

Minutes**Municipal Energy Working Group Committee
of the
Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board****11:30 a.m.****Wednesday, February 29, 2012****held at the****Office of Energy & Planning, 107 Pleasant Street, Johnson Hall, Concord, NH**

Those in Attendance: Pansy Bloomfield, Tim Fortier, Chris Skoglund, Eric Steltzer, Pam Crook

Phone-Ins: Karen Crampton and David Borden

1. Welcome and designation of Secretary
Folks went around the room and introduced themselves. Pam Crook took the minutes.
2. Discussion on Municipal Energy Working Group (MEWG) Purpose

There was a general discussion of what has happened with the MEWG since last summer. In August, the EESE board was reluctant to disband the MEWG and cede its duties over to the Local Energy Working Group (LEWG). Since then, a straw proposal has been drafted on the purpose of the MEWG, outlining its role to be a liaison between the EESE board and the LEWG. It was mentioned that the purpose of this meeting was to brainstorm on other niche services the MEWG could provide to make the purpose of the MEWG stronger.

Under RSA 125-O:5-a, I(h) the EESE Board was charged to encourage municipalities and counties to increase investments in energy efficiency and sustainable energy through financing tools, and to create local energy committees. The group discussed whether or not to be more than a bridge between the Local Energy Working Group and the EESE Board as well as not wanting to duplicate the work of the LEWG. Items that were discussed included:

1. MEWG could identify gaps in what the LEWG is working on.
2. MEWG could review what the LEWG is doing and invite a greater audience to review the work and ask questions and then prepare a summary for the EESE Board.
3. In 2008 a comment had been made to not have committees on the EESE Board, but when discussions would come up regarding other groups, that the other groups be brought in to report to the EESE Board.
4. MEWG role is to make sure that there is a focus on energy at the municipalities, and is a working arm of the EESE Board.

5. There are towns that do not have an energy committee.
6. The LEWG is holding a conference at the end of March for Municipalities.
7. LEWG has four teams: Financing, policy, technical assistance, and capacity.
8. RPCs work with LEWG and act as a forum to get people together and to show them how to leverage what is out there.
9. There is confusion amongst Local Energy Committees on where to go to for assistance. Do they go to MEWG, to LEWG, to RPCs?
10. EESE Board has no staff, and the LEWG is staffed by an outside agency.
11. Ensure that the EESE Board is transparent and that the transparency flows down to its working groups. But, to only remain a group because of transparency and liaison isn't a good enough reason to formally establish a MEWG.
12. The initial focus of the MEWG was to set up a road map for municipalities to reduce energy use. The roadmap consisted of doing an inventory of consumption, audits, plans, then implement – This served as a guideline to the Municipal Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) to conduct inventory and strategic planning for municipalities. It also sought and receive funding to issue out an energy audit Guideline. This tool has been sent to municipalities.
13. ARRA funding is running down. LEWG is running conference every year. Times are changing. The NH Municipal Association is the go-to place for municipalities, and towns who do not have a lot of resources.
14. EESE Board does not have a working group for all of the groups in 125-O:25A-J duties. The question was raised whether a working group needed to be formed in order to comply with the EESE board meeting its duties. It was suggested that this was not needed.
15. An idea was discussed that maybe the MEWG should be renamed and have a broader vision, looking into multiple duties of the EESE board rather than just municipal efforts.
16. It's important that the MEWG is not duplicating others efforts but has a purposeful mission to assist the municipal energy effort.
17. The MEWG could collect data on what is happening in municipal energy front. Discussion on how the data would be collected ensued. A survey could be done, and the MEWG could gather the information and analyze the data and report to the EESE Board. The EESE Board focuses on case studies, but has not done surveys or sector scans. What are towns doing and how might the towns be addressing these issues would be of interest. Oftentimes survey responses are very low.
18. Communication amongst municipal energy efforts is important. Julia Dundorf sends out emails to the local energy committees/commissions requesting updates on a monthly basis, and she, in turn, collects their info and gets it out to her list.
19. MEWG could maintain its focus and could work on better communication as well as assist communities as opportunities are presented, recognizing restrictions with funding.
20. The question is whether or not the MEWG fulfills the statutory requirement of the EESE Board or if the EESE could meet its statutory obligations without

having a standing committee. It was noted that the previous chair of the EESE board, Dick Ober, opted to disband working groups, with full EESE board approval, rather than leaving standing subcommittees without a strong purpose.

21. There was general consensus at the end of the meeting that the MEWG draft proposal should be modified to:
 - a. Ensure that RSA 125-O:5 statute outlining the duties of the EESE board as it pertains to municipal energy action, is clearly described in the proposal.
 - b. Expand the purpose of the draft MEWG proposal to include:
 - i. Serve as a communication bridge
 - ii. Develop Products to assist municipal efforts, as time and resources allow.
 - iii. Collect Data and information on municipal efforts.
 - iv. Share frustrations and barriers municipalities are facing on energy action with the EESE board.
 - v. Track the ongoing efforts of municipal energy action.

Eric Steltzer will put something together for the EESE Board next week.

3. Meeting adjourned 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Pam Crook, NHOEP