prompted extensive discussion. McCarey suggested that votes could be pushed back a month if there is substantial feedback on Council documents. McCarey said that the Executive Committee could also perform more editing prior to sharing documents with the full Council. Abbe and Boyd expressed willingness to edit documents within the Executive Committee to streamline finalization and votes during Council meetings.

7. May EEAC Meeting – Draft Agenda Topics

McCarey indicated that the May Council meeting would cover the Q1 2022 Report and an update on the Minority- and Women-Owned Contractor Study. McCarey said discussion on the updated EEAC Bylaws will also be included in the May EEAC meeting agenda.

8. Adjournment

McCarey, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:01 AM.