MA ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, December 18, 2024
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Councilors Present:	Greg Abbe, Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony, Brian Beote, Audrey Hettinger, Paul Johnson, Steven Miller, Kyle Murray, William Rose, Mary Wambui, Alexis Washburn, Sharon Weber, Brooks Winner, Martijn Fleuren, Tim Costa
Councilors Absent:	Daniel Leary, Meg Lusardi, Robert Rio, Cindy Carroll, Maggie Downey, Michael Ferrante, Kate Peters, Chris Porter, Stephanie Terach, Jillian Winterkorn
Consultants Present:	Adrian Caesar, Gretchen Calcagni, Margie Lynch, Griff Keating, Eric Belliveau, Ben Cartwright
DOER Staff Present:	Ina Dasso, Alissa Whiteman, Jo Ann Bodemer, Rachel Evans, Ian Finlayson

1. Call to Order

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 PM.

Virtual Meeting Procedure
Bodemer reviewed the virtual EEAC meeting procedure:

1. The Council meeting would be recorded, for administrative purposes only.
2. All attendees except for Councilors and presenters will 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 function.
4. Councilors who disconnect from meetings need to announce when they rejoin.
5. All Council votes would be taken by roll call.

2. Public Comment

Susan Olshuff (Springfield, West Springfield, and Pittsfield Community First Partner)

Olshuff announced that she will no longer be managing the Community First Partnership (CFP) in Springfield. Olshuff said that the successes in the CFP would not have happened without All in Energy and HomeWorks Energy, program administrator (PA) vendors that provide services for the CFPs and residential programs, respectively. Olshuff said that HomeWorks Energy allowed the CFP team to focus on equity-focused issues. Olshuff said that the CFPs need to meet cynicism about Mass Save from the target audiences with consistent communication and savings. Olshuff provided an example that a customer's oil furnace failed last February and was reminded of Mass Save through a letter from the mayor, which HomeWorks distributed to target customers. Olshuff explained that the customer was offered a gas furnace because the ground was too frozen to install heat pumps. Olshuff said that communication was poor; the customer called for months, complained to the mayor's office, then was connected with Olshuff. Olshuff said that All in Energy has helped the customer get service. Olshuff believed that this customer's service was poor because she is a Latin woman residing in a poor neighborhood. Olshuff described another difficult case with a church that completed an audit in March 2024 then received a second invoice for services they could not afford. Olshuff said that the church was supposed to be targeted in the last Main Streets campaign, but nothing happened, because there is a law in Pittsfield that is creating additional costs for churches and small businesses. Olshuff said that the church minister believes that Mass Save is not serving them because they are a Black church, though it is a city issue. Olshuff said that perception of Mass Save is negatively impacted by these issues. Olshuff praised the CFPs and the customer coaching programs and reiterated that Mass Save needs to progress.

3. Council Business and Updates

Program Administrator Updates

Lyne provided updates on the adjudication of the 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). Lyne reviewed the timeline, major filings to date, and key findings from the adjudicatory proceedings.

4. 2025 EEAC Meeting Dates and Topics

Bodemer presented proposed EEAC meeting dates and topics and noted that both were informed by the end-of-year EEAC survey. Bodemer also identified in-person meetings and dates that would vary from the standard cadence.

Council Discussion

Rose said that he will not be available on October 22 for the proposed in-person meeting due to a conflict. Bodemer said that Rose may need to delegate his vote to another Councilor.

Johnson said that he was impressed with DOER's adjustments to the proposed meeting structure. Winner agreed that the revised structure is an improvement.

Fleuren asked if meetings can allow for more discussion time. Bodemer said that other Councilors expressed similar feedback, and DOER will keep this in mind.

Murray and Rose volunteered to present during Councilor spotlights. Bodemer thanked them and encouraged other Councilors to reach out if interested.

Washburn asked if DOER could post a list of the working group initiatives. Bodemer said that the working groups will not be EEAC groups, but will include DOER, the AGO, the EEAC Consultants, and AGO Consultants, who will report out to the EEAC. Bodemer said that Lusardi recommended a cheat sheet for all new initiatives and Program Administrator (PA) commitments in the 2025-2027 Plan.

Murray asked if the Decarbonization Clearinghouse proposal is missing from the meeting topics. Bodemer said that this would likely be an update during a February or March EEAC meeting. Murray said that the outcomes of the Decarbonization Clearinghouse work will be relevant to Mass Save, and asked if the topic of non-ratepayer funding in July will include a concrete proposal or general brainstorming. Bodemer said that DOER envisioned an update on available non-ratepayer funding but agreed that brainstorming other sources would be beneficial.

Johnson seconded Murray's comment about the Clearinghouse and suggested that the Council discuss the capabilities of the Residential program because contractors are struggling with the Hancock implementation software.

Winner suggested that the updates for 2025 indicate when there are notable studies posted on the EEAC website, such as nonparticipant studies. Bodemer agreed.

5. Mass Save 2024 Third Quarter (Q3): Performance Report

Calcagni, Lynch, Caesar, and Keating, on behalf of the EEAC Consultants, presented the Mass Save Q3 2024 results including an overview of 2022-2024 performance and sector-specific highlights.

Council Discussion

Johnson said that participation in the Residential sector is consistently between 40-50% despite 92% of the Term being complete, and that the discussed hockey stick trend is primarily relevant to the C&I sector. Johnson said that the Council needs to address low cumulative participation next Term. Keating agreed with Johnson's concerns but noted the impacts of the MTMs. Keating recommended looking to the unit production of priority measures and that the PAs are providing more granular measure-level data in quarterly reports for the new Term.

Abbe said that he was surprised by the quantity of heat pump displacements for gas customers. Abbe asked about customer motivation and if the displacements were full or partial. Abbe was concerned that customers were using heat pumps for cooling as opposed to heating. Keating said that the PAs planned discussions with LEAN regarding this, but gas-displacing heat pumps incur the same energy savings as delivered-fuel replacements as suggested in the heat pump metering study. Keating said that there is likely some increase in cooling loads. Bodemer said that the $10k whole-home rebate requires full displacement, and properly-sized heat pumps will fully displace the heating load.

Wambui asked if the PAs can track in future reporting whether Unitil's heat-pump discount rate is increasing fuel switching. Bodemer and Commissioner Mahony said that DOER will keep this in mind as it works with the Interagency Rates Working groups.

6. Proposed Equity Targets

EWG Update
Bodemer, on behalf of the EEAC Equity Working Group (EWG), shared the 2025-2027 Equity Targets, to assess progress toward planned outcomes using investment as a guideline. Doug Quattrochi, Cindy Luppi, and Charlie Harak also joined the meeting on behalf of the EEAC Equity Working Group (EWG).

Wambui commented that the Equity Targets are tethered to the PAs' 2025-2027 Plan and the priority communities selected during the planning process. Wambui said that the targets are important for identifying and correcting systemic inequalities.

Luppi underscored how central distributive justice was in developing the Equity Targets. Luppi said that the nonparticipant study provided evidence that gateway communities are investing more into the Mass Save programs than they are receiving in benefits. Luppi said that it is important for the EEAC to keep a clear list of these communities in the Plan and maintain transparency to ensure progress and investment.

Quattrochi commented that his organization, Mass Landlords, supports the Equity Targets. Quattrochi said that most housing providers in the targeted communities are small, undercapitalized operators, and these Targets will change the game for renters in these communities.

7. Draft EEAC Priorities for 2025

DOER Overview
Bodemer reviewed the Draft EEAC Priorities for 2025 and said that the Council will vote on its 2025 Priorities in January. Bodemer encouraged Councilors to provide additional feedback.

Council Discussion
Johnson said that he liked the priority in Section 8 regarding lessons-learned from the current Term to inform the 2025-2027 Plan. Johnson said that the Council requested quarterly updates on greenhouse gas emission reductions, but it is not included in this draft. Johnson said that the Council should provide a specific cadence for reporting on underperforming measures. Bodemer disagreed because reporting on underperforming measures is an ongoing obligation for the PAs. Johnson said that the Council should include a requirement for the PAs to provide nonparticipant data by building, particularly in equity communities, to the CFPs.

Winner agreed with Johnson's last point and said that it came up during the DPU hearings, but customer privacy was an issue. Winner said that personally-identifiable information is exempt from public records law, so this is not a concern regarding Freedom of Information Act requests

from municipalities. Winner said that that the draft Priorities looked great, pending further wordsmithing.

Weber encouraged continued discussion regarding how the PAs will monitor instances of heat-pump-refrigerant leaks because homeowners are not required to report them. Bodemer said that the Council can modify the language to make it more open. Weber suggested adding a priority for monitoring advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) rollout. Weber said that there are ways to use AMI even if advanced meters are not fully deployed across the Commonwealth. Bodemer asked if this would be a PA update or priority. Weber advised that discussion in late 2025 may be too late. Bodemer said that DOER can determine when to include this in the proposed 2025 meetings topics.

Wambui said that she appreciated that affordability is explicitly called out in the Priorities but asked where coordination with other programs fits in. Wambui said that integrated and coordinated planning is important when a utility is considering energy efficiency as a potential solution. Bodemer said that these likely fit under Priority 8, but the Council will need to discuss coordinated efforts and other areas that overlap with Mass Save.

Quattrochi said that the Council can coordinate with him if there is interest in discussing refrigerant leaks in greater detail. Quattrochi cautioned against increased refrigerant leaks in underserved communities because the Environmental Protection Agency only provides leak guidance for larger buildings.

8. Adjournment

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, adjourned the meeting at 2:58 PM.

Meeting Materials:

- Official Meeting Notice
- Meeting Link
- Agenda
- Program Administrator December Updates for EEAC
- 2025-2027 Equity Targets
- EEAC Consultant 2024 Q3 Results Presentation
- Draft EEAC Priorities for 2025
- 2025 EEAC Meeting Schedule and Proposed Topics