

## **CLEAN ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD**

### **DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**December 15th, 2021 (Monday)**

**3:00PM – 5:00PM**

**\*\*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**

Meeting called to order at 3:11 pm

#### **Roll Call**

Present:

Kirk Johnson, Taylor Brown, Toni Ostrowski, Kendyl Crawley Crawford, Sam Brumberg, Carmen Bingham, Hannah Coman, John Warren, Susan Kruse

Not present:

KC Bleile, Will Cleveland, Will Reisinger, Katharine Bond (at time of roll call)

Janaka Casper, Sarah Nerette, Bill Greenleaf, and Katharine Bond participated in the meeting electronically. Janaka Casper participated from Blacksburg, VA due to medical reasons related to the ongoing pandemic. Sara Nerette had a business conflict and participated from Falls Church, VA. Bill Greenleaf had a business conflict and participated from Richmond, VA. Katharine Bond joined the meeting late due to a business conflict and joined from Richmond, VA.

There were no objections by the Board for the electronic accommodations of the Board members that participated remotely.

*Virginia Energy Staff:* Carrie Hearne, Aaron Berryhill, Bettina Bergoo (electronic)

*Office of Attorney General:* Grant Kronenberg

Wafa May Elamin of the Clean Energy States Alliance was also present to assist with discussion of the LMI Solar Fund.

#### **Board Members Introductions**

Members and nonmembers introduced themselves at the beginning of the meeting. This included the introduction of Carmen Bingham as a new member of the Clean Energy Advisory Board who was sworn in as a member of the Board on December 14, 2021.

## **Amend Bylaws and Board Mission Statement**

Hannah Coman led the discussion to update the Bylaws and Board Mission Statement to reflect the Virginia Department of Energy's recent name change from the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy.

Sam Brumberg moved to amend the bylaws and board mission statement to reflect the Virginia Department of Energy's name change. The motion was seconded by Susan Kruse. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Committee Updates**

### *-Program Development Committee*

Bill Greenleaf provided an update on the activities of the Program Development Committee. The committee met once in 2021 in February to review the legality of solar leasing and PPAs in Virginia. Additionally, the committee had a discussion with the Clean Energy States Alliance on their work for the Board.

### *-Stakeholder Engagement and Marketing Committee*

Hannah Coman provided an update of the activities of the Stakeholder Engagement and Marketing Committee. She did not have any additional updates to report since the October meeting. She summarized the committee's work to collaborate on stakeholder engagement for the LMI Solar Program Fund. This work is summarized in the Board's annual report.

### *-Policy and Regulatory Committee*

Sam Brumberg provided an update of the activities of the Policy and Regulatory Committee. The committee met twice in 2021. The committee's main role has been to engage with Virginia's utilities on policy questions such as around solar leasing and PPAs. The committee sent letters to each of the state's investor-owned utilities on the topic of solar leasing. Electric cooperatives will also be receiving a similar letter. The committee recommends a change to the 12% efficiency requirement in the LMI Solar Fund program.

## **Virginia Low and Moderate Income Solar Pilot Program Update**

Wafa May Elamin of the Clean Energy States Alliance gave a presentation regarding updates to their work towards designing an RFP for the LMI Solar Pilot Program in addition to outlining the next steps.

Before the presentation, Carrie Hearne explained that Board members may provide recommendations to the Virginia Department of Energy during the review of applicants for the RFP, however individual members are encouraged to consult with the Ethics Council to determine conflict of interest considerations.

Ms. Elamin described the general pilot structure. Virginia Energy will seek to select a partner organization through a RFP in Q1 2022. Any Virginia resident with eligible income can

participate in the program, but the community based marketing campaigns will be focused in Wise County, Augusta County, and Shenandoah County. The solar projects must be supported by contracts that are cash flow positive to protect participants in the program from any hidden fees.

The elements of the current draft of the RFP include:

- The selected installation and financing partners will have 24 months from the contract start date to complete the full scope of work
- Focused marketing campaign and program deployment will occur in the identified market areas.
- Budget of \$400,000 for direct solar investment with additional funds reserved for VA Energy to support programmatic, administrative, and marketing needs.
- The RFP allows for open-ended financing terms to allow respondents to share what model they think best fits this pilot.
- Participants in the program should demonstrate reduced energy consumption first before participating in the solar program.
- Energy equity goals will be included to support local workforce needs and historically economically disadvantaged communities.
- There will be a local installer requirement to support local investment.
- The income threshold for participation will be 60% of the state median income level. Documentation will be required for program auditing purposes.

*Questions and comments from the Board to the presenter included:*

Have we figured out how we are planning to extract information and metrics out of the implementation of the pilot to inform future development of the program? What information are we hoping to learn? What benchmarks do we have?

Some of it will probably be quantitative in terms of bill savings, solar capacity, and amount of investment. Others will be more qualitative such as surveys to homeowners and other story gathering methods.

In the future, the Board and the Program Development Committee should consider the type of information that should be extracted from the pilot program to inform future implementation.

Quantifying savings to be able to compare savings from efficiency and solar installations will be useful in the future. This work should help to identify what is the correct level of subsidy for both efficiency and solar programs.

Installers or other entities should collect some type of information during the installation to reduce on-going interactions with homeowners and program participants.

Will the full cost of the solar installs be covered by the fund?

No, that is not necessarily the case. The open ended financing component in the RFP leaves some decisions up to the potential applicants. It will vary depending on how many homeowners the program intends to reach.

One board member recommended changing the host utility escalator in the RFP. There are lots of different opinions on what rates will be in the future. As a result, it should be standardized in the report. 2.5% is often cited as a reasonable number to use in this situation. The same number should be used throughout the application process to ensure there is equal comparison between all potential applications.

Will this program be available to all Virginia residents? Is there a plan for the rollout in stages or will it be accessible to everyone at the same time?

As drafted, the marketing campaign would be rolled out in phases in each separate market while the statewide campaign will be open for everyone.

The installations will occur after each application is received and reviewed in the order they are received. Currently as in the statute, the Board will make recommendations to the Virginia Energy Director about installations.

### **Board Meeting Minutes Approval**

The past meeting minutes were presented to the Board for approval. Any revisions to the meeting minutes that differed from the copies provided to each member of the Board were presented and screen shared with red lining. Hannah Coman discussed all of the changes in each of the meeting minute documents.

The meeting minutes included from the Board's meetings on October 20th, November 3rd, November 5th and November 15th.

Motion by Sam Brumberg to approve all the meeting minutes as amended and edited. The motion was seconded by John Warren. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Annual Report Review and Approval**

Hannah went through the annual report. Any changes made to the report were shown in a redlined version to compare with the version printed for each Board member. Hannah explained each of the changes made to the report. These changes included:

- The language of 'Program' and 'Pilot Program' was differentiated throughout the report to differentiate them as separate entities.
- Use of Virginia Energy was changed from DMME throughout the report.
- Updates were made to the summary of the Board electronic meeting policy.

- Virginia code number and citations were included where missing and to replace mentions of legislation bill numbers.
- Small changes were made to names and sentence structure throughout the report.

Appendix F due to its size was not included in the version presented to the Board but was attached via email to each Board member.

Sam Brumberg moved to approve the annual report as edited and discussed today, and where changes by Virginia Energy must make any non-substantive changes, Susan Kruse seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments given.

### **Discussion and Next Steps**

Hannah Coman reminded Board members that if they are in the second year on the Board, the conflicts of interests training is due by the end of the year.

The primary action for the Board in the upcoming year will be to focus on getting the RFP for the LMI Solar Pilot Program finalized and published.

Upcoming meetings of the Board will be decided through the use of a Doodle poll to set a meeting calendar for the next year. The poll will identify an ongoing schedule for the Board to convene.

The Board also discussed how to strengthen the Board's relationship with the General Assembly and new administration. The Board considered providing an update to the incoming Secretary of Commerce and Trade.

Board members were also tasked to think about their existing relationships and how to do potential outreach in January to delegates and senators members from both political parties. Outreach to delegates representing areas where marketing for the solar pilot program should also be considered.

New appointments to the Board will need to be made in 2022. That means that new connections will need to be established with the Speaker of the House, Governor's Office, and Senate Committee on Rules. The Board agreed to create a cover letter of the annual report to send to the relevant committees, chief of staff, and Secretary of Commerce and Trade after the annual report has been approved.

Finally the board discussed funding options for the LMI Solar Fund. The Board should think creatively about what other sources are available to complement the state's contribution to the fund. Potentially, the Board could create a committee to seek additional funding from grants and donations for long-term funding.

### **Conclusion**

Meeting adjourned at 4:58 pm

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