



# Redwood Coast Energy Authority

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## **COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

### **MINUTES**

**July 9, 2024 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.**

Chair Christopher Honar called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6:09 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The meeting agenda was posted on July 5, 2024.

#### **Members present:**

Norman Bell

Deborah Dukes

Colin Fiske

Christopher Honar

Richard Johnson

Dennis Leonardi

Pliny McCovey

Michael Shackelford

**Members absent:** Elizabeth Burks, Luna Latimer, Ethan Lawton, Kit Mann

**Board-Nominee Vacancies:** County, Rio Dell, Yurok Tribe

**Board Liaison present:** Natalie Arroyo (non-voting)

#### **Staff and others present:**

Mike Bishop, Senior Demand Side Management Technician

Brytann Busick, Community Strategies Manager

Faith Carlson, Regulatory and Legislative Policy Manager

Richard Engel, Power Resources Director

Lori Taketa, Board Clerk

Eileen Verbeck, Interim Executive Director

There were no comments on non-agenda items.

### **3. Consent Calendar**

#### **3.1. Approve May 14, 2024, CAC Meeting Minutes.**

Member Bell reiterated his request for a report on possible wave and tidal energy projects in Humboldt Bay and a presentation by the Harbor District's Rob Holmlund on harbor infrastructure development. There was no public comment on this item.

**Motion Leonardi, Second Dukes: Approve May 14, 2024, CAC meeting minutes.**

**The motion passed with the following unanimous vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Honar, Johnson, Leonardi, McCovey, Shackelford. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Burks, Latimer, Lawton, Mann.**

## **5. Income Graduated Fixed Charge (Information only)**

Power Resources Director Engel and Regulatory and Legislative Policy Manager Carlson reported on this upcoming electricity billing change and its possible effects on Humboldt County coastal and inland customers. The plan features a fixed charge for electricity service that varies depending on income, and lower rates for electricity used. Proponents say the plan lowers bills for low-income Californians, especially Central Valley residents, who may not be able to afford running air conditioners during major summer heat events. The charge also would pay for new grid infrastructure as renewable sources like wind and solar come online from different parts of the state. The plan should not increase utilities' incomes. RCEA's inland customers will likely save money on this plan but electricity bills for RCEA's coastal customers may go up. Staff will ask the CAC for help with customer messaging before the plan goes into effect.

The group discussed:

- how the plan may encourage higher electricity use, which happens when electrifying homes
- how the plan may encourage solar customers with battery storage to disconnect from the grid, or discourage solar adoption by reducing cost savings
- how the fixed charge will be distributed between the portions of the electric bill collected by PG&E and by RCEA
- whether RCEA must comply with this plan
- how the plan will affect Humboldt's low-income CARE and FERA customers
- how staff will focus on enrolling eligible customers in CARE and FERA discount programs.

Members expressed interest in providing input to the CPUC and legislature on how to implement the plan and asked whether RCEA could incentivize customers to adopt solar panels and battery storage. The group encouraged differentiating RCEA from PG&E in plan roll out messaging, stating clearly that RCEA did not start this statewide plan. There was no public comment on this agenda item.

## **6. CAC Charter Amendments**

Interim Executive Director Verbeck described proposed Community Advisory Committee Charter amendments to help the committee take action despite ongoing member vacancies, including changing the quorum to 50% plus one of the appointed members rather than total membership which includes long-vacant seats. The group requested that if consensus cannot be reached on a recommendation to the Board:

1. That a simple majority of appointed members passes the action,
2. That dissenting opinions be included in the staff report to the Board, and
3. That the list of how all members voted also be included in the staff report.

Chair Honar and members Dukes and Leonardi volunteered to serve on an ad hoc subcommittee to review and approve redrafted Charter changes on behalf of the entire CAC. There were no public comments on this item.

**Motion McCovey, Second Dukes: Approve Community Advisory Committee Charter revisions, after review and approval by the ad hoc Charter Revision Subcommittee, to be approved by the RCEA Board of Directors.**

**The motion passed with the following vote: Ayes: Bell, Dukes, Fiske, Honar, Johnson, Leonardi, McCovey, Shackelford. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Burks, Latimer, Lawton, Mann.**

### **7. Residential Kit Focus Group**

New Community Strategies Manager Brytann Busick and Account Services Manager Marisha Ramirez were introduced to the committee. Manager Busick and Senior Technician Bishop described the Demand Side Management Program's Energy Efficiency Kit, valued at up to \$75, which is available to any RCEA residential customer. The CAC gave feedback on proposed standardized efficiency kit contents.

Committee suggestions:

- Include health and safety tools such as refrigerator thermometers, carbon monoxide monitors and a nightlight.
- Include Spanish-language RCEA program information and educational material.
- Include a way for people to return unwanted material to avoid waste.
- Continue using recycled boxes to mail the kits.
- Partner with Humboldt Transit Authority to include free bus passes.
- Include particulate or nitrogen oxide monitors to ensure healthy air as houses are sealed to prevent heat loss.
- Include material showing what rebates are available to customers.

Members asked for restarting in-home visits by energy efficiency experts to install energy saving devices when program funding becomes available. There was no public comment on this agenda item.

### **8. Interim Executive Director's Report**

Interim Executive Director Verbeck announced that the search for RCEA's Executive Director has begun and shared recruitment materials. Members requested that a CAC member be included on the Board's hiring committee.

### **9. Member and Board Liaison Reports**

Board alternate liaison Arroyo reported on the Board's decision to pause the 100% clean and renewable energy by 2025 procurement goal through 2025 unless financial conditions allow reinstatement earlier. Interim Executive Director Verbeck explained the agency budget and energy market conditions driving the decision, and the possibility of depleting cash reserves should current goals be kept through near term forecasted market conditions. Members requested a report on the Board's decision at the next meeting.

Chair Honar adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.



Lori Taketa  
Clerk of the Board