



COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING **MINUTES**

May 13, 2025 - Tuesday, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Chair Ethan Lawton called the hybrid in-person and teleconference meeting to order on the above date at 6 p.m. at the Jefferson Community Center Auditorium, 1000 B Street, Eureka, CA. The meeting agenda was posted on May 9, 2025.

Members present:

Norman Bell (remote, just cause)	Ethan Lawton, Chair
Colin Fiske	Dennis Leonardi, Vice Chair
Benjamin Fordham	Kit Mann
Richard Johnson	Pliny McCovey

Board Liaison present: Sarah Schaefer (non-voting)

Members absent: Deborah Dukes, Luna Latimer

Board-nominee vacancies: Blue Lake Rancheria, Fortuna, Humboldt County seat 2, Rio Dell, Yurok Tribe.

Staff present:

Elizabeth Burks, Executive Director	Lori Taketa, Board Clerk
Richard Engel, Power Resources Director	Eileen Verbeck, Deputy Exec. Director

2. Non-Agenda Item Public Comment

No non-agenda public comment was received at the meeting.

3. Consent Calendar

3.1. Approve March 11, 2025, CAC Meeting Minutes.

There was no public comment on this item.

Motion Leonardi, Second Mann: Approve March 11, 2025, CAC meeting minutes.

The motion passed with the following unanimous, roll call vote: Ayes: Bell, Fiske, Fordham, Johnson, Lawton, Leonardi, Mann, McCovey. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Dukes, Latimer.

5. CAC Subcommittee Discussion

Executive Director Burks described the CAC subcommittees' work to date, current agency needs, staff support capacity, and upcoming agency work areas.

Staff recommended continuing these CAC subcommittees:

- Bond. The Board is interested in issuing a renewable energy project bond. Staff propose enlisting this subcommittee to investigate what bond issuance entails.
- Customer Program Outreach. Staff would like this committee to provide input on Northern Rural Energy Network programs.

Staff recommended sunsetting these subcommittees:

- Climate Action Plan. Staff will enlist the entire CAC for support as opportunities arise and request subcommittee formation if needed.
- Critical Facilities. The critical facility list will be forwarded to the Bond Subcommittee to help develop a shortlist of potential bond projects.
- McKinleyville – Arcata Major Projects. Staff will engage member agency staff during early project development phases. CAC members may notify RCEA staff of project development that might impact RCEA's Strategic Plan goals.
- Offgrid Cannabis Greenhouse Gas Impact. This committee's objectives do not overlap with RCEA's work and are more appropriately addressed by other agencies.
- Offshore Wind Outreach. The entire CAC will be enlisted for support as opportunities arise.

Staff will need CAC, and possibly subcommittee, support if RCEA adopts a cost-of-service model for calculating electricity rates.

The group expressed a desire for member agency planning departments to understand RCEA strategic plans, which are also County General Plan Energy Element goals. The group asked whether member agency staff could incorporate RePower target alignment assessment in their workflow. The committee encouraged Board members to advocate for RCEA's targets with their respective agency's planning staff. There was no public comment on this item.

6. 100% Local Renewable Portfolio by 2030 Goal

Power Resources Director Engel described difficulties meeting the local requirement

of the RePower Strategic Plan's 100% local, net-zero-carbon-emission renewable source power mix goal. Challenges to local renewable energy development include Humboldt County's antiquated electricity grid, grid interconnection delays, community skepticism toward large-scale renewable energy projects, and changed federal attitudes toward offshore wind development. Local renewable energy procurement is less affordable than procuring energy produced elsewhere. Staff will ask the Board to revise the local portion of the procurement goal prior to the next strategic plan update.

The group discussed how grid upgrade timelines do not allow RCEA to meet state renewable energy procurement requirements with local resources and how the 2019 Strategic Plan revision depended on local offshore wind coming online earlier than possible. Staff clarified they will not ask the Board to change renewable energy and net-zero-carbon-emission portfolio goals. The Committee suggested eliminating the 2030 deadline from the local procurement goal, prioritizing locally produced renewable energy development and procurement to the extent feasible, quantifying how much more expensive local renewable energy procurement is for the Board staff report, and revising the strategic plan more frequently. Members supported local renewable energy development to lessen demand for local gas-generated electricity, and helping developers overcome barriers so the County can become more self-sufficient. There was no public comment on this item.

7. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Burks announced an upcoming RCEA and Schatz Energy Research Center battery energy storage workshop in Arcata, reported on the Board's recent electricity affordability study session, and on RCEA's solicitation for cost-of-service study providers. Member Fiske stressed the need to target the community's most disadvantaged rate payers to equitably address affordability. There was no public comment on this item.

8. Member and Board Liaison Reports

Board Liaison Schaefer described the Roger's Garage Project near Jacoby Creek School and supported RCEA efforts to engage earlier with jurisdiction staff. Vice Chair Leonardi reminded staff to consider marginalized community members when designing and implementing programs. Chair Lawton encouraged members to review and comment on the McKinleyville Town Center environmental impact report and thanked them for their volunteer service on the CAC.

Chair Lawton adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Lori Taketa, Clerk of the Board