



## MINUTES

### Joint Committee of the CT Energy Efficiency Board and the Connecticut Green Bank Board of Directors

Wednesday, June 17, 2020  
1:30-3:30 p.m.

Due to COVID-19, all participants joined via the conference call.

#### In Attendance

Voting Members: Eric Brown, Michael Li, Lonnie Reed, Brenda Watson

Non-Voting Members: Stephen Bruno, Bryan Garcia, Bert Hunter, Donna Wells, John Viglione  
(pending voting member)

Others: Ron Araujo, Gentiana Darragjati, Craig Diamond, Brian Farnen, Ricardo Jordan, Russell King, Liz Murphy, Madeline Priest, Glenn Reed, Cheryl Samuels, Ariel Schneider, Kim Stevenson, Brendan Thomas, Nicholas Zuba

Unnamed Callers: 01, 02, 08, 09

1. Call to Order

Eric Brown called the meeting to order at 1:36 pm.

2. Public Comments

No public comments.

3. Review and approval of Meeting Minutes from the December 18, 2019 meeting.

#### Resolution #1

Motion to approve the meeting minutes for December 18, 2019.

**Upon a motion made by Mike Li and seconded by Eric Brown, the Joint Committee voted to approve Resolution 1. Brenda Watson and Lonnie Reed abstained, none opposed. Motion approved.**

4. COVID-19 Status - Updates

- Bryan Garcia summarized the COVID-19 updates with Liz Murphy and Ron Araujo. A survey was compiled to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the clean energy industry in CT and understand how revitalization and stabilization could occur. It was a 33-question survey with over 150 responses, of which over 90% were small businesses.
- Bryan Garcia reviewed the response data regarding business impact. It is clear that the clean energy industry fared worse than small businesses in general. For the time-to-recover once stay-at-home orders are lifted, most clean energy industry businesses will take 6-12 months which is longer than most other small businesses. As well, many businesses have noticed the demand has drastically decreased.
- Overall, communication has begun to businesses on how to attain federal assistance, how to access PPE, increase customer demand, and handle project delays. The Green Bank is continuously messaging clean energy contractors. Due to decrease in demand, extensions are being sought through PURA for ZREC, LREC, and SCEF timetables. Smart-E is launching an Interest Rate Buydown to also help support recovery efforts.
- Ron Araujo said HES is working across multiple states to pool resources to help the contracting community. HES business resumed with new guidelines adopted to allow contractors to work outside so that minimal time spent in living spaces would occur. They also hosted self-certification training and virtual pre-assessment training so that HES assessments could occur without going into homes. On June 11<sup>th</sup>, extra training and certifications were initiated so that vendors can conduct work under the “new normal” conditions. HES also increased incentive levels for insulation which was proposed to DEEP. The typical customer would receive insulation at no cost in order to help them after suspension of work, with the intent to help jumpstart business. For heat pumps, incentives were increased for installations. Also made the heat pump pilot more attractive by increasing rebates.
- Liz Murphy reviewed the recovery efforts for commercial incentives. SBEA is working with partners in New England to adopt regional energy efficiency health and safety guidelines and return to work strategies. They also rolled out project waivers which covered in-process projects and new projects to help jumpstart business later and hosted a Workforce Training online for vendors. Virtual audits have been offered at no cost to microbusinesses, including providing self-installation energy savings kits. Deferrals of SBEA loans have been offered on customer request to move the start of payment up to 6 months after installation. Project payments plans are being developed by utility companies as well. SBEA continues to support limited time offers to increase customer demand including significantly increased incentives across project groups in order to keep revitalization efforts up.
- Bryan Garcia noted that in the survey, 75% of respondents were owners and presidents of companies, that they were drastically impacted, and so communication has been to support them and help them stay confident and safe in their efforts. There will be a follow-up survey as well to see how impact from the efforts have affected businesses.

## 5. Energy Jobs Report - Update

- Bryan Garcia summarized the job study analysis, though it was conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Data came from the USEER report. Discussion was had about what to do with the Connecticut state data and it was decided to pursue a more custom state report presentation. Due to COVID-19, the event to present the report couldn't be held as planned, but instead a more overview-based report will be released featuring data highlights and easy to understand visuals to make it

accessible to a wider audience. With the survey BW research conducted, prior to COVID-19 the employment projections were high, but post COVID-19 those projections are down to below pre-2015 numbers. The report also includes variances about the Connecticut “clean energy” definition in comparison to the national “clean energy” definition.

- Bryan Garcia reviewed an example of the worksheet made in collaboration with DOL-OWC per sections 19 and 20 of Public Act 19-35. The goal is to link the report to the career ladder worksheets to build a connection to the public policy.
- The report is slated to be done by the end of June. Added to the scope of work is the inclusion of the monthly memos about COVID-19 impacts, a couple more years of data to get 5 years total, and additional career profiles. However, what is needed is the completion of the letter from the Chair of the Joint Committee, Eric Brown, as well as other items including support staff’s help make the final decisions for the report for a more rounded and collaborative product.
  - Steve Bruno asked if Bryan Garcia was satisfied with the numbers on the figure sample. Bryan responded yes, and there is more information within the report. There is steady progress being made to build the industry but impacts of COVID-19 can’t be understated, and we need to help the market bounce back as much as possible.
  - Lonnie Reed commended the direction of the report, especially in developing narratives which is so important to build connections to understanding. She said she is hopeful this is the kind of report people will keep with them. Bryan Garcia thanked her for her advice and guidance. He believes if the report launch had gone on time, it would have really boosted support for the clean energy industry. The committee also discussed the importance of diversity and inclusion within the report.

## 6. C&LM Plan and Green Bank Comprehensive Plan – Reviews and Input

### a. FY21 Green Bank Comprehensive Plan

- Eric Brown discussed challenges between each group’s reporting timeline variances and the effort to pull them together to be better aligned. Bryan Garcia talked about the efforts to look at different strategic planning cycles between the Green Bank and the Conservation and Load Management Plan to see how to better align those cycles. While the C&LMP acts on 3-year cycle and the Green Bank on 2-year cycle, efforts have been made to overlap more and set better meeting dates to encourage everyone to be knowledgeable about the plans within those individual cycles to increase collaboration efforts. Stephen Bruno said the new schedule looks good for the C&LMP timeline. Glenn Reed agreed.
- Bryan Garcia reviewed the Green Bank Comprehensive Plan, named Green Bonds US which follows the new bond issuance campaign. May into June is when the Green Bank’s Budget, Operations, and Compensation Committee meets to review and approve the budget for the coming fiscal year which includes looking ahead at the revenues, targets, and expenses. He then summarized the changes to the new Comprehensive Plan.
  - The Green Bank’s FY21 targets are presented at a range this year due to instability created by COVID-19 and whether contingency plans for projects will be realized by PURA decision. The targets are not as large as in the past, but that is due to the market and industry uncertainty.

- The Comprehensive Plan is called Green Bonds US to push the equity and inclusion message in tandem with the bonds to be issued. The bond launch date has been pushed due to COVID-19 but Bryan Garcia said it is close, within the next few weeks. Use of proceeds will be put to combat climate change, mitigation of negative change, will be available to everyday citizens, and are certified and verified independently as a climate bond or green bond for consumer protection.

b. CY21 C&LM Plan

- Glenn Reed summarized the C&LMP is working on the third changes as part of the three-year plan. All the tables and data are updated and though much is paired down, it is still a rigorous undertaking. There hasn't been any discussion of having upper and lower bands due to the uncertainty from COVID-19, but those discussions will occur later this year. Traditionally the C&LMP has been on the conservation efforts, but in the last few years there has been more growth in the load management component. One area of interest is the opportunity to increase the electrification uses of heating and hot water. There have been discussions about pursuing it on a limited basis within 2020 as a residential pilot and a possible CMI pilot next year. A broader discussion of the C&LMP as a driver of the electrification plan will take place in the future as well. The hope is the pilot efforts will inform larger efforts. As noted from prior discussions about the work force, in some areas there is an aging workforce and it will become increasingly important to train the next generation of contractors to continue to pursue the installation of efficient systems.
  - Eric Brown asked if there is any foresight into, whether within the next plan or the new three-year plan, any sections that include recommendations that are common to both entities and reflect a partnership in achieving those priorities. Glenn Reed said is it a good idea, and it is possible it could be more fleshed out within the next three-year plan. Stephen Bruno said there are sections that discuss the programs that overlap with energy efficiency but the focus has been on the financing area, so it's possible some areas of the plan may be worthwhile to build together. Bryan Garcia said that typically in the past there have been 5 sections that have been looked at jointly, and that within the past couple of years more progress has been made on specific financing programs like Smart-E Loan and Small Business Energy Advantage, that in the future the Joint Committee could build around those.

7. Plans for the Special Summer 2020 Legislative Session

- Lonnie Reed said there is a lot of uncertainty with future sessions and it will likely have a very narrow focus, on voting and police reform, but anything is possible. Eric Brown said the challenge is that there may be efforts to keep it to non-controversial topics without need for amendments, but the two items Lonnie Reed mentioned are unlikely to be so and it's hard to imagine a session that wouldn't address those. Overall, no one seems to have a solid concept on what the next session will address.

8. Other Business

- The next meeting is September 16, 2020 at 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm. Bryan Garcia noted it will likely be hosted online.

9. Adjourn

- Eric Brown invited any feedback or commentary on the meeting or any additional questions from participants so that the meeting time is used well.

**Upon a motion made by Brenda Watson and seconded by Lonnie Reed, the Joint Committee Meeting adjourned at 2:52 pm.**

Respectfully submitted,

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Eric Brown, Chairperson