

**Block Island Utility District**  
**Meeting of the Board of Utility Commissioners**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, January 26, 2023 @ 4:00 PM**  
**THE HARBOR CHURCH**

In attendance: Boad Members: Barbara MacMullan, Tom Risom, John Warfel  
Others: Jeffery Wright, Tracy Fredericks, Evan Carey, Rene Meyer.

Barbara MacMullan called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm

1. **Public Input**

- John Warfel asked to post to the website what are the responsibilities of the public vs the power company regarding new services and rights-of-way.

2. **Commissioner's Report**

- Nothing to report.

3. **Approve Meeting Minutes: December 20, 2022**

- John Warfel made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, seconded by Tom Risom, the motion carried unanimously.

4. **Review Strategic Plan Measures**

- Jeff reported that the only yellow (at risk) on the plan is due to rescheduling the safety training. The rest is long term and nothing else to report.

5. **Approve the 2023 Board of Utility Commissioners Annual Calendar**

- Jeff encouraged the BOD to attend the NE Association of Electric Cooperatives meeting in Newport and any NRECA regional meetings or trainings.
- Barbara asked we add the cutoff date for new BOD ballots.
- Barbara MacMullan made a motion to approve the Board of Utility Commissioners Annual Calendar, the motion was seconded by Tom Risom, the motion was approved unanimously.

6. **Treasurer's Report**

- Tom reported he has received all the billing summaries, did not find anything non-compliant with the BIUD financial policy.

- Tom reported on the conference call he had with Jim Meiers of CFC and Jeff. The meeting was to look at the line of credit. After the last 2 cable failures, a need for a restricted emergency line of credit for fuel/power supply only was discussed. Everyone agreed it would make sense to create a 500k line of credit for fuel.
- Barbara expressed concern on our borrowing capacity if we have another need. Ad discussion was had regarding the impacts on our future borrowing capacity. She recommended limiting the operating line increase to \$1M.
- Jeff said we would have to recalculate and that he would follow up with Dave Bebyn and Paige from CFC on this.
- Barbara MacMullan made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, the motion was seconded by John Warel, the motion passed unanimously.

## 7. **President's Update**

- Jeff requested the Power Supply Sub-Committee get together next week. He will reach out to Barbara, John and ENE to find out how do we solicit members to the committee.
- Jeff reported that he and Barbara spoke with Mayforth Group, they will help with retail choice exemption and renewable goals that the state has.
- Jeff said he would like to get a Round-Up program started. -what do we do with the monies and, what do we advertise the monies are for. Suggested we create a committee to make these decisions. The committee should include members, employees and board members. Jeff took the action to develop a program charter that would be presented to the BOD for approval in a future meeting.
- Jeff reported that over the past year the E-Bill program was used to collect nearly \$700K of our revenue. We will be offering an incentive to sign up for paperless billing to encourage more to use the program.
- Sertex contract we will be discussing service agreements and dig safes. We will do these for them at a price. Sertex is looking to lease Sertex space at BIUD, Jeff will negotiate a rental agreement with Sertex. The old day room is the spot, this could help with the working relationship. Possibly erect a new building if this is going to be long term. Sertex would not be having employees on island full time, they would use this as office space.
- Jeff reported that the EV bus has had some challenges, but it seems to become more reliable. Jeff touted the "fuel" savings. The town used to pay \$3,500-\$5,000 in fuel costs each year, now they are charging it for approximately \$100/month.
- Jeff reported on the CEO closeup conference, and that he spoke with Sheldon Peterson for about a half hour about our accomplishments.
- Jeff reported the Level 3 charger will be arriving next Wednesday. The charger will be at the BIUD office, on the left-hand side of the parking lot of the office. The solar initiative will be administering it, BIUD is only hosting.
- Motion to accept the President's report was made by Barbara, seconded by Tom, the motion was approved unanimously.

8. **Review and Approve Gravel Pit III Final PPA Pricing**

- Jeff reported that Gravel Pit cancelled the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> PPA but offered a 3<sup>rd</sup>. The price must increase due to material costs. Jeff detailed the terms of the new PPA. Jeff suggested this is still a good deal, and wanted to make sure we are all in agreement.
- Barbara made a motion to approve executing the revised PPA of Gravel Pit III, the motion was seconded by John Warfel, the motion was approved unanimously.

9. **Appoint NRECA Voting Delegate for the 2023 Annual Meeting**

- Barbara MacMullan made a motion to have Tom Risom be the voting delegate for the 2023 Annual Meeting the motion was seconded by John Warfel, the motion approved unanimously.

10. **Review and Discuss EV Level II and Level III Charging Program Options**

- Jeff reported that we need to develop a program, he spoke with others in the business that have these programs in place. One of the issues is talking with chargers through Wi-Fi. If you have AMI meters you can see how the members are using them. The cost for the level 2 chargers is between \$200-\$300, the member gets the charger from the company, they sign an agreement not to use it during certain peak hours. The companies Jeff spoke with reported that the members have been honest.
- John Warfel suggested we find one we like and recommend it. Vermont Electrical Coop (VEC) uses charge point, chargers. Jeff said our first step is to develop a program and find out if we need regulatory approval if we are giving them to our members, or can we roll this in with our efficiency program.
- Barbara asked what the benefit is of giving away chargers. Jeff reported that it is an incentive to work with their members, know where the chargers are located and ensure they only charge off peak and that they are using a charger that works with their car and our system.
- Jeff encouraged everyone to read the attached information. This will be discussed over several meetings. We need to agree on a program and in parallel do some more research on the different chargers.
- Further discussion was had on what people are doing now to charge their EV's and how the technology works between the different charger levels and the time and amperage involved to bring the car to be sufficiently charged. People are going to want to get level 2 chargers to charge their private vehicles. It is in BIUD's interest to know where these chargers are and to be able to control when they are used. BIUD wants the sales, but they need to be used at the right time of the day.
- Barbara asked if we could come up with a separate EV rate. Jeff reported no, because we would need to install a second meter. It has been proven if you offer time of use rates, you can change people's behavior. These new time of use rates can be tricky. Jeff suggested everyone attending the NRECA conference to attend a time of use rate session.
- BOD's will do more research and attend session on EV charging. More chargers are suggested to be installed around the island. Offer incentives to the commercial businesses to install chargers, at the beach, hotels, grocery store. These need to be

level 3 chargers to work efficiently.

## 11. Review and Discuss 2023 State and Federal Grant Opportunities

- Jeff reported that NRECA has earmarked three grant opportunities for us, and that he feels confident that the NRECA business strategies group is re-prioritizing their efforts to get the grant monies to their COOPs.
- Jeff reported that the first grant is for \$3 million dollars to replace poles and storm guying. We would have 5 years to spend the money and would be able to replace all the poles on the island. We need to bid everything out; we need DOE to approve the contractor. There would be a lot of reporting, but NRECA would be helping us with all of this. Jeff suggested everyone read the concept paper. We should find out if we are accepted this June.
- Jeff reported the second grant is a Funds Opportunity Announcement (FOA), which has not yet been announced. This is for an ERA grant for rural and remote areas like us, for grid modernization. The voltage conversion is perfect for this grant. Jeff said he is hoping NRECA will do a joint concept paper, and that first we need to ask them to include us in this grant. Jeff reported he has already filled out the survey, announcing what projects we would do and how we qualify. We will ask and lobby for this grant. Jeff suggested everyone go onto Cooperative.com website to see what grants are available.
- Jeff reported that the third grant is an Office of Energy Grant. This was for the storage project, the storage project as it currently stands is having difficulty being economical. This grant could also be used for the voltage conversion. The voltage conversion avoids us from having to replace wire, so this fits with the grant. Jeff suggested we grab this, have been discussing this for years and we are afraid this will go away.
- Jeff reported that all these grants are 50/50 and CFC said they would lend us the money for these grants. The first grant is \$3 million, and we would need to borrow \$3 million to match. These grants are not definite, and we should not stop any of the current work we are doing.
- Jeff asked everyone to look over the attached list of state grants available.
- Jeff expressed his concerns over getting all of these grants, and how much work this would require, but this would be a “good” problem.
- Jeff reported that there is the Municipal resilience energy program that the town is involved in and we are mentioned in the grant to relocate the substation to a higher area.
- John brought forward a grant from the Island Institute. John reported the energy transition project, is a technical assistance grant. We need to tell them what problems we would like them to look at. Administered by Island Institute. They would want community involvement, town council, other departments. We would all have to agree on what we would like them to help us with. Some suggestions would be a community solar project, rate design, or energy resilience. The grant is due in April. Jeff and John will have a conversation with Emily and Emma from the Island Institute.
- Jeff suggested if we want to apply for this, we speak with the NRECA grant people to

help us write this grant.

Barbara MacMullan made a motion to adjourn the meeting, the motion was seconded by John Warfel the motion was approved unanimously, the meeting adjourned at 6:11 PM.