

**Virginia Solar Energy Development Authority (VSEDA)**  
Inaugural Board Meeting  
Thursday, December 3, 2015 | State Capitol – House Room #1

**Proposed Minutes**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The inaugural meeting of the Virginia Solar Energy Development Authority (VSEDA) was called to order at 1:05 PM on December 3, 2015 in Richmond, Virginia.

The following members were present: William Carmack; Barrett Hardiman; Cody Nystron; Cliona Robb; Dawone Robinson; Jon Hillis; John Rust; Ryan Dunn; Kenneth Hutcheson; and Katharine Bond.

The following members were absent: Sylvain Marsillac.

The Following VSEDA Staff were present: John Warren (VSEDA Director), Al Christopher, Ken Jurman, Chris McDonald, and Borna Kazerooni

The following non-members were present: Hayes Framme (Secretary of Commerce and Trade); Paul Kugleman (Office of the Attorney General).

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:**

Ken Jurman of the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME), serving as staff to the Authority, welcomed everyone to VSEDA's inaugural meeting and invited Members and Staff to introduce themselves. Mr. Jurman then provided a brief overview of the Authority's enabling legislation – Section 67-1500 of the Code of Virginia – and discussed the objectives and powers of the Authority.

**OFFICER ELECTIONS:**

After the welcome, introductions, and legislative overview, the Authority discussed nominations for VSEDA Chair and Vice-Chair. Mr. Barrett Hardiman was nominated to serve as Chair, and Mrs. Cliona Robb was nominated as Co-Chair. Both nominees were unanimously elected by the members present.

**REVIEW OF PROPOSED BYLAWS:**

Following the election of officers, the Authority reviewed proposed by-laws that had been pre-drafted by Authority Staff. After brief review, two amendments were proposed:

1. Chairman Hardiman recommended adding a more specific COIA/FOIA provision to the bylaws regarding official communications between board members. It was agreed that the bylaws should include a provision that all e-mail communications include DMME Staff as an additional recipient in order to maintain accurate records.
2. It was recommended that Article III, Section 2 (Terms for Members and Staff) be amended to more exactly reflect the actual language of the enabling legislation.

Both amendments were unanimously approved by the Authority. DMME staff will make the necessary edits to the bylaws and circulate the updated version to the Authority. Barring further discussion, the final version of the bylaws will be voted upon at the next VSEDA Meeting.

#### **COIA/FOIA TRAINING:**

Paul Kugelman, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General, provided training to the Members regarding compliance with Virginia's Conflict of Interest Act and Freedom of Information Acts. Mr. Kugelman made a formal COIA/FOIA presentation, a copy of which will be made available to all members interested. Members were advised that they were required to file their COIA Disclosures by December 15, 2015.

#### **REVIEW OF 2014 VIRGINIA ENERGY PLAN GOALS:**

VSEDA Members were then provided brief overviews of the relevant goals from the 2014 Virginia Energy Plan. Hayes Framme provided updates on behalf of the Secretary of Commerce and Trade regarding workforce development objectives and energy diversification goals, while DMME staff highlighted a number of germane projects to the Authority. After brief discussion, it was agreed that at the next VSEDA meeting, DMME staff would provide a more formal, in-depth summary of current projects and initiatives that are planned or currently underway in the Commonwealth.

#### **EXPECTATIONS OF AND GOALS FOR THE AUTHORITY:**

The floor was then opened to Member discussion of their expectations and ideas for the role of the Authority.

The Authority again expressed a desire for VSEDA staff to prepare presentations on the programs and initiatives in solar energy that already exist or are underway in the Commonwealth. DMME agreed to prepare briefings on such programs and present them to the Board at their next meeting. VSEDA Members also expressed interest in learning more about the solar policies in neighboring states and other utility-regulated states. Staff and MDV-SEIA agreed to provide this information to the group.

Discussion was had on whether there was possible financing available for the Authority. VSEDA's enabling legislation was not passed with an appropriation of funds. . If in the future VSEDA *is* granted an appropriation, this funding would likely be housed within DMME (as DMME currently does for other similarly designed Authorities). There may be future opportunities for creative financing, in-kind incentives, or unique partnerships, and Staff agreed to prepare a briefing on such opportunities at some future meeting, including but not limited to the Virginia Public-Private Educational Facilities Infrastructure Act (PPEA). Other funding opportunities may exist at the Federal level as well.

VSEDA Members took some time to discuss perceived barriers to increased solar energy in Virginia. Such possible barriers discussed included: a lack of robust third-party Power Purchase Agreement projects; Virginia's voluntary renewable portfolio standard; absence of state tax credits; net metering capacity caps; prohibitions on non-utility community solar programs; soft costs (such as consumer

acquisition and other non-equipment costs); a lack of standardized guidelines for zoning, permitting, etc, between localities; relatively low electric rates compared to neighboring and regional averages.

Members spoke at length about workforce development as related to the solar industry, discussing both the possible barriers to increased workforce development as well as opportunities to make workforce development a key part of the Authority's mission. It was agreed that while Virginia may not have the most robust solar workforce development programs, the Commonwealth would be able to leverage or take advantage of existing workforce development programs that are relevant to the solar industry.

Finally, Members discussed what the Authority was well-positioned to focus on in the future. These ideas included a larger focus on how Virginia solar will help fit into the Commonwealth's plan for addressing the new Clean Power Plan and an emphasis on more residential, consumer , and utility-scale projects.

Further discussion was tabled until the Board has a chance to learn more about existing programs and initiatives from VSEDA Staff.

#### **GOVERNOR'S WELCOME AND REMARKS:**

Governor Terence McAuliffe visited the Authority and provided a brief welcome, thanking the Members for their service and expressing his utmost support and enthusiasm for continuing to build a greater solar industry in Virginia. The Governor firmly believes that energy policy will a cornerstone of a New Virginia Economy, and Solar Energy is the one of the most critical components of this.

#### **NEXT STEPS: FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TOPICS:**

After the Governor's remarks, the Authority turned its attention towards next steps, focusing on setting up a second meeting and establishing what goals should be addressed and accomplished before then.

It was agreed that members did not want to wait until the 2016 Legislative Session concluded to meet again. Staff agreed to poll members for availability in late January/early February.

Staff agreed to prepare presentations and briefings on Virginia's various solar programs and other relevant state projects and initiatives in anticipation of the next meeting. Katharine Bond offered to help arrange a possible group visit to Dominion's solar array and battery storage at Randolph Macon College.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

No members of the public provided comment.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

The Authority adjourned at 3:08 PM.