

Residential Ratepayers' Advisory Board
October 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Present for the Board:

Tom Moses, Chair
Dana Nute, Vice Chair
Ryan Clouthier
James Garrity
Matthew Kfoury
Kenneth Mailloux
Claira Monier
Yolanda Baumgartner

Present for the OCA:

D. Maurice Kreis
Pradip Chattopadhyay
James Brennan
Christa Shute
Jamie Breen

Guests: Pat Martin and Emily Manns

Guest Speaker: Senator Chuck Morse

Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order No. 12 issued on March 23, 2020, this public body met electronically via WebEx.

Mr. Moses called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m. All Advisory Board members who were present, OCA Staff, and guests stated their names for the record by roll call.

1. Minutes of July 27th Meeting

Mr. Moses moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Nute seconded the motion. Board members agreed unanimously by roll call vote.

Mr. Moses welcomed Yolanda Baumgartner, RRAB's newest member, appointed by the Senate President, representing environmental concerns. Introductions were made all around. Ms. Baumgartner gave a brief background about herself.

2. Presentation by Senator Chuck Morse

Senator Morse spent several years developing relationships with cities and towns working with the Southern New Hampshire Regional Water Project to bring public water supply in Manchester, Derry, Windham, Salem and Atkinson. He noted that Plaistow, which has faced many challenges, should be online next year. Fear of wells drying up and contamination are eliminated when residents are connected to the city or town's main water sources. Senator Morse described his efforts to address an issue created by the 2018 federal tax reform bill, which made infrastructure built by developers and contributed to public utilities (particularly water utilities) taxable. These taxes get passed down to ratepayers through rate cases. A bill is currently pending in Congress to eliminate this provision; Senator Morse noted its major proponents are Senator Shaheen and Senator Murkowski of Alaska.

3. Legislative Update

There was no written legislative update; Mr. Kreis explained that it was still early in the legislative process and he noted there would be changes in the leadership of energy-related committees due to turnover in the House and Senate.

4. Case Update

The Board received a current Activity List prior to the meeting, Mr. Kreis further elaborated on the OCA's work in the following dockets:

- **DE 19-057 Eversource Energy** Rate Case (settlement pending)
- **DE 19-197 Utilities** Statewide, Multi-Use Online Energy Data Platform
- **DE 20-092 Utilities** 2021-2020 Triennial Energy Efficiency Plan

Mr. Kreis informed the Board that Hampstead Area Water Company, Aquarion Water Company, Lakes Region Water Company and Pennichuck are water companies expected to file rate cases in late 2020 and early 2021.

Mr. Kreis briefly explained that he had complied with the directive from the Governor to submit an "efficiency" budget for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 that reduces annual spending by more than 20 percent. He noted that, should such a budget be approved, there will be no funds available for new contracts with outside consultants beginning on July 1, 2021.

Mr. Nute asked if Mr. Kreis wanted to comment on the recent changes to ISO New England called for by the governors of five of the six New England states. Mr. Kreis noted that that NESCOE (the New England States Committee on Electricity, which represents the governors of all six states) released a white paper on October 18 calling for major reforms, particularly with respect to transparency. He explained that Governor Sununu had not signed the statement issued by his five counterparts two days earlier because New Hampshire lacks a statutory decarbonization goal.

5. 2021 Proposed Schedule

The Board agreed unanimously on the following dates for the 2021 Advisory Board meeting schedule: 1/25/21 4/26/21 7/26/21 10/18/21

6. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021

Mr. Moses nominated Mr. Nute as Vice Chair. Mr. Kfoury seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously. Mr. Nute nominated Mr. Moses as Chair. Mr. Garrity seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously.

7. Any other topics or issues that the Board wishes to discuss

Ms. Monier and Mr. Moses discussed having someone speak to the Board about what goes into electric rates. Mr. Kreis said he would ask a Staff member at the PUC to come and speak with them at the next meeting.

Mr. Nute asked Mr. Kreis about the prospects for PUC approval of the three-year triennial energy efficiency plan submitted by the utilities in DE 20-092. Mr. Kreis noted that the ambitious savings goals (5 percent of electric sales and 3 percent of natural gas sales) were controversial and thus might be subject to downward revision by the PUC.

8. Public input

Ms. Martin asked Mr. Kreis to discuss the meaning of "designation of staff" referenced in OCA's Motion of September 2, 2020 in DE 20-092. Mr. Kreis explained that the motion

sought to preclude ex-parte (i.e., private) contact with Commissioners by two PUC employees who were outspoken opponents of the proposed savings goals. Ms. Manns expressed interest as a ratepayer in transparency at the PUC.

Mr. Moses moved to adjourn. Mr. Nute seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously by the Board by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.