

Residential Ratepayers' Advisory Board  
October 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

***Present for the Board:***

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

***Present for the OCA:***

Donald Kreis  
Jamie Breen  
Josie Gage  
Maureen Reno

**Guest Speaker:** Neil Proudman, President of Liberty Utilities New Hampshire

Mr. Moses called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Kreis introduced OCA's new Director of Rates and Market Policy, Maureen Reno and OCA's new Director of Economics and Finance, Josie Gage. Each gave a brief background description of themselves. Introductions were made around the room.

**1. Minutes of July 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Mr. Moses moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Mailloux seconded the motion. Board members agreed unanimously, except Mr. Nute and Mr. Kurk abstained.

**2. Presentation by Liberty Utilities New Hampshire President Neil Proudman**

Mr. Proudman spoke with the Board personally and informally, sharing his history of growing up in Stoke-on Trent, an industrial city and pottery town in the UK. He started working at age 15 and soon after began laying pipeline for what was then the government-owned national gas utility. He learned early on from a mentor to "[l]et the tool do the work." This advice applied in his life not only to physical tools, but to abstract ones as well. He spent over 40 years as an engineer with National Grid gas, staying engaged with his crews on the streets on a daily basis, before moving on to work for Liberty Utilities. Mr. Proudman stated the importance to him in making sure that customers can go home every night having power, heat, and the lights on. He told the Board he believes in a future of diversification, and not just an all-electric future. He said we need to use different sources to provide electricity to the grid, such as solar. This would allow us not to deplete natural gas as a resource as quickly. Resources need to be safe, long term, sustainable, reliable and most importantly affordable. He said it's time to start thinking differently about energy and to start thinking outside the box. He mentioned the City of Keene would be a great place to start this diversification, by serving and extending their network. Their system is an isolated system and old.

Mr. Kurk asked how can we reduce costs? Mr. Proudman said it is complicated and he doesn't know all the answers, but offered that it would depend on where the energy is coming from, how the customer's money is being used, if the cost of commodities are going up, and said decoupling could be used as a way to reduce the costs. Mr. Mailloux asked if older gas pipelines go bad. Mr. Proudman said that just because they are old, it does not mean they are

bad pipelines, factoring in maintenance of those lines are important as well. He said New Hampshire will have all their CIBS (cast iron/bare steel) lines replaced within the next four years. Mr. Moses would like Mr. Proudman to return next fall to discuss progress with the Board that Liberty Utilities has made over the next year.

**3. Legislative Update**

The Board previously received a draft list of LSRs that the OCA is monitoring for further review once they become a Bill. Mr. Kreis elaborated on the following:

- **Retained HB 549 Relative to the Energy Efficiency Resource Standard and the Systems Benefits Charge.** Mr. Kreis told the Board that he testified and gave written testimony supporting Representative Vose on his amended bill.

**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 21-133 New Hampshire Electric Utilities** Joint Petition for Approval of the 2021-2022 Electric Assistance Program Budgets
- **DG 21-132 Liberty Utilities** Winter 2021/2022 Cost of Gas
- **DG 21-131 Northern Utilities** 2021/2022 Cost of Gas
- **DG 21-130 Liberty Utilities** Winter 2021/2022 Cost of Gas Summer 2022 Cost of Gas
- **DE 20-092 Electric and Gas** 2021-2023 Triennial Energy Efficiency Plan

Several water dockets that are nearing the end of their procedural schedules.

**5. Board Elections for 2022**

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

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

The Board agreed unanimously on the following dates for the 2022 Advisory Board meeting schedule:      1/24/22      4/25/22      7/25/22      10/24/22

Mr. Kurk told the Board that although he has had many opportunities to meet Mr. Kreis in the past through the legislative venue, he was unaware until recently that this Board existed. Mr. Kurk suggested two possible items for discussion at the next meeting. He would like to discuss if Mr. Kreis would be willing to expand his published articles beyond InDepthNH to reach a larger audience, he feels it would be beneficial to the public. In addition, he would like to know if the Board has a long-term plan, i.e. five-year plan, as to their mission to help residential ratepayers lower their rates, and what kind of role they can play in accomplishing it.

Mr. Moses moved to adjourn. Mr. Mailloux seconded the motion, which was adopted unanimously by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 p.m.