

**State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations**

**Public Utilities Commission**

**Minutes of Open Meeting Held on December 17, 2019**

An Open Meeting of the Public Utilities Commission was held on Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 10:00 A.M. in Hearing Room A, 89 Jefferson Boulevard, Warwick, Rhode Island to discuss, deliberate, and/or vote on the following dockets.

Present: Chairperson Margaret Curran, Commissioner Marion Gold, Commissioner Abigail Anthony, Cynthia Wilson-Frias, Margaret Hogan, John Harrington, Todd Bianco, Alan Nault, and Luly Massaro.

- I. Chairperson Curran called the Open Meeting to order at 10:08 A.M. A quorum was present.
- II. **Docket No. 4994 – Providence Water Supply Board (PWSB)** – PWSB submitted a rate application to collect additional revenues of \$13,311,349 to support a total cost of service of \$85,932,149 for effect January 2, 2020. Chairperson Curran moved to suspend Providence Water’s proposed tariffs beyond January 2, 2020 for purpose of conducting discovery and hearing on the rate application. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**
- III. **Docket No. 4981 – Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island (Episcopal Diocese)** – The PUC considered the Episcopal Diocese’s Petition for Declaratory Judgment pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-8(c) with respect to Affected System Operator studies and cost associated with the studies under R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 39-26.3-3 to 4.1 and federal regulations. The Division and National Grid submitted responsive comments. After review of the filings submitted in the docket, Chairperson Curran moved that the PUC schedule the matter for further consideration. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion passed. **Vote 3-0.**
- IV. **Docket No. 4982 - Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island (Episcopal Diocese)** – The PUC considered the Episcopal Diocese’s Petition for Declaratory Judgment pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-35-8(c) with respect to the eligibility for net metering of certain solar power generation systems paired with battery storage, pursuant to R.I. Gen. Laws §§ 39-26.4-1 to 5. The Division and National Grid submitted responsive comments. After review, the following motions were made:
  - A. Chairperson Curran moved to declare that a renewable energy power generating system paired with battery storage meet the definition of an eligible net metering system where: (1) the battery is only charged from the solar power generation system; (2) the host is not on time-of-use rates; (3) the generator/customer does not claim the right to capacity payments or the value of ancillary services markets; (4) and the entire system (renewable energy power generating system plus storage) is paired on the customer side of the retail meter. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

B. Chairperson Curran moved that National Grid shall have the right to inspect the paired system to ensure that it is configured to allow no charging of the storage unit from the electric grid. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

C. Chairperson Curran moved to open Docket No. 5000, entitled “Investigation Into the Treatment of Storage as an Electric Distribution System Resource”. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.** The docket shall include short-term and long-term inquiries. It should first focus on distributed generation paired with storage, and eventually focus on standalone storage systems. At the outset, the PUC will issue a 30-day notice to solicit comment to determine the scope and discuss the appropriate process for the docket. The docket will include broad topics such as: 1) identification of the costs and value streams of distributed energy resources under each of the programs in which renewable energy distributed energy resources can currently participate; 2) identification of the costs and value streams of distributed energy resources paired with storage under each of the programs in which renewable energy distributed energy resources can currently participate; 3) understanding whether and how the design and purpose of a paired system changes the costs and value streams; 4) identification of an definition of inappropriate market activity; 5) understanding of concerns with time-of-use rates and implications on the previously identified costs and value streams; and 6) ownership of capacity and ancillary services values.

V. **Docket No. 4990 – Pascoag Utility District (Pascoag)** – Pascoag Utility submitted on November 7, 2019 and supplemented on December 4, 2019, proposed rate changes arising out of the reconciliation of its tariff adjustment provisions for the Standard Offer Service Rate, Transition Service Charge and Transmission Service Charge effective for consumption January 1, 2020. The proposal represents a reduction in rates. The Division submitted a memorandum finding the proposed rates are reasonable and accurately calculated and recommended approval. After review, Chairperson Curran moved to approve Pascoag Utility’s requests. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

VI. **Docket No. 4991 – Pascoag Utility District (Pascoag)** – The PUC reviewed the record relating to Pascoag Utility submitted proposed 2020 Demand Side Management Program (DSM) with an overall budget of \$199,829 and associated charge for effect January 1, 2020. The Division and OER submitted comments supporting approval of Pascoag Utility DSM proposal. After review, Chairperson Curran moved to approve Pascoag Utility’s 2020 DSM Program. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.** Commissioner Anthony noted that 25% of Pascoag’s budget is for marketing which includes the Family Fair and Green Festival (about \$9,000 for Green Festival). Commissioner Anthony stated that the PUC will be looking for more evidence to support the Green Festival budget vendor fees. Commissioner Gold also encouraged Pascoag Utility to look for alternative source to fund the budget for festival and fairs.

VII. **Docket No. 4290 – Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS)** – DHS submitted on September 30, 2019, a request for approval of the LIHEAP Enhancement Fund in accordance with R.I. Gen. Laws § 39-1-27.12. DHS requests that the PUC set the LIHEAP charge at \$0.80 per month for both gas and electric customers for calendar year 2020. The Division submitted a position memorandum summarizing its review and recommended approval of the LIHEAP Enhancement Charge at \$0.80 effective January 1, 2020 for both gas and electric customers. After review, Chairperson Curran moved to approve DHS’ request. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.** Commissioner Gold requested a technical session on the low-income program early in the year to consider how we are reaching out to people who are struggling with paying their bills.

VIII. **Review and rule on the Renewable Energy Resource Eligibility Application submitted in the following dockets:**

**Docket No. 4970 – Smart Energy Holdings, LLC’s** application for eligibility certification of the Rossi Solar generation unit, a 0.66 MW AC solar facility located in Warwick, Rhode Island as a New Renewable Energy Resource. After review, Chairperson Curran moved to grant conditional eligibility with the requirement the applicant submit documentation verifying commercial operation date and the assignment of NEPOOL- GIS Id number as recommended by PUC consultant. Commissioner Anthony seconded. **Vote 3-0.**

**Docket No. 4985 – Westbound Solar, LLC’s** application for eligibility certification of the Walmart North Kingstown generation unit, a 0.360 MW AC solar facility located in North Kingstown, Rhode Island as a New Renewable Energy Resource. Chairperson Curran moved to approve the application as recommended by PUC consultant. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

**Docket No. 4987 – Enerpac, Inc.’s** application for eligibility certification of the HOPE – HOPE FARM SOLAR generation unit, a 10 MW AC solar facility located in Hope, Rhode Island as a New Renewable Energy Resource. Chairperson Curran moved to approve the application as recommended by PUC consultant. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

**Docket No. 4988 – TPE Hopkins Solar Holdings I LLC’s** application for eligibility certification of the TPE Hopkins Solar Holdings I LLC generation unit, a 6.678 MW AC (9.54 MW DC) solar facility located in West Greenwich, Rhode Island as a New Renewable Energy Resource. Chairperson Curran moved to approve the application as recommended by PUC consultant. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

**Docket No. 4989 – S.M. Trombino Properties LLC’s** applications for eligibility certification for the Cedar Hollow Solar generation unit, a 10 MW AC solar facility located in Ashaway, Rhode Island as a New Renewable Energy Resource.

Chairperson Curran moved to approve the application as recommended by PUC consultant. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

IX. **Telecommunications Service Provider Dockets** - The following companies ceased operations and requested cancellation of their authority to conduct business. After consideration, Chairperson Curran moved to grant the request and cancelled the authority of:

- Docket No. 4372 – Common Point, LLC
- Docket No. 2262(B21) – Operator Service Co., LLC
- Docket No. 2262(P15) – Frontier Communications of America, Inc.

Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

X. **Docket No. 4809 – The Narragansett Electric Co. d/b/a National Grid** – This docket relates to the PUC’s review of the Company’s Standard Offer Service rates proposed under the procurement plan approved in this docket. Chairperson Curran moved to grant National Grid’s Motion for Protective Treatment of Attachments 5 & 6 submitted in the Company’s October 17, 2019 filing. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

XI. **Docket No. 4992 – The Narragansett Electric Co. d/b/a National Grid** - National Grid submitted proposed Long-Term Contracting for Renewable Energy Recovery Factor (LTC Recovery Factor) of 0.0543¢ per kWh for the period January 2020 through June 2020. The Division submitted a position memorandum summarizing its review and recommending approval. After review, Chairperson Curran moved to grant the requested LTC Recovery Factor. Commissioner Gold seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

XII. **Docket No. 4980 – The Narragansett Electric Co. d/b/a National Grid** – The PUC considered National Grid’s 2020 System Reliability Procurement (SRP) Report submitted as a settlement between the participating members of the SRP Technical Working Group. The Company proposes an SRP factor of \$0.00015 per kWh to recover the 2020 SRP budget of approximately \$81,000 as well as the recovery of an under collection of \$1.1 million resulting from an accounting error. The Company requests the recovery of these funds be rolled into the existing Energy Efficiency Program (EEP) charge for effect January 1, 2020. After review, Commissioner Gold moved to approve the request by National Grid. Chairperson Curran seconded the motion and the motion unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**

XIII. **Docket No. 4979 – The Narragansett Electric Co. d/b/a National Grid** – The PUC reviewed the record relating to the Settlement entered between National Grid, the Office of Energy Resources, the Energy Efficiency and Resources Management Council, Acadia Center, The Energy Council of Rhode Island and the Green Energy Consumers Alliance (collectively, the Parties). The Settlement requested approval of National Grid’s 2020 Energy Efficiency Plan, budgets to implement electric and natural gas energy efficiency programs and associated Energy Efficiency Program

(EPP) charges applicable to electric and gas customers. After review and deliberation, the following motions were made:

- a. Commissioner Anthony moved that the PUC disallow National Grid's proposed fuel switching rebates, as provided in lines 1 through 12 and 14 of attachment to data response PUC 2-2, National Grid may reallocate \$827,820 to other residential electric efficiency programs and resubmit appropriately revised electric savings targets. This includes the option to reallocate funding to the appliance rebate program. The amount disallowed and to be reallocated is \$827,820, this includes \$657,000 in the budgets for the installation from data response PUC 2-2 plus the 26% programmatic costs from data response PUC 2-1. Chairperson Curran seconded the motion. Commissioner Gold opposed. **Vote 2-1.**
- b. Commissioner Anthony moved that the PUC reject the delivered fuels carveout. Chairperson Curran seconded the motion. Commission Gold opposed the motion. **Vote 2-1.**
- c. It is moved that the PUC approve the funding of the \$5.2 million to Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) and included in the calculation of system benefit charge. That the PUC authorized the collection of the \$5.2 million but withhold approval of transfer to RIIB until the such time the PUC receives answers to follow-up question regarding whether \$5.2 million is the appropriate amount to transfer including whether there are funds available to reduce the \$5.2 million requested. Commissioner Gold moved to approve the motion. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**
- d. It is moved that the PUC approve the energy efficiency budgets as presented in Table E-1 and Table G-1 (as revised in National Grid's December 6, 2019 filing). Commissioner Anthony moved to approve the budgets as revised. Chairperson Curran seconded the motion and the motion was unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**
- e. It is moved that National Grid submit a compliance filing on December 23, 2019 for review on December 30, 2019. The compliance filing shall adjust the savings targets for the elimination of the delivered fuel carve-out, the inclusion of weatherization in the core electric targets, the reallocation of \$827,820 from delivered fuel heat pumps to other residential programs. Chairperson Curran moved to approve the motion. Commissioner Anthony seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed. **Vote 3-0.**
- f. It is moved that the PUC approve the Energy Efficiency Program Plan as amended at this Open Meeting. Commission Anthony moved to approve the Plan and Commissioner Gold seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. **Vote 3-0.**

XIV. There being no further business to discuss Chairperson Curran moved to adjourn the Open Meeting at 2:25 P.M. A web video of the Open Meeting discussion can be accessed at <http://www.ustream.tv/channel/WqQyXw296dg>.