



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 11, 2023
Virtual Meeting: Zoom

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

Executive Committee Members Absent: (None)

Other Attendees: Eric Belliveau, Adrian Caesar, Gretchen Calcagni, Rachel Evans, Paul Johnson, Elliott Jacobson, Alyssa Vargas, Maggie Downey, Chris Porter, Sam Nigro, Ina Dasso, David Lyons, Frank Gundal, Margie Lynch, Alissa Whiteman, Audrey Eidelman Kiernan

1. Call to Order

McCarey, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:06 AM.

2. Executive Committee Updates and Business

McCarey introduced Ina Dasso, the EEAC Manager at the Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

Jacobson asked if a Low-income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN) representative would be added as a standing Executive Committee member. McCarey said the full Council would have to amend the Executive Committee Charter to add LEAN as an Executive Committee member.

McCarey announced that Governor Healey issued an executive order which created an Office of Climate Innovation and Resilience within the Governor's Office. Governor Healey appointed Melissa Hoffer as Climate Chief and Rebecca Tepper as Secretary of the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

3. EEAC Management

Follow-Ups from December EEAC Meeting

McCarey listed two follow-up items from the December EEAC Meeting:

1. Richard Keleher, a condominium owner in Acton, requested a refund for installed heat pumps due to unclear messaging on whole-home heat pump rebate eligibility.
2. Councilor Paul Johnson requested data which attributes program participation to specific marketing impressions in order to assess winter price mitigation marketing strategies.

Lyne stated that he would discuss the marketing impressions analysis with the program administrators (PAs) and that the PAs intend to disseminate lessons-learned from winter-price mitigation strategies. Lyne added that the PAs are interested in extending winter price mitigation offerings beyond the current deadline of January 31st. The PAs will file a notice to the Department of Public Utilities within the following week.

Bodemer supported McCarey's responsiveness to public comment since it facilitated transparency. McCarey replied that receipt of written comment is acknowledged prior to posting on the EEAC website, but responding explicitly to all public comment is challenging. McCarey suggested that the Executive Committee identify public comments that require follow-up. Porter agreed that the Council and PAs should demonstrate responsiveness to public comment where appropriate, and while the PAs have not formally tracked public comment follow-up through the EEAC, they often respond to customer concerns or questions separately. Porter said the PAs will consider tracking these responses more formally.

McCarey said that several public comments regarding active demand management programs have also triggered follow-up with the PAs.

Councilor Term Updates

Evans announced that the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) appointed three new Councilors:

- Tim Costa representing ISO New England
- Meg Lusardi representing the Massachusetts Non-profit Network
- Jonathan Schreiber representing the Massachusetts Association of Realtors

McCarey noted that DOER finalized interviews for the Municipalities representative but Brooks Winner would continue his role on the Council until the DPU approves DOER's recommendation. McCarey said that many contractors expressed interest in representing Energy Efficiency Small Businesses on the Council, so DOER is vetting prospective representatives to ensure they meet statutory requirements. McCarey said that Dasso had developed the election survey, but Paul Johnson would continue his role on the Council until the election for the Energy Efficiency Small Businesses Seat is completed.

Johnson asked when the election would be opened. McCarey responded that the election candidate list needs to be finalized before opening the election. Evans stated that the Green Communities Act requires the winner be selected by a majority vote, and since there are more than five candidates, the election may require multiple rounds.

Porter asked whether written statements would be provided to help voters differentiate between candidates. McCarey said that each candidate's statement of interest would be posted online.

Villanueva asked how Councilors for each sector are defined. McCarey said Councilor roles and the process for their appointments are defined in the Green Communities Act.

2023 Meeting Schedule and Topics

McCarey stated that the 2023 EEAC schedule and topic list was updated after the December EEAC meeting and requested feedback on proposed dates and topics. McCarey said that July 5th and October 11th meeting dates are highlighted since they represent likely holiday conflicts. McCarey suggested that the July 5th Executive Committee Meeting and October 11th EEAC Meeting both be postponed by one week. Lyne and Bodemer agreed that the two highlighted meetings should be postponed.

McCarey said that discussion of the Income-Eligible program would be interspersed throughout the year and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center would provide semi-annual updates on workforce development. McCarey added that the Equity Working Group would share updates on new initiatives in Greater Lawrence in April.

Bodemer advocated for frequent updates on the Income-Eligible program, as opposed to receiving annual updates with too much content. Bodemer recommended that updates on the moderate-income program implementation also be provided semiannually. Jacobson agreed that semiannual presentations on the Income-Eligible program would work well, but LEAN staff would need to confirm the meeting dates.

Abbe suggested that the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and updates on the Healey administration be added as meeting topics. Abbe said that intentional discussion related to new initiatives needs to occur. McCarey replied that coordination of state and federal offerings with existing Mass Save programs is included in the draft 2023 EEAC Priorities, so the topic can be added to 2023 EEAC meeting agendas.

Jacobson asked whether meetings would allow hybrid or virtual attendance. McCarey said that the Open Meetings Act exemption allowing virtual participation expires at the end of March, but the EEAC Remote Participation Policy allows for remote presentations. Evans clarified that the Remote Participation Policy requires a physical quorum of councilors and all voting councilors are required to attend in-person unless it is unreasonably difficult for them to do so.

Abbe left the virtual meeting at 10:45 AM.

4. EEAC Planning

2022 In Review – Feedback and Comments

McCarey requested feedback on 2022 EEAC management and meetings.

Lyne said that the PAs appreciated timely agenda development, coordination on meeting materials, and shorter agendas allowing for coverage of all materials. Lyne commented that tone during early 2022 meetings was improper, but DOER effectively reset EEAC meeting expectations. Lyne also said that the PAs welcome the opportunity to present program results,

lessons learned, and customer questions and feedback. McCarey said that Dasso will further support EEAC management and meeting materials development.

McCarey proposed that the Executive Committee prioritize meeting topics so important agenda items are sufficiently covered. McCarey said that EEAC meetings are used for both Council discussion and public education and engagement, which presents a challenge if Councilors want to discuss details as opposed to high-level presentation materials. McCarey asked if meeting materials can provide digestible information for public consumption, while EEAC meetings focus on deep-dive discussions.

Lyne noted that the PA quarterly reports include extensive information, but feedback is rarely provided. Bodemer said that quarterly reports are good sources of public information.

Bodemer agreed that the Council should balance high-level presentations with detailed discussions. Bodemer said it will be important to determine which topics require deep dives in advance of 2025-2027 Plan development. McCarey asked if three to four deep dive topics should be identified in the 2023 EEAC Priorities. Bodemer said that equity, decarbonization, and workforce development were three pillars of 2022-2024 Plan and this should be reflected in the EEAC Priorities. McCarey responded that these pillars include many subtopics, so a Council survey might inform priority topics for deeper discussion.

Villanueva stated that reducing energy consumption is the main charge of the EEAC despite the strong focus on electrification, which does not always save energy. McCarey said that the statute now prioritizes greenhouse gas emissions reductions through energy efficiency, electrification, and active demand management. Jacobson said that those decarbonization strategies compete at some points and need to be balanced.

Evans said that DOER is obligated to post meeting agendas and materials. While presentations do not have to occur during meetings, Evans said that full Council deliberation or discussion outside of EEAC meetings is prohibited, so Councilors would need to review all materials in advance of meetings to enable discussion. Evans added that EEAC meeting minutes list meeting materials in order to inform the public of EEAC operations and comply with the Open Meetings Law.

Johnson supported the idea of posting presentations for Council review, with the expectation that Councilors come prepared to discuss all meeting materials. Johnson commented that Ruth Georges and the Consultant Team (C-Team) developed great presentations on workforce development and 2022 Quarter 3 Results, respectively, but discussion was too limited. Johnson recommended minimizing presentation time to maximize discussion time. McCarey said that shifting the EEAC meeting framework to allow for more discussion would require full Council feedback before sharing this intent with the public.

Boyd suggested that DOER administer quarterly surveys to determine deep dive topics for each quarter. Boyd said that analysis versus application is a consideration for all presentations because discussion of strategy improvements is more beneficial than quantitative analysis in some instances.

2023 Priorities

McCarey shared the Draft 2023 EEAC Priorities, which includes many 2022 Priorities in addition to topics related to winter-price-mitigation strategies, federal funding opportunities, and progress of program implementation. McCarey asked if there are critical priorities that warrant deeper discussions.

Bodemer agreed that critical priorities should be highlighted to ensure they receive appropriate focus. Bodemer said that the EEAC is an advisory council and suggested that the PAs identify areas for Council discussion that will support meeting Plan goals. Lyne said that the PAs will review the Draft 2023 EEAC Priorities and discuss Bodemer's suggestion. Lyne noted that the PAs have never provided direct guidance on what the Council should discuss to support program design and implementation strategy.

Boyd concurred that the PAs should provide this guidance to leverage the Council's expertise. Lyne appreciated the request and thanked Acadia Center for directing the PAs and LEAN toward American Rescue Plan Act funding opportunities. Lyne added that the PAs are seeking funding to support pre-weatherization and mitigate barriers to electrification.

Jacobson commented that federal funds will need to be incorporated into existing Mass Save programs, but Department of Energy funding is discretionary and could be reduced by 8-12%. Jacobson said that cuts to discretionary funding could hinder electrification, weatherization, and Fuel Assistance.

McCarey asked if a Councilor survey could help identify EEAC priorities for deeper discussions. Boyd supported this idea if survey results could be generated in time, but new Councilors may have difficulty responding.

5. January EEAC Meeting – Finalize Agenda

McCarey announced that the January EEAC Meeting would cover Council updates and business, active demand management programs, 2023 EEAC priorities and meeting topics, and a vote on the Equity Working Group Charter.

Lyne suggested adding updates to the agenda for electrification, particularly 2022 successes and barriers and initial 2023 results, and qualitative discussion on the heat pump installer network. Boyd and Bodemer agreed that the PAs should provide updates on the heat pump installer network.

Boyd asked if the Equity Working Group would be required to elect the rotating EEAC seats. McCarey replied that only two Councilors expressed interest in filling the two EEAC seats on the Equity Working Group, so this would be announced during the January EEAC Meeting in case additional Councilors are interested. Evans said that this will facilitate new Councilor onboarding in January. Belliveau noted that the Consultant Team (C-Team) has orientation materials that can support new Councilors.

Bodemer suggested that a Mass Save Data tutorial and update may be helpful for both new and existing Councilors. Lyne said that a Mass Save Data tutorial and updates on other data tools, like the Google Earth tools offered to Community First Partners, could be provided after January. McCarey said that all program data sources should be presented to support better understanding. Johnson agreed with Bodemer and McCarey.

Johnson requested that the 2022 Quarter 3 Report and corresponding C-Team presentation be discussed in January and suggested that truncated Council discussions be added to the following EEAC meeting agenda as a standard practice. Boyd suggested that Quarter 3 Report discussion is important and McCarey agreed.

Johnson recommended that someone present results from the Clean Heat Commission Final Report. In addition, Johnson recommended that presentations list key questions, issues, and decisions, to better frame Council discussion. McCarey said that the Clean Heat Commission Final Report can be discussed during the February Executive Committee Meeting.

McCarey announced that the Consultant Services Request for Responses (RFR) was posted, responses are due in mid-February, and DOER will schedule Executive Committee review meetings. Evans said that Executive Committee preliminary review of responses will occur during executive sessions, which are closed to the public.

6. February EEAC Meeting – Finalize Agenda

McCarey stated that the February EEAC meeting would include Council updates, votes on the 2023 EEAC priorities and budget, and active demand management program updates.

7. Adjournment

McCarey, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 11:42 AM.