

## **Clean Energy Advisory Board**

**November 10, 2020**

**10 am - noon**

### **Meeting Minutes (FINAL)**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Hannah Coman at 10:10. Chair Coman conducted a roll call. Clean Energy Advisory Board (CEAB) members KC Bleile, Janaka Casper, Hannah Coman, Bill Greenleaf, Will Reisinger, Susan Kruse, Katharine Bond and John Warren were present. The record will show there was a quorum. DMME staff present introduced themselves: Carrie Hearne, Daniel Farrell, Mike Skiffington, Al Christopher, and Jordan Burns. Also present was Grant Kronenberg, Counsel to the Board, from the Office of the Attorney General.

Carrie Hearne of DMME read the prepared electronic meeting notification. A motion was made to establish the meeting as an electronic meeting by Bleile, and seconded by Casper. All members present voted in favor of certifying the electronic meeting. It was noted that Sam Towell and Toni Ostrowski were not present at the time of the vote.

Chair Coman moved to the next item of business which was to update the CEAB on comments submitted to the SCC on the proposed shared solar programs. The CEAB comments focused on shortcomings in the proposed regulations that could impact the viability of shared solar programs.

Coman noted that the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) requires that investor owned utilities consult with the CEAB on their programs for low- to moderate-income (LMI) customers. This is an opportunity for a dialog and for CEAB members to offer their expertise to Dominion. Katharine Bond, CEAB member, provided an opportunity for the Dominion Energy Virginia team, in addition to herself, to introduce themselves: present were Nathan Frost, Michael Hubbard, Eric Bateman, and Scott Gastman.

Dominion Energy staff provided a presentation that focused on key targets of its LMI programs, as required by the Virginia Clean Economy Act (CEAB). Dominion discussed current regulated and unregulated programs. The Energy Share program is a bill assistance program that has been in place since 1982. There is also a weatherization component, which assists customers who are in urgent need and in danger of losing their primary source of heating and cooling. Energy Share has an extensive list of energy and water-saving measures that can be installed. There is a network of 100 agencies and non-profits that provides referrals to the program, and installers are the existing Weatherization Provider network. Over 15,000 customers have been served since 2015.

Coman asked about income verification guidelines. Nate Frost responded that there are various entities that assist in income-qualifying. DSS has guidelines for defining customers that are in crisis. Coman asked what documentation is required for income verification. Michael Hubbard responded that customers must sign DHCD attestation to the income level, and number of occupants in the home. Dominion does not retain any customer sensitive information. Coman related this to shared solar, and noted that other states have self-attestation, but may also show the customer is in a census tract where there is a high percentage of low income customers, or have high energy burdens.

[FIRE DRILL interrupted – Dan Farrell of DMME had to evacuate building for 20 minutes]

Dominion staff went on to discuss House Bill 2789 (2019) Component 1 (HVAC). HB 2789 required utilities to invest more in LMI programs, for HVAC and solar. Michael Hubbard talked about training centers. KC Bleile mentioned the lead abatement grant through DHCD. Casper mentioned there are an increasing number of resources for LMI customers but putting them together in the right way is the challenge.

Hubbard noted that HB 2789 – Component 2 (solar) will be included in Dominion’s SCC filing on Dec. 1. This is to be a three-year program, if approved it will be available Jan. 1, 2022. The program will incent install of net-metered solar at participant’s homes. This will be full subsidy so there will be no cost to customer. Solar array will be installed on roof or poll-mounted. Component 1 implementer will do “solar suitability” review of home to see if it’s a good candidate for solar. Casper asked if this is owner-occupied only. Frost responded it can be either owner-occupied or rental. Greenleaf asked if this is rate-payer funded. Yes, \$25m for HVAC and \$25m for solar.

Eligibility includes component 1 (or other weatherization program) retrofit and solar suitability study. WAP providers would have a roster of qualified solar installers that come in and do the solar install. Greenleaf asked if there are a projected number of homes that could be served; Hubbard has this info and will provide.

Coman asked for more detail about what would be a qualifying retrofit for component 2 solar. Frost said Dominion would consider any retrofit (envelope, HVAC) as a component 1 qualifying repair. Coman asked about renters. Rental units can be served by weatherization, but must get owner/landlord sign off for solar. Susan Kruse asked about rental properties where due to increase in property value may drive lower-income renters out of the property. Dominion indicated they are aware of this issue and are having ongoing conversations about how to mitigate, in context of program development and roll-out.

Casper noted that Housing VA Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects have 30 year commitments to ensure that building will remain affordable for LMI customers. In Virginia, most occupants pay their own utility bills (not a lot of master-metered buildings.) Coman asked after the solar suitability study is done, whose responsibility is it to follow up with the customer? Dominion responded that its program implementer would follow up with eligible customers. Greenleaf asked about how the ITC would be monetized, if the homeowner owns the system. Frost responded that Dominion agreed to “parking lot” the issue of how the ITC would be handled. Emphasis was to be on standardized system, up to 3 KW per customer, so that as many participants can be served as possible.

11:08 Ostrowski joined the call. She asked if this was to be a financing program (such as loan) or full subsidy model. It was discussed earlier that the solar component (component 2) is to be a full subsidy.

Hearne asked about the sizing of the system and stakeholder engagement process after the Dec. 1 SCC filing. Frost stated emphasis was to be on standardized system, up to 3 KW per customer, so that as many participants can be served as possible. Stakeholder process throughout 2021 will be refining certain elements of the program, also focus on outreach to get the word out. Hearne asked if training of weatherization providers can be trained on solar suitability studies now. Frost replied Dominion intends to work with the WAP providers and implementation vendor to train WAP providers. Hearne asked about workforce.

Relating back to question raised by Greenleaf, Hubbard estimates about 1500-1600 homes could be served (have solar system installed) with the component 2 HB 2789 program investment of \$25m.

Coman asked about role of solar in grid transformation and AMI. Frost stated that AMI is designed to incorporate two-way flows of power which centers nicely around solar, and will help customers become more engaged in managing their energy use. Bleile asked if the system is installed through 2789, does it stay with the home or can it be moved when/if the customer moves? Frost responded that system will stay with the home as permanently installed measure, such as insulation or HVAC upgrade.

There was discussion about coordinating public outreach on these programs. Hearne mentioned stakeholder outreach DMME has done in preparing LMI Solar Loan and Rebate program on marketing: Tri-fold brochures and simple marketing pieces could be helpful. Bond suggested if folks can provide examples of best practices for marketing material for LMI customers to Dominion it would be helpful. Hearne suggested we can ask CESA for examples from other states.

It was agreed that conversation for another day on deficiency payments if DG carve out is not met.

Coman opened up for public comment. Lesley Fore from Community Housing Partners would like to encourage the CEAB and IOUs to collaborate on a program that would last into the future, not just 3 years per HB 2789 requirements. Stakeholder process has been very good, Dominion is listening and incorporating stakeholder feedback into the programs being proposed.

Casper suggested more efforts to bring weatherization providers into the conversation so that they can be up to speed and best determine how to prioritize the multiple programs they will be involved in delivering. Hubbard spoke to Dominion's plan to invest in training of the weatherization provider network. COVID has been a challenge for weatherization and serving LMI customers.

There was more discussion about potential impacts to customers of property value and tax increases. Is Dominion working with Appraisal Institute to educate appraisers about the value of solar? DMME is available to help educate and research on this issue.

Coman went through takeaways in preparation for concluding the meeting:

1. Dominion to send data on number of homes projected to be served via HB 2789
2. CEAB will gather marketing and public outreach materials and best practices to share
3. Property value and property tax discussion and research
4. Shared solar collaboration (this is an important pathway for LMI customer to have access to clean energy)

CEAB will have a similar conversation with AEP and ODP, yet to be scheduled. Public is welcome to attend when this is scheduled.

Chair Coman thanked Dominion staff again and adjourned meeting at 11:58 am.