

**CLEAN ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD  
FINAL MEETING MINUTES  
October 20th, 2021 (Wednesday)  
10:30AM – 12:00PM  
\*\*Meeting was open to the Public \*\***

Meeting Recording Found [here](#)  
CEAB website hosted at [energy.virginia.gov](http://energy.virginia.gov), direct link [here](#)

**Call to Order**

Chair Hannah Coman called the meeting to order at 10:35AM

**Roll Call**

KC Bleile - present, Taylor Brown - present, Sam Brumberg - present, Will Cleveland - present, Hannah Coman - present, Susan Kruse - present, Kendyl Crawley Crawford - present, William Greenleaf - present, Kirk Johnson - present, John Warren - present, Janaka Casper -present (electronic), Sarah Nerette - present (electronic)

Tony Ostrowski, Katharine Bond, William Reisinger were absent.

Janaka participated electronically from Blacksburg, Virginia due to a personal medical condition that prevented his physical attendance. Sarah participated electronically from Florida due to a personal vacation traveling out of town.

Quorum was met with the above present in person.

*Virginia Energy Staff:* Carrie Hearne, John Warren (Director), Larry Corkey, Aaron Berryhill, Bettina Bergoo (electronic)

*Office of Attorney General:* Grant Kronenberg

The meeting was held in-person with a hybrid electronic system via Webex. There were no objections to virtual participation for the above referenced Board members.

**Board Member Introductions**

The meeting began with a brief round of introductions of board members and others in attendance.

**Review Previous Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes from the previous meeting on July 21st, 2021 were reviewed. They were circulated on October 14th and posted online. Corrections were submitted:

- Change to reflect that Kirk Johnson was not present at the previous meeting

Sam Brumberg moved to adopt the meeting minutes, seconded by Taylor Brown. A vote was conducted with all votes in the affirmative. The motion carried; minutes approved.

### **Adoption of Electronic Meeting Minutes Policies**

Grant Kronenberg of the Office of the Attorney General presented for the Board's consideration two policies concerning electronic meetings of the Board and its committees. The first was the draft Policy on Individual Participation in Clean Energy Advisory Board Meetings by Electronic Means Pursuant to § 2.2-3708.2. Mr. Kronenberg explained that the draft policy amends the Board's current electronic meeting participation policy to reflect recent statutory changes, and he described the nature of those changes and the requirements contained in the draft policy. The second was the draft Policy on Meetings of the Clean Energy Advisory Board Pursuant to Enactment 17 of Chapter 1 of the 2021 Special Session II Acts of Assembly. Mr. Kronenberg explained the draft policy and the authority for its adoption.

Grant Kronenberg clarified that these new rules do not apply to meetings for informational purposes only. These new rules are in place for any meetings that will require a quorum where votes will be cast.

Motion by Sam Towell, and seconded by Sam Brumberg to adopt both of the electronic meeting policies. A vote was conducted with all votes in the affirmative. The motion carried and each of the electronic meeting policies were approved.

### **Virginia LMI Solar Pilot Program Update**

Carrie Hearne of Virginia Energy provided an overview of the Virginia LMI Solar Pilot Program. The program is at the phase of engaging with the Stakeholder Engagement and Marketing committee and working to identify target pilot markets to consider for the LMI Solar Pilot. Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA) has helped to identify at least 5 localities. Factors used to identify localities included: available property tax exemptions; percentage of LMI single family owner-occupied households; and commitment to 3 day review of solar projects for permitting (as represented through a SolSmart Gold designation) among other factors previously discussed.

The next step is to reach out to key stakeholders at localities, utilities, and community-based organizations to push this ahead. Localities under consideration at this time include: Wise County, Shenandoah County, City of Waynesboro, City of Franklin and Augusta County.

CESA is working on an RFP for Virginia Energy to review and bring to board by the end of the year.

### **Updates from Subcommittee Chairs**

*Program Committee:* William Greenleaf: No updates

*Policy and Regulatory Committee:* Sam Brumberg: Recently met in Charlottesville in September where the Committee sought to resolve two issues related to solar leases:

- Legality of solar leases: Based on internal review, solar leases appear to be legal
- Need for CPCN for net metering activities: Evidence points to the fact that no certification is necessary.

The committee is looking to receive written agreement from all utilities in Virginia in regards to these subjects. The committee will draft a memorandum to distribute to utilities to complete by the end of the year. It will include a clear response deadline by year's end.

*Questions:*

- Will the question to the utilities apply to all types of customers or just residential?
  - Utilities should affirm that anyone eligible to net meter is eligible to use a solar lease to do so.
- Any initial outreach to utilities on their interest in solar leases?
  - Have spoken briefly with Dominion and Electric Cooperatives. Each is looking forward to responding to the memo.

*Stakeholder Engagement Marketing Committee:*

Hannah Coman: Have not met since last meeting, however the committee has a plan in place to conduct outreach in the five communities identified for a potential pilot program. Each of the Board members have been emailed to participate in stakeholder engagement tasks. A spreadsheet has also been created to collect information on interested stakeholders; Board members are encouraged to volunteer for this outreach effort.

This process of conducting a qualitative analysis to understand if a pilot program will be successful in each of these communities should be completed in the next three weeks. Board volunteers are asked to complete the spreadsheet by November 3rd. This information will be passed to CESA to fold input into the RFP design by the end of the year.

**Shared Solar Update**

Carrie Hearne and Hannah Coman provided an update of recent activities regarding shared solar programs. Virginia Energy recently facilitated 8-12 stakeholder meetings on the LI Shared Solar Program as required by the SCC. This is for the Shared Solar Program eligible for Dominion Customers (not multi-family shared solar).

Topics for the stakeholders meetings included PIPP (least resolved; needs to go back through PIPP group within SCC), low income verification and eligibility, and self-attestation. The Commission adopted all the previous recommendations and they are currently reviewing this round of recommendations.

Larry Corkey of Virginia Energy provided a summary of the minimum bill issue with shared solar. There is an ongoing question on what the minimum bill should be for customers enrolled in shared solar that impacts the viability of the program. There will be a hearing on November 18th with the SCC focused on the minimum bill limit. Virtual participation and public witness testimony is available. This minimum bill topic was not part of the working groups since low income customers would not be subject to a minimum bill.

Virginia Energy was recently awarded a Community Solar Leadership Award from the Coalition for Community Solar Access, relating to the above work.

*Questions:*

- In regards to multifamily shared solar, has Dominion filed a new tariff for this program?
- Has anyone tried to do multifamily shared solar in Virginia yet?
  - Virginia Energy is in consultation with NREL and Cliburn Energy to gather more information on this topic of multi-family shared solar. Need to follow up with more information on this topic

- There have been some concerns from solar and MF housing developers about how the metering will work. Virginia Energy anticipates conducting further outreach to understand what barriers still exist and what pathway provides an opportunity to participate.

## **2022 Legislative Agenda and Update on Green Bank Market Assessment**

Director Warren explained that Virginia Energy is working with the Governor's office on a legislative packet. More information will be provided on the packet and the Governor's priorities as it relates to clean energy financing and low-income financing programs, as information becomes available to share publicly. Virginia Energy, as an executive branch agency, works in service of the Governor's priorities.

Bettina Bergoo, the Energy Efficiency and Financing Programs Manager at Virginia Energy, provided a presentation on Green Banks and a market assessment for a statewide program.

Green banks operate as a clean energy fund that are market responsive depending on where there is a need for renewable energy financing. Types of financing could include direct lending, credit enhancement, loan loss reserves, etc. While HB 1919 authorized localities to establish their own green banks, most do not seem to have the resources and staff to successfully implement a program of this scale. This is where a statewide program could support all areas of the Commonwealth.

Virginia Energy is currently exploring a market assessment of a statewide Green Bank fund to complement any local Green Bank Program that may arise. This assessment will include identifying sectors in the clean energy landscape that are most in need of financing.

In the future, a discussion is necessary to ensure that a Green Bank program would interact productively with the LMI Solar Fund. This means that the Clean Energy Advisory Board would be involved with a Green Bank Program since it has a similar mission as the LMI Solar Fund.

### *Questions:*

- If the LMI Solar Fund stayed separate, could it receive financing from a Green Bank?
  - This would need to be looked into from a legal perspective, but it would not necessarily be disallowed. It would essentially be a transfer of funds between different funds/programs.
- Would Green Banks be a separate entity of Virginia Energy?
  - To date, most Green Banks have been established in a quasi-government status and not fully in government. Virginia needs to find a sweet spot that is close to the market as well as policy oversight.
- What kind of outreach has been occurring on this subject? Who has been contacted?
  - A Board member recommended that outreach would be beneficial to engage with locality leadership, elected officials, or local utilities (variety of levels/perspectives). Different responses may come from different levels of leadership in a locality (e.g. energy and sustainability staff at localities, or the municipal utilities, or statewide association groups)
  - The Virginia Solar Survey did include a question on Green Banks which went to planning directors of every locality in Virginia. There was some interest based on responses in the survey. Results are still being tallied.

- How would Green Banks interact with the Brownfield fund?
  - Might need a distinction from typical utility-scale solar projects, but recognize potential in certain cases for developments on brownfields.

**Public Comment:**

Ruth Amundsen of Norfolk Solar LLC asked if there has been any discussion on how to use RGGI funds for solar.

- RGGI funds were specifically designated in legislation for flood prone communities and energy efficiency/weatherization programs, and not currently allowable for renewable energy projects.

Jameson Babb commented that they are present at the meeting, representing Delegate Lashresce Aird.

End of Public Comment

**Announcements and Committee Updates**

In the next two weeks, members will reach out to stakeholders in localities being considered for the Virginia LMI Solar Pilot Program. Any local stakeholder input should be received by November 3rd. CESA will send a draft RFP to Virginia Energy for review and it will be released to the Board on or around November 12th.

CESA will have the opportunity in November to present the RFP to the Board. The RFP will be attached to the annual report [Note: the RFP will be included in the Annual Report if it has been officially posted by time of publication]. December 15th is the deadline to complete the annual report to allow sufficient time for the Governor's approval by January 12th. There will be a board meeting in December to approve the annual report. The annual report will include an executive summary, reports from each subcommittee, and general statements from meetings during the year, as well as an update on the LMI solar landscape and need in Virginia.

Consultations with Appalachian Power, Old Dominion Power and Dominion Energy will be held electronically on November 3rd from 10am to 1pm, per the requirement from the VCEA.

On November 5th the board will meet electronically for a Green Bank Presentation.

There will be an Electronic Board Meeting on November 15th for CESA to present the RFP for the LMI Solar Pilot Program.

The year-end in-person meeting of the board will be held on December 15th at 3pm to discuss the RFP and annual report.

All presenters were thanked for the informative discussion.

Susan Kruse moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by John Warren. At 12:15pm the meeting was adjourned.