

Electric Assistance Program Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2016

Participants

Amanda Noonan, Public Utilities Commission
Rorie Patterson, Public Utilities Commission
Don Kreis, Office of Consumer Advocate
Pradip Chattopadhyay, Office of Consumer Advocate
Celeste Lovett, Office of Energy and Planning
Shannon Nolin, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action Agency
Sue Corson, Unitil Energy Systems, Inc.
Janice Johnson, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy
Karen Mackey, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy
Allen Desbiens, Public Service Company of New Hampshire d/b/a Eversource Energy
Steve Tower, New Hampshire Legal Assistance
Dennis Labbe, New Hampshire Legal Assistance

Minutes – Public Utilities Commission

1. Review of April Minutes

The Board discussed the minutes as revised by the Commission Staff. The minutes as revised were accepted.

Action Items

- Commission Staff will distribute final version of minutes with changes accepted.
- Commission Staff will revise Minute-taking list and distribute to Board.

2. Format of Minutes, Posting Minutes to Commission Website, and Notice of Meetings

The Board discussed using a standard, succinct format for minutes going forward.

The Board decided that future minutes would follow a standardized format that includes the identification of members present; the topics discussed (*e.g.*, items on the agenda); any decisions made by the Board; any action items; the date of the next meeting; and any topics from the agenda to be carried forward to a future meeting.

The Board discussed posting the minutes to the Commission website as suggested in the Triennial Review. The Board decided to post meeting minutes, on a prospective basis, to the Commission website.

The Board discussed noticing their meetings. The Board decided to use the Commission's process for noticing meetings (*e.g.*, posting a notice on the bulletin board in the reception area of the PUC and posting the same notice on the PUC's website).

3. Education and Outreach to EAP customers using Competitive Electric Supply

The Board discussed the current practices of applying the EAP discount to the total bill for customers who use the utility's default service but applying the discount only to the distribution portion of a customer's electric bill, when that customer chooses competitive electric supply. The Board reviewed a chart, created by Liberty with input from all the utilities, with the total numbers of EAP customers on competitive supply. The Board also discussed a recent increase for Unitil in the number EAP customers selecting a competitive electric supplier as a result of door to door marketing efforts by Clearview. The Board discussed generally various ideas for applying the EAP discount to the total bill of customers who use competitive electric supply, including a "Shopping Credit" proposal and a proposal to apply the EAP discount to the supplier's total ES charge (rather than applying the discount to the suppliers' rates). The Board discussed Eversource's summary of its concerns about applying the EAP discount to competitive electric supply costs (attached), based on previous discussions. The Board agreed that a joint discussion between the Board and IT staff from the utilities would be the most productive next step and decided to continue the discussion in January 2017 with the benefit of IT expertise. While not preferred, the Board also agreed that if the appropriate IT staff were not available in January, the discussion would be further postponed until the April 2017 meeting.

Action Items

- The utilities will notify the Board of the availability of IT staff for the continued discussion for the January meeting by November 11, 2016.
- UES will send Eversource updated numbers of EAP customers on competitive supply, and Eversource will update the chart developed by Liberty and re-distribute it to the Board.
- The utilities will provide a sample bill for an EAP customer using more than 750 kwh/month and a detailed description, if possible in flow-chart form, of how the companies' billing systems calculate the EAP discount for customers no less than two weeks prior to January 2017 meeting. IT Staff from each utility will participate in this discussion.
- Commission Staff will communicate to Liberty and the New Hampshire Electric Co-op the request for the sample bill, a billing-process description, and IT staff participation in the continued discussion.
- Eversource and OCA will prepare a description of the "Shopping Credit" proposal.
- Commission Staff will prepare a description of a proposal to apply the EAP discount to the supplier's total ES charge.

4. Rules of Governance

The Board discussed updating Appendix A to reflect the current names of the members and to delete Connecticut Valley Electric Company, Inc. The Board tabled further discussion on this topic to the next meeting.

Action Items

- The Commission Staff will revise Appendix A and re-circulate to the Board.
- Board members will review the Rules of Governance, circulate any suggested changes no less than two weeks in advance of the January 2017 meeting and be prepared to their proposed changes at the January 2017 meeting.

5. Website Information

See 2.b., above. The Board tabled further discussion to a future meeting.

6. Possible Legislative Changes to Improve EAP or Assist Low-income Households

The Board discussed Senator Feltes' question, at the Electric Restructuring Oversight Committee's meeting yesterday, about whether there is a need for additional funding for the EAP. The Board discussed seeking legislation to remove the cap on the System Benefits Charge, to allow the PUC discretion in setting the rate for the EAP and allow for consideration of an arrearage management program, something which would not be feasible with current funding without reducing benefits or implementing a waiting list. The OCA, NHLA and Eversource expressed support for pursuing that legislation. The Commission Staff took no position. The Board also discussed legislation to mandate an arrearage management program, as is done in other states. The Board discussed the OCA and NHLA leading the legislative efforts, if any.

Action Items

- UES will let the Board know the company's position on the legislation ideas discussed by November 11, 2016.
- Commission Staff will ask Liberty and NHEC to let the Board know their positions on such legislation no later than November 11, 2016.

7. Arrears Management Program

The Board tabled this discussion to the next meeting.

8. Triennial Process Evaluation

The Board tabled discussion on this topic to a future meeting.

Next Meeting – January 27, 2017 at 9:00 am

Action Items

1. The utilities will notify the Board of the availability of IT staff for the continued discussion for the January meeting by November 11, 2016.

2. UES will send Eversource updated numbers of EAP customers on competitive supply, and Eversource will update the chart developed by Liberty and re-distribute it to the Board.
3. The utilities will provide a sample bill for an EAP customer using more than 750 kwh/month and a detailed description, if possible in flow-chart form, of how the companies' billing systems calculate the EAP discount for customers no less than two weeks prior to January 2017 meeting. IT Staff from each utility will participate in this discussion.
4. Commission Staff will communicate to Liberty and the New Hampshire Electric Co-op the request for the sample bill, a billing-process description, and IT staff participation in the continued discussion.
5. Eversource and OCA will prepare a description of the "Shopping Credit" proposal.
6. Commission Staff will prepare a description of a proposal to apply the EAP discount to the supplier's total ES charge.
7. The Commission Staff will revise Appendix A and re-circulate to the Board.
8. Board members will review the Rules of Governance, circulate any suggested changes no less than two weeks in advance of the January 2017 meeting and be prepared to their proposed changes at the January 2017 meeting.
9. UES will let the Board know the company's position on the legislation ideas discussed by November 11, 2016.
10. Commission Staff will ask Liberty and NHEC to let the Board know their positions on such legislation no later than November 11, 2016.

Agenda Items – January 27, 2017 meeting

1. Education and Outreach to EAP customers using Competitive Electric Supply
2. Arrears Management Program
3. Website Information
4. Rules of Governance
5. Triennial Process Evaluation
6. Possible Legislative Changes to Improve EAP or Assist Low-income Households