

**Clean Energy Advisory Board**  
**September 9, 2020 (Quarter 3 meeting)**

**1:00pm – 4:00pm**

**FINAL APPROVED Meeting Minutes**

A regular electronic meeting of the Clean Energy Advisory Board was held Wednesday, September 9, 2020. Chair Hannah Coman called the meeting to order at 1:06 pm. EDT. Roll call was taken, and the following Board members were present: John Warren, KC Bleile, Bill Greenleaf, Hannah Coman, Janaka Casper, Will Reisinger, Katharine Bond, Sam Towell (with eight members present, this comprised a quorum). Office of the Attorney General Counsel Grant Kronenberg was in attendance. DMME staff in attendance included Carrie Hearne, Dan Farrell, Jordan Burns and Barbara Simcoe. Susan Kruse is not attending, Toni Ostrowski indicated she would join later. Representatives from the public also joined the virtual meeting.

DMME staff Carrie Hearne read the General Assembly's Acts of Assembly language that established parameters for conducting official and legitimate electronic meetings. Coman asked for a motion, upon a motion by KC Bleile, seconded by Towell, a roll call vote was called. The members present unanimously voted in favor and concluded that this meeting qualified as an electronic meeting under the terms of the Acts of Assembly.

Coman asked for the Board to consider the June 23, 2020 and July 21, 2020 meeting minutes. Coman noted in the July 21 minutes there was an apparent mis-statement relating to Virginia Consumer Protection laws that indicated these would not apply to the LMI solar loan and rebate program. Towell stated that his view did not constitute a legal opinion or Attorney General's advice. Proposed corrections were noted by Hearne. After due consideration, on a motion by Greenleaf, seconded by Bond, the Board unanimously approved. Kruse and Ostrowski were not present.

Coman turned the meeting over to Greenleaf for an update on the Program Development Committee meeting on August 6<sup>th</sup>. The Program Development Committee generated a number of questions on program structure, based on the language in the statute:

- Should pilot program apply to new construction or just to retrofits?
- What if home was weatherized 5-10 years ago, would homeowner still be eligible for a solar loan or rebate through the program?
- What if resident qualified for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) program years ago, but income has gone up and they no longer qualify per this program's income guidelines?
- Would LMI households want to take on more debt via a loan program?

- DMME staff is tasked with developing a straw proposal for an incentive or rebate program
- Next meeting is scheduled for September 22<sup>nd</sup>

Greenleaf noted that the group reviewed Review LMI solar loan program in MA, used credit enhancements with banks to encourage lending to LMI customers. Program was \$30-\$40 million in scale over several years. Hearne noted that energy efficiency providers were well represented on of the Board, but appointments of solar industry representatives are still working their way through the House and Senate.

- Coman asked that 8/6 Program Development Committee minutes be mailed to Boardmembers.

Greenleaf stated that there was some conversation about amending the legislation to clarify certain areas. Greenleaf suggested the rebate program could be developed as a means to leverage funding request to the General Assembly. Hearne noted that DMME's opportunity to submit possible changes to the CEAB's enabling statute to the Governor's office was 8/26 and no changes were submitted.

For the next order of business, Coman reported out on the 9/4 Stakeholder Engagement and Marketing Committee. The group decided on a two pronged approach. DMME will convene meetings with key stakeholders (weatherization and solar provider), and bring these findings back to the Board. Board members can attend, but if more than two (2) Board members attend, the meeting needs to be an official Board meeting. Reach out through trusted leaders to communities we would like to serve.

Meetings with the solar providers could provide good feedback on the program design. A list of stakeholders has been developed and will be circulated to the Board for input in terms of other stakeholder groups that should be added.

SEM would like guidance on what information we should solicit from WAP and solar providers. SEM will meet again in late September, in preparation for October stakeholder meetings. Hearne noted that DMME will continue to gather reference materials and best practices for stakeholder engagement from other states via the Clean Energy States Alliance (CESA).

DMME staff Farrell and Hearne discussed potential funding sources being explored (e.g., general funds, foundation grants, private contributions). DMME was advised that we received approval from DPB to spend an appropriation from DMME's ARRA funds in FY2021, some of which could be used for the solar program rollout.

Coman asked for an update on Community or Shared Solar. Hearne made contact with SCC lead on shared solar rulemaking process. Impression is that there will be a less formal stakeholder process for the shared solar rulemaking. Coman noted that shared solar could be an important tool to provide broader access. Reisinger noted that CEAB and other (utilities)

have submitted comments by the late July for both shared solar programs. SCC invited proposed regulations, Coalition for Community Solar Access and MDV-SEIA. SCC is now reviewing proposed regulations and comments. Next step is for SCC to issue its proposed regulation, which will likely be followed by another public comment period. Hearne noted that SCC may consult with DMME around ensuring the LMI stakeholders are engaged in providing comments on the proposed regs for LMI shared solar.

Coman noted that VCEA requires the IOUs to consult with the CEAB on programs they are offering for LMI customers and how the LMI Solar program can help LMI customers lower their electric bills through access to solar energy. Coman, Hearne, and Farrell have had initial conversations with Dominion and Appalachian Power representatives. Coman noted that there are a lot of good lessons learned through better understanding of how utilities engage and inform customers about their programs.

Hearne noted that the CEAB Annual Report is due on the first day of the regular General Assembly session, which is typically the first full week of January. Hearne asked for some date commitments in terms of how to encapsulate the work that's been done, suggesting a final draft ready in early December. Coman asked if Committees could provide a summary of work done to date, and a draft outline.

Coman asked for update on 2021 General Assembly session and what might need to be adjusted in terms of the statute. Greenleaf suggested moving forward on demonstration pilot before going back to the General Assembly. First cut of rebate program is to be ready for Sept. 22 Program Development Committee meeting. Greenleaf stated there are a lot of details that still need to be worked out.

Boardmember Ostrowski joined the call at 2pm.

In terms of potential 2021 GA activity around clean energy, Coman and others noted that it was too early to be certain what clean energy legislation may be put forward and what priorities may be. Hearne noted we are still missing a Board appointment from the Environmental Justice Council and this input will be needed going forward for DMME to execute on VCEA goals.

At 2:15, an invited presentation by Shelley Cohen of the DC Sustainable Energy Utility on DC's "Solar for All" program started. Solar for All is a three-year program that installs solar at no cost to income-qualified DC homeowners. The program is funded through the Renewable Energy Development Fund (REDF). REDF is a benefits charge assessed on utility bills. There were 86 residential installations in 2019, and \$8 million in incentives was available in 2020. One hundred residential homes are being targeted for installations in 2021. Solar installers in the program must guarantee at least 90% of expected electrical output every year for 20 years.

In terms of challenges for the program, COVID-19 has interrupted in-person contact with customers, which is helpful in building trust. This has required significant changes in program policies and procedures to keep things moving forward. Mayor Bowser deemed solar workers

as essential workers. REDF incentive funds 1/3 to 1/2 of cost of the system. Revenue to installers from the Solar Renewable Energy Credits (SRECs) are repaying some of the cost because these can be monetized. Cohen has seen very interesting financing RFPs that are slated to be released by late September as the next round of the program.

Ostrowski asked about how customer outreach is conducted. Cohen replied that outreach was done through events that Mayor Bowser's office was sponsoring or that the Mayor was attending (such as Senior Day); solar installers were also identifying potential customers. A first step is to do a triage to see if roof is suitable for SF rooftop; if the rooftop isn't suitable for solar, or the customer doesn't qualify, the customer is referred to the community solar program.

A question was asked about if the customer sells the home: panels installed through Solar for All convey with home, but if new homeowner doesn't want solar system, the solar installer is obligated to remove them. Cohen noted that having solar system installed actually increases the value of the home, and thus far for homes that have changed ownership no one has asked to have the panels removed. Hearne noted that SRECs are not available in Virginia. If new buyer doesn't income qualify, then panels stay with the home.

Coman noted at 2:48pm that there were still 7 members of the Board were on the call and there was still have a quorum.

Coman opened up meeting to public comments and questions at 2:49pm.

Karla Loeb of Sigora Solar noted the real intent of the legislation forming the Clean Energy Advisory Board was to provide a sustainable financial platform for long term access, not necessarily a cash-based grant program. There is no silver bullet or singular program model that will work for every situation. She noted the 25% carve outs for LMI in the VCEA. Loeb asked about the Virginia Solar and Storage Authority's report and if CEAB work should be noted in VSSEDA's report. Hearne noted that DMME would incorporate some information on CEAB activities in the VSSEDA Annual Report.

Hearne noted that due to policy changes put in place by VCEA access to PPAs and leases for LMI customers are now available, which may have impact on the program model.

2:55 Greenleaf had to leave the call.

2:57 Public comment period was closed.

3:01 Coman adjourned meeting.