



Energy Efficiency Board Special Meeting

Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Conference Call Only

MINUTES¹

In Attendance

Voting Board Members: Neil Beup (Chair), Amanda Fargo-Johnson (Vice-Chair), Michael Li, Amy McLean, Brenda Watson, Jack Traver, John Wright, John Viglione

Utility Board Members: Ron Araujo, Steve Bruno, Liz Murphy, Will Riddle

Board Members Not in Attendance: Eric Brown, Bruce McDermott, Scott Whittier

Board Consultants: George Lawrence, Richard Faesy, Glenn Reed, Craig Diamond, Lisa Skumatz

Others: Donna Wells, Bryan Garcia, Joseph Roy, Brendan Thomas, Chris Phelps, Rebecca Baez Castro, Jack Halpin, Michael Custer, John Figlewski, Vivian Perez, Matt Macunus, Charles Rothenberger, Guy West, Diane Lauricello, Jonathan Casieno, Lorenzo Wyatt, Pete Carlson, Phil Cagnassola, Shannon King, Stephanie Weiner, Bert Hunter, Michele Altemus, Martin Mador, Leticia Colon, John Kibbee, Blaine Fox, Mark Harris, Ida Churchill

Public Comments Regarding the Utilities' Suspension of On-Premise Energy Efficiency Services Due to COVID-19

- Leticia Colon - she said that there were some vendors who had not been heard from yet because some of the vendors were not aware of this meeting. She asked that all vendors receive communications about all EEB and DEEP meetings. Mr. Beup noted that there would be other opportunities for input beyond this EEB meeting.
- Steve Cowell - he said that E4TheFuture was working in several states, and that they were working with BPA and had submitted a proposal to provide support to contractors. He said the California energy efficiency board had approved an effort support the contractors in California. He also said that on-line training should be provided to vendors to increase skills. He said that he had done some research, and that it appeared that a stipend could be provided to laid off workers in MA and RI as long as the stipend was not more than 33% of unemployment benefits.
- Guy West - he requested that DEEP extend its comment period 48 hours (to March 26) because some vendors had not been aware of this EEB call. He said that vendors would need more time to reflect on how best to service low-income customers during this crisis. Mr. Li noted that this call was primarily intended to update the EEB members on the Companies' and DEEP actions regarding COVID-19, and that there not an intention

¹ Meeting materials available in Box.com: <https://app.box.com/s/9cc8lanz80xwjon66wwica3hdd339o67>

to provide much new information. He said that written comments could be submitted to DEEP at any time. He also said that there would be multiple opportunities to provide public comment moving forward.

- Stephanie Weiner - she asked if the Governor's extension of restrictions would impact the programs' restarting. Mr. Li said it would. She asked if California's and NYSEERDA's plans would be considered. Mr. Li said that DEEP would be taking those plans into consideration.
- Jonathan Casieno - he said that vendors were feeling panicked by the situation and were wondering what assistance would be available to them. Mr. Li said that DEEP would be deciding very soon what resource it would make available to vendors.
- Ida Churchill - she said that vendors were in great need of assistance, and that she was personally starting to lay off employees.
- Diane Lauricello - she said that out-of-the-box thinking was needed in this situation, and that assistance should be directed to communities. She said that there should be a carve-out from the utilities for assistance. She asked if DEEP could contact insurance companies to see if insurance costs could be waived or lowered during this time.
- Rebecca Baezcastro - she said that she had laid off 19 employees, and that her business might not survive without assistance.
- Lorenzo Wyatt - he said he agreed with Ms. Lauricello's comments, and that his company had so far laid off 83 employees. He said that overhead and insurance costs were difficult to maintain. He requested to the Companies that they process project payments as quickly as possible.
- Pete Carlson - he said that all vendors were suffering, and were in great need of cash flow and lowering overhead expenses.

Board discussion of the Utilities' Suspension of On-Premise Energy Efficiency Services Due to COVID-19

Mr. Li said that DEEP was very concerned about the HES and HES-IE vendors in this situation, and that DEEP recognized they were in need of assistance. He said that DEEP would direct the Companies to provide a percentage of completion payments. He also said DEEP was considering loan repayment options and other measures that were fairly easy to implement. He said DEEP would explore options for on-line training and stipends. Ms. Watson asked if the Companies could move on projects with rental applications. Ms. McLean said that the comments from the vendors today and the March 20 DEEP call were very important, and that we should do our best to provide assistance to the vendors so that the energy efficiency sector in CT does not collapse. She said that the programs help achieve GHG reduction goals. Mr. Beup said that many people on the call had expressed similar concerns and suggested actions. He said that vendors certainly should be assisted, and that we needed to maintain a balance between that and other considerations. Ms. Fargo-Johnson said that we needed to also consider the needs of customers and rate-payers. She asked what the timing was for the training effort. Mr. Araujo said that the Companies were working with other states on training approaches for both residential and C&I. A board member asked if the EEB needed to vote on any of the proposed actions discussed today. Ms. McLean said that she would like to weigh in on proposed actions. Mr. Beup and Mr. Li clarified that the EEB was not going to hold a vote at this meeting. Mr.

Li reminded those on the call that DEEP would issue an interim decision of actions on March 27, and that DEEP would be seeking additional input after that. Mr. Traver suggested that the DEEP comment period be extended 24 hours. Mr. Beup said that there would be additional opportunities for input and comments. Mr. Fargo-Johnson said that the EnergizeCT website should be the place for the Companies to post on-going actions and updates on the COVID-19 response. Mr. Beup requested that Mr. Reed develop some guiding principles for the Board to consider as it reacts to the crisis over the coming months. It was agreed that there would be another special EEB meeting (webinar only) on Monday, March 30 at 2:00.

The meeting adjourned at 4:03 pm.