

Residential Ratepayers' Advisory Board

April 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Present for the Board:

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

Present for the OCA:

Donald Kreis
Pradip Chattopadhyay
Christa Shute
Al-Azad Iqbal
Jamie Breen

Guest: Pat Martin

Guest Speaker: Meredith Angwin, author of [*Shorting the Grid*](#)

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 2:04 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 January 25th Meeting

Mr. Moses moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Mailloux seconded the motion. Board members agreed unanimously.

Mr. Kreis introduced Al-Azad Iqbal, Finance Director, the newest member of the Office of the Consumer Advocate's staff.

2. Presentation by Ms. Angwin

Ms. Angwin provided the attached PowerPoint presentation to the Board regarding her book *Shorting the Grid*. Ms. Angwin described the importance of writing her book about Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), including the one serving our region, ISO New England. She stated that utility customers should know more than which utility company serves them. Through her book, she wants to warn and inform customers about these systems, as well as their lack of transparency. She provided the Board a map of the different RTO territories throughout the United States and Canada, explaining the differences between the RTOs and vertically regulated utilities. Ms. Angwin said due to being unregulated at the state level, RTOs can go on and offline without repercussions or responsibilities, this allows power plants in the RTO areas to benefit financially when the grid gets stressed. This does not happen with vertically integrated regulated utilities, which are held accountable. Ms. Angwin explained that RTO wholesale power auctions are not good for consumers and do not save them money. She stated in studies, consumers in areas with RTOs pay higher prices than customers served by vertically integrated utilities. Mr. Kreis asked Ms. Angwin if she felt RTOs should be abolished. She replied that some of the RTOs could be restructured or set up in different ways, as opposed to abolishing them.

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 315** Relative to the aggregation of electric customers.
- **HB 2** Mr. Kreis briefly discussed the proposed creation of a New Hampshire Department of Energy, separate from the Public Utilities Commission, as proposed in the Budget Trailer Bill. This bill was currently pending in Senate finance.

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 20-092** Utilities 2021-23 Triennial EE Plan
- **IR 15-296** Grid Modernization
- **DE 19-197** Utilities Multi-Use Online Data Platform
- **DE 21-030** Unitil Rate Case
- **DW 20-156** Pennichuck East Utility Rate Case
- **DW 20-117** Hampstead Area Water Company Rate Case
- **DW 20-112** Abenaki Rate Case

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

Mr. Moses thanked Ms. Angwin for coming to speak with them and hopes she will come to speak in the future. Ms. Monier said would like to have Representative Somssich speak at a future Board meeting. Mr. Nute said he would like to be kept informed on the Department of Energy and Public Utilities Commission unifying in relation to House Bill 2.

Mr. Moses reminded the Board the next meeting is on July 26. Mr. Moses moved to adjourn. Mr. Mailloux seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 3:46 p.m.