

Residential Ratepayers' Advisory Board
January 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Present for the Board:

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

Present for the OCA:

D. Maurice Kreis
Pradip Chattopadhyay
Christa Shute
Jamie Breen

Guests: Robert Backus; Steve Eckberg, Public Utilities Commission (PUC); Representative Kat McGhee; Representative John Mann; Madeline Mineau, Clean Energy NH; Representative Lucius Parshall; Representative Rod Pimentel; John Tuthill

Guest Speaker: Representative Michael Vose, Chairman of the House Science Technology & Energy Committee (ST&E)

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 2:07 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 October 19th Meeting

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

Mr. Moses congratulated Mr. Nute on his reappointment in January. Mr. Kreis gave a brief background and introduction of Chairman Michael Vose.

2. Presentation by Chairman Michael Vose

Chairman Vose summarized his vision of where the state's energy policy is going from here. He noted that 2021 has been an especially difficult year to accomplish goals, exchange ideas and have meetings with 400 legislators in light of the pandemic. Thus, he explained, the policy agenda has shrunk quite a bit. He noted that there are many bills proposing study committees and study commissions this year but because of the pandemic and lack of space and places to meet, many if not all of these bills will either be retained (deferring them to the fall) or simply not adopted. Chairman Vose said that 32 bills had been assigned to ST&E and that 26 bills were still awaiting an initial hearing.

Chairman Vose noted that the House would try to meet in person if possible. He added that the number of committee rooms available at the Legislative Office Building had been halved, which means that each committee, including ST&E, would only be able to meet one day a week. According to Chairman Vose, given a late start to the session, this makes hearing and voting on all of the bills even more challenging. Written testimony is being required prior to the hearings on any bills heard.

Chairman Vose took questions from the Board. Mr. Nute asked if the House planned to bundle similar bills together for general testimony then break it down by specific bills for hearings. Chairman Vose said they would group bills on public hearing days. Ms. Baumgartner asked if Chairman Vose saw any bills this session that would relieve the low income user's energy burden. Chairman Vose noted that he and several colleagues on the ST&E committee wrote a letter to the PUC in hopes the Commission would suspend the 2021-2023 Triennial Energy Efficiency Plan. He pointed out that businesses, e.g., restaurants, use a lot of electricity and gas and employ many low-income people. Chairman Vose stated that this is a time to be very careful, cautious and compassionate about our fellow citizens. Ms. Monier asked if he would consider coming back again to speak to the Board and Chairman Vose agreed.

Mr. Kreis asked Chairman Vose for his perspective on the PUC's use of its authority. Chairman Vose stated that an administrative agency like the PUC should yield to elected officials as policy makers. He added that one must be careful how much authority we give to agencies and oversight and accountability are needed.

3. Legislative Update

The Board previously received a list of House and Senate Bills prior to the meeting, Mr. Kreis elaborated on the following:

- **HB 382**
- **HB 315**
- **HB 371**
- **HB 549**

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:

- **DG 17-152** LU LCIRP
- **DW 20-156** PEU Rate Case
- **DW 20-112** Abenaki Rate Case
- **DE 19-197** Utilities Multi-Use Online Data Platform
- **DG 21-008** LU Petition to Approve TGP Contract
- **IR 15-296** Grid Modernization

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

Mr. Moses told the Board that he had been asked to provide their email addresses to the Department of Administrative Services in regards to the required training in light of the Governor's executive order entitled "Respect and Civility in the Workplace." He asked members to check their email, which will provide a link for this training.

Mr. Moses reminded the Board the next meeting is on April 26. 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 3:55 p.m.