

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC) Executive Committee

MEETING MINUTES

Friday, June 30, 2023
Virtual Zoom Meeting

Councilors Present: Liz Anderson, Sarah Bresolin Silver, Galen Nelson, Elizabeth Mahony, Kyle Murray

Non-Voting Councilors: Carol Sedewitz

Councilors Absent: ---

DOER Staff Present: Aurora Edington, Joanna Troy, Sarah McDaniel, Julia Fox

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Mahony, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

2. Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda

Commissioner Mahony, Commissioner Department of Energy Resources (DOER):
Commissioner Mahony welcomed all participants to the Executive Committee (ExCom). The Commissioner took roll call for voting and non-voting members. The Commissioner asked if anyone wanted to add agenda items after sharing the meeting presentation slides. The Commissioner walked through the agenda (slide 2).

3. Consultant Scope of Work and Plan

Commissioner Mahony shared slide 3 of the presentation and explained the consultant search timeline. The Request for Quote (RFQ) will be posted on COMMBUYS. In the posting it will state that the deadline for receiving the RFQ is July 21st, 2023, at 4:00 PM. The procurement calendar anticipated timeline is outlined in the meeting presentation slides. The consultant will be helpful this fall when we are digging into the Electric-Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs) that the EDCs submit to the GMAC on September 1st, 2023. The Commissioner encouraged members to share the RFQ with their networks.

Discussion:

Aurora Edington, DOER: As a clarification, the RFQ is being posted this afternoon (6/30/23). This will also be posted on the GMAC website next week.

Sarah Bresolin Silver, Enel North America, representing the transmission-scale renewable energy: I appreciate the tight turnaround on the RFQ questions and responses. This will be difficult, but it is understood that this is being pushed along efficiently.

4. Agenda for Upcoming GMAC Meetings

The Commissioner shared slide 4 and shared the agendas for upcoming meetings, including discussion topics, speaker ideas, and pre-read materials. At the July GMAC meeting, the topics of stakeholder engagement and equity will be discussed. We are proposing ideas for the August meeting. We will open these meetings with time for public comments. We will also be approving a series of meeting minutes at the upcoming meeting. We do anticipate taking up any unused time during the public comment period to discuss the EDCs' ESMP outline. We also have collected written comments on the EDCs' ESMP outline and have posted these. The topics on July 13th include stakeholder engagement and equity.

1. Proposed July 13^h meeting

The Commissioner shared slide 4 and explained the agenda for the July 13th meeting.

Discussion:

Carol Sedewitz, representing National Grid: Regarding EDCs' current practices with stakeholder engagement as preliminary information for the GMAC, would it be possible to have until the morning of July 11th to provide slides?

Commissioner Mahony: 9:00 AM on the morning of July 11th works, but we need to have these materials posted at least 48 hours in advance per open meeting laws. It will be a tight timeline.

Carol Sedewitz: Could EDCs deliver a presentation on their plans during that hour? How much time would the EDCs have to present?

Commissioner Mahony: EDCs could have a 10-minute presentation to show an outline of thoughts on stakeholder engagement.

Kyle Murray, Acadia Center, Representing the environmental advocacy community: 10 minutes from utilities would be great. If we could get this presentation to our speakers in advance that may be helpful for their presentations.

Aurora Edington: Jollette Westbrook, EDF and Sofia Owen, ACE are confirmed speakers on stakeholder engagement and will deliver presentations of 10 minutes each. We could have the

EDCs go first so that the speakers can deliver their thoughts. Mary Wambui and Undersecretary Maria Belen Power have been invited to speak on the topic of equity.

Galen Nelson, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center: DOE has developed community engagement materials and resources, such as hydrogen hub. Given all of the federal money attached to the standard, it is a great template. This could be provided as a reference material.

Commissioner Mahony: We can add this to pre-read materials for the next GMAC meeting.

Aurora Edington: Both Jolette and Mary requested that questions be sent ahead of time so that they can create their presentations around them.

Commissioner Mahony: Are there any specific questions or topics to discuss during the equity topic section?

Kyle Murray: I am confident in the speakers' ability to run this session.

Sarah Bresolin Silver: My suggestion is to assume that people do not know much about the topic. Start with a basic discussion that the speakers would build on.

Galen Nelson: With stakeholder engagement and equity, it is important to talk about how those considerations overlap with necessary changes and how communities are impacted. Part of the consideration includes equity opportunities from a workforce perspective. What is the state/utilities/clean energy developers doing, and how do they source more diverse workers? This could be one angle to take on this topic.

Commissioner Mahony: Discussion points can include IT considerations, non-wire alternative applications, and diversifying the workforce.

Liz Anderson, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General: Speaking from my previous work with EV dockets coming from a cost perspective, how do we ensure ratepayer funds are used in an equitable manner? I would love to hear of other examples of this in the context of GMAC plans. I can foresee an issue with directed funds in updating infrastructure in EJ communities. How do we do the right stakeholder engagement to have buy-in with the communities? We need to be proactive in promoting this so that we can understand the communities' concerns. It is a delicate balance.

Commissioner Mahony: Framing this as a delicate balance is spot on. Many communities have been asked to bear electric grid infrastructure. We cannot assume communities want grid infrastructure despite it being a part of providing clean energy solutions.

Carol Sedewitz: Really appreciate those comments Liz because that is the delicate balance about adding infrastructure in communities for providing the benefits of electrification. Guidance on this balance would be helpful.

2. Proposed August 10th meeting

The Commissioner shared slide 4 and explained the agenda for the August 10th meeting.

Discussion:

Kyle Murray: In the August GMAC meeting, we are blocking off one hour for public comments. We want robust stakeholder engagement, but would we move onto new items after that point? What if someone could only come at 12:45 PM, what happens in that instance?

Commissioner Mahony: That is a fair concern. There are two options that I think of. We could move this public comment period to the end of the meeting from 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM, or if we keep the public comment from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM, we have some flexibility if we flag in the agenda that we will move to other items if there are no other public comments.

Sarah McDaniel, DOER: That could be an option. If people have scheduling concerns, we can do our best to accommodate them when they reach out. I do not know of anything that bars us from moving on or going back to public comment later in the meeting.

Commissioner Mahony: Do council members prefer to keep this public comment period from 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM, or do we move it to the end of the meeting?

Sarah Bresolin Silver: We might get more thoughtful comments at the end of the meeting so, moving to the end of the meeting could be useful.

Carol Sedewitz: Public comments from 12:00 PM – 12:30 PM, then do a public comment section at the end for a half hour?

Galen Nelson: It is interesting to have the public comment at the beginning. Could we do them at the beginning and the end?

Commissioner Mahony: Eliciting public comments on the ESMP outline was the rationale behind the hour at the beginning of the meeting. Breaking it up may be the way to go. We can check on GMAC members' thoughts about public comment at the next meeting. Distributed Energy Resource (DER) integration and cost allocation are the topics of discussion for the August meeting.

Sarah Bresolin Silver: Yes, they will allow for a robust discussion. I suggest for the first August topic that there is discussion on existing or anticipated future technologies to managing DERs on the distribution system. Lots of talk on distributed energy resources management system (DERMS). The lack of that technology being developed or deployed is a roadblock. I am happy to think of speakers to speak to us, such as software providers.

Commissioner Mahony: If anyone has any ideas for pre-reading materials on these topics, please share them. We would want to have neutral resources that can speak to these items. If anyone has suggestions for speakers, please share them as well.

Liz Anderson: The EDCs’ grid modernization plans have a lot of what you mentioned, Sarah. It would be helpful to hear what EDCs are currently doing, especially on the broad topics of cost allocation/interconnection.

Commissioner Mahony: We only thought about this in terms of interconnection, if there is something broader than that, the sooner we talk about it the better.

Liz Anderson: Both topics involve discussion on rate design and need to have spending plans. We need to keep our focus on containing these costs, with attention to demand side strategies and rate design to manage the peak. Those aspects need to be a part of these plans as they are part of the overall context of this discussion to keep in mind.

Carol Sedewitz: On the topics of DER integration and active resource integration, we could bring in Mike Pocaro. I can also reach out to some of contacts in the UK to have information on what has been done in their markets and processes. I will bring this information back to the group.

Commissioner Mahony: Suggested speakers we have thought of are Ron Nelson and Eli Asher from Strategen.

Galen Nelson: There is a study in publication process with Baringa called “Value of Distributed Energy Resources for Distribution System Grid Services” right now. It is highly relevant, and findings have been exciting. This focus is on larger, above 500 kw in front of the meter systems. It is an important subset of our scope. We have a draft now. Not sure if the timing would work. We could link as prereading material?

Aurora Edington: We could check in to see if there will be a public facing draft ready by then to share as a pre-reading material.

5. Other Discussion Areas

The Commissioner shared slide 5 and asked for feedback on various discussion topics, as well as suggestions for additional discussion items.

Discussion:

Commissioner Mahony: DOER put out a notification to the GMAC listserv and tweeted about eliciting public comments during the July and August GMAC meetings. How do we broadcast the message?

Kyle Murray: I suggest that we engage with municipal planning entities.

Commissioner Mahony: We do have a GMAC member from MAPC.

Sarah Bresolin Silver: We are members with several trade associations and those folks are well engaged. If we feel that we are not getting enough response from stakeholders, perhaps a joint

meeting with organizations could be useful. It is important to consider who we are not hearing from and reflect on that.

Commissioner Mahony: There should be many stakeholders engaging in this conversation. Going forward, we are planning for GMAC review of draft ESMPs September – November. We need to be thinking about how we will run those meetings in the fall leading up to what is required of us – give the utilities a response on their plans. It may be useful to look to the EEAC on how their process works. They share a resolution. What sort of work product do we want to give back to the utilities? This will be discussed more in July. Begin thinking about this and share examples ahead of the meeting.

Kyle Murray: In terms of the EEAC, they draft a plan, then a resolution. It may not be a one-to-one process for us.

Commissioner Mahony: The resolution development process allows councilors to think about issues and drives discussion and decision making. This is our first time.

Kyle Murray: It will also depend on the consultant we bring in.

Liz Anderson: I suggest thinking about the specific areas that are difficult to tackle, and possibly creating working groups around them. It would take more time outside of regular monthly meetings to get consensus on these issues.

Commissioner Mahony: Additional meetings are possible to negotiate all this. The first exercise is looking at these issues and sorting them. Any other items?

Kyle Murray: Suggestions for topics – learning about the different planning challenges by sector. Question – How does one go about attending the GMAC meetings in person if you are not a member of the council?

Commissioner Mahony: We have come close to filling the current meeting room. Saltonstall has rooms on the second floor, but they are not set up for hybrid meetings at the time. If we anticipate a meeting with lots of people participating, we could go to Ashburton on the 21st floor. We could also ask other EEA agencies about appropriate meeting spaces with good sound quality. Let's readjust if there is a large interest in attending these meetings in person.

6. Close

Commissioner Mahony, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 3:06 PM.

Meeting Materials:

- Meeting agenda
- Meeting presentation slides