



## Energy Efficiency Board Special Meeting

Monday, March 30, 2020, 3:00 – 4:00 PM

Webinar Only

### MINUTES<sup>1</sup>

#### In Attendance

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

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

Board Members Not in Attendance: John Viglione, Scott Whittier

Board Consultants: George Lawrence, Phil Mosenthal, Richard Faesy, Glenn Reed, Craig Diamond

Others: Donna Wells, Bryan Garcia, Joseph Roy, Brendan Thomas, Rebecca Baez Castro, Jack Halpin, John Figlewski, Vivian Perez, Matt Macunus, Charles Rothenberger, Guy West, Diane Lauricello, Jonathan Casieno, Pete Carlson, Shannon King, Stephanie Weiner, Bert Hunter, Leticia Colon, John Kibbee, Ida Churchill, Theresa Lavoie, Dartanyen Byrd, Julie Saimininkas, Tammy Wilson, Michelle Long, John Greeno, Mark Foley, Jane Lano, Bert Hunter, Paul Horowitz, William Wesson, Larry Rush, Joe Cullen, Peter Callan, Diane Del Rosso, Paul Scicchitano, Mike Bruno, Miles Ingram, Erin Kempster, Nekabari Goka, Adam Tardif, Michael Frownfelter, Selya Price, Jennifer Gray, Craig Olinsky, Sonia Cruz, Jamie Watson, Tasha Perreault, Becky Pelton, Jeffrey Gerber, Martin Harisi, Karl Christie, Robert Auer, Brent Borgnine, Sheri Borrelli, Jeff Brining

**Purpose of Meeting: discuss response to utilities' March 17 suspension of on-premises energy efficiency services due to COVID-19**

#### Public Comments

- Steve Cowell - he said that 97% of contractors had participated in E4TheFuture's just-completed survey on energy efficiency workforce issues/challenges. He said that 373 employees had been laid off or furloughed.
- Jonathan Casieno - he said that insurance costs for the vendors should be lowered.
- Pete Carlson - he requested that the Companies switch to weekly billing for a few months to support vendors' cash flow once the programs are operational again.
- Leticia Colon - she said that she was receiving calls about the status of the programs. She said that the vendors' administrative costs needed to be reduced during this time.

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting materials available in Box.com: <https://app.box.com/s/gkagz5xevnyle77geiac74m1scs42zn8>

## **Presentations/Information from DEEP and the Companies**

Mr. Li provided a presentation on DEEP's actions to date in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Mr. Li noted that Congress had passed the CARES Act last Friday, and that DEEP would be working with the CT Green Bank to leverage the resources available through the legislation. He said DEEP would be looking to use federal funds first, and then it would look to fill in remaining gaps. Mr. Bruno said the Companies were working on loan deferments and purchase orders. He also said they were working on ways to compensate vendors. Ms. Murphy said that the Companies were identifying all in-process projects and would be implementing that for residential and C&I programs. She also said the Companies were working with regional partners to explore the possibility of doing virtual inspections. Mr. Araujo said that the Companies were working with other states to develop approaches to on-line training. He said they were looking at multi-media training, modules, and practices exams leading towards certification (BPI certifications).

## **Presentation on Priorities**

Mr. Reed provided a presentation on Proposed Board Principles Related to the C&LM Plan and the COVID-19 Pandemic. He noted that Mr. Beup had requested these proposed principles at the March 24 special EEB meeting. Mr. Beup said that the proposed principles were consistent with the public comments. He asked what was being done in other states? Mr. Reed said that California had proposed paying contractors up-front. He said there was discussion about paying contractors a stipend for training, but he was not aware of anyone implementing that yet.

## **Board Discussion**

Mr. Beup asked for Board member input. Mr. Traver, Ms. McLean, Mr. Wright, Mr. Brown, and Ms. Fargo-Johnson all said they did not have additional input at this time. Mr. Beup asked for the Companies' thoughts about billing weekly once the programs were operational again. Mr. Araujo said that Eversource would be able to do that. Mr. Murphy said she would find out if UI could do that same. Mr. Beup asked about decreasing insurance costs. Mr. Riddle noted that the Companies, in their contracts, do require their vendors to carry insurance. He said that he would look into it to see if it was possible to address insurance costs. Mr. Bruno said he would also look into it for Eversource.

## **Public Comments**

- Ida Churchill - she asked what the timeline was for when assistance would be available? Ms. Murphy said that UI had developed a matrix of action items with responsibilities for implementation and timelines. Mr. Araujo said that Eversource was working on some of the items that have immediate deadlines. He said that notifications would go out to vendors once they find out about whether insurance waivers are possible.
- Jonathan Casieno - he said that the vendors were facing a crisis, and needed assistance as soon as possible.

- Steve Cowell - he said that E4TheFuture and BPA has submitted a proposal on how to support contractors. He said that his legal team had researched the question of stipends and had concluded that stipends could be offered as long as they were not more than 33% of the unemployment amount.
- Bert Hunter - he said that the CARES Act provided several benefits that contractors should be aware of. He suggested that contractors should reach out to their banks and to the Small Business Administration.
- Paul Scicchitano - he said that the vendors needed support with their administrative costs.
- Joe Cullen - he said he was with BPA. He said that this challenge was happening in all states.

Ms. Wells said that she would be consolidating several email lists to make sure that all vendors would receive meeting notices and other communications.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.