

**Electric Assistance Program Advisory Board
Meeting Minutes
October 26, 2018**

Participants:

Amanda Noonan, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Rorie Patterson, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Karen Emis-Williams, Concord Human Services
Shannon Nolin, Belknap-Merrimack Community Action Agency
Sue Corson, Unutil
Lisa Sheehy, New Hampshire Electric Cooperative
Gary Cronin, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission
Eileen Smiglowksi, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives
Tracy Desmarais, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives
Noah Hodgetts, New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives
Don Kreis, New Hampshire Office of Consumer Advocate
Janice Johnson, Eversource
Nicole Harris, Liberty Utilities
Stephen Tower, New Hampshire Legal Assistance

Minutes: Liberty Utilities

Agenda Items-October 26, 2018 Meeting

1. Introductions

2. Approval of July 27th, 2018 Meeting Minutes

- Draft document with edits was circulated by Eversource on 10/17/18. Belknap-Merrimack CAA circulated document with edits in response. Minutes unanimously approved as edited. Eversource will circulate final version of the minutes with changes accepted.

3. Update on applying discount to customer on competitive energy supply (Utilities)

- No issues were reported by all utilities
- Liberty processing discounts (less than 100) manually at this time. Estimate of \$238,000 to update system so Liberty intends to continue with manually processing of discounts if it can. As long as number stays under 100 is manageable to process manually.

4. Update on RFP for new software (OSI)

- OSI will be hiring a consultant to develop RFP for the FAP/WAP/EAP software
- PUC offered assistance of the advisory board if any information is needed during this RFP process
- NHLA: Inquired into the time line for the RFP. OSI indicated none at this point in time.

5. EAP Monthly Reconciliation Reports (NHLA/TWH)

- Comments/Question from NHLA:
 - Data is different, formatted differently for all utilities, e.g., aging data

- 1st page is standard, tabs beyond are in a different format
 - Do the utilities have the ability to standardize format?
- Liberty's data in spreadsheet format, so could be changed.
- UES could format spreadsheet differently, too.
- PUC: Intent is to have the same info; however, reports all submitted based upon the capability of the Utilities' billing system
- **Action Item:** Utilities to circulate the Sept reports prior to the next meeting for discussion at that meeting

6. EAP and FAP "Advertising" by Utilities (CAA)

- Discussion on the timing and types of customer outreach performed by the utilities
 - Bill inserts, new customer welcome packages (All)
 - Inserts in ebills /link to website (All)
 - On hold messages (Unitil)
 - Outbound Calls (Liberty and Unitil)
- Belknap-Merrimack CAA and OSI offered to attend utilities' staff meetings
- **Action Item:** Eversource will report back to Board about its outreach

7. M&E Procedures Manual – Reporting Requirements (NHHLA/TWH)

- NHHLA: discussion around section 3.1.6.2 in the M&E procedure manual, specifically the reference to the Arrearage report
- PUC: Data required is being provided by all the utilities in the monthly EAP Reconciliation Reports (see Agenda Item #5). If there is more data that the Board wants to collect, we can discuss that.
- NHHLA interested in the revival of an arrearage management program (i.e. Forgivable arrears program)
- Unitil has a pre-program forgiveness program in Massachusetts.
- Eversource has an arrearage forgiveness program in Connecticut and would like one in New Hampshire.
- Liberty has a program in Massachusetts.
 - Charlie Harak presented to the Board in 2017
 - **Action items:** Liberty will find the info and send along with the meeting minutes. Discussion tabled to the January 2019 meeting.

8. Triennial Performance Evaluation (OSI)

- Noah Hodgetts will be performing the upcoming evaluation and provided an update
- 3-year review covering the period of Oct 2015 through Sep 2018
- Purpose:
 - Assess whether the program has met general level need
 - conformance to the guidelines and efficiency of the program
 - review prior evaluations to identify whether there are any outstanding recommendations
- Formal data request will be issued in the next couple of weeks, primarily working with Belknap-Merrimack CAA and possibly with other Advisory Board Members before the end of the calendar year
- Report is due 04 /01/19, draft by end of February
- Prior evaluations

- Steve Walker 2nd iteration
- Rob Ditman 3rd iteration

9. Brochures for 2019 (CAA)

- CAA requires additional stock, will reach out Eversource
- Changes in Chart, Supplier, effective date
 - Add information about discounts applicability to competitive supply – displayed in a way to attract attention, e.g., “NEW”, bolded font, enclosed in a box
 - Poverty Levels not out until Jan/Feb – can be plugged in later
 - Poster to be updated to match the updated brochure
- **Action Item:** Unitil to take the lead and finalize draft poster and draft revised brochure between now and January meeting
- **Action Items:** Current Translations: Spanish, French & Bosnian
 - Belknap-Merrimack CAA to reach out to all CAAs to confirm
 - OSI will review the OSI Census data

10. Update re extended CAA business hours (CAA)

- Belknap-Merrimack CAA provided the following updates
- Hours
 - Saturdays and extended evening hours (through Feb)
 - Call CAA for specific hours
 - Tri-County will schedule on an as needed basis
- Fuel Assistance Update
 - Funding approved in late September
 - Effort to avoid removals, a removal letter is sent 45 days prior and includes a mail-in application
 - Usually opens the 1st Monday after thanksgiving, last year opened on October 23rd
 - Notification letters to vendors, then letters to customer
 - CAA accepted 11K to date
 - Benefits increased by 40%
 - Starting out at 60% of the state median

11. New Business:

- **Program year 18/19 projections (PUC)**
 - PUC: balance isn't projected to change, however, waiting to see how the discount on energy supply impacts the budget
 - Belknap-Merrimack CAA: Inquired if the funds used for discounts on competitive supply can be extracted separately and can it be added to the monthly EAP reconciliation report.
 - **Action item:** Utilities follow up to see if this can be extracted separately
- **Recovery for the expenses incurred for the implementation discount to customer on competitive energy supply (Eversource)**
 - PUC: utilities should jointly file
 - Eversource and Co-op may be prepared to file in January

1. Unitil will not be seeking recovering
 2. Liberty will speak with the Liberty Regulatory team. Want to preserve right for recovery if number of customers with competitive suppliers grows beyond what can be processed manually.
- **EAP Fund Balance (NHLA)**
 - Discussion on effective use of funds
 1. Raise eligibility level to match FAP
 2. Arrears Management Program
 3. Raise the usage cap above 750 kWh
 - Belknap-Merrimack CAA: Family size impacts eligibility and usage; consider increasing the kWh cap
 - **Action items:** Belknap-Merrimack CAA mentioned a prior study drafted by Eversource, she will locate and circulate; table to January 2019
 - PUC: Should have better info in January regarding how the discount to customers on competitive energy supply and new EAP/FAP software will impact the fund
 - NHLA: question regarding reason why applicants are not eligible; do the CAAs track denials?
 1. **Action item:** Belknap-Merrimack CAA will provide Denial Report to the Board. Most common reasons for denial are incomplete/insufficient/missing documentation; bill not in the applicant's name; or the applicant is over income.
 - PUC: Enrollment has been down, national trend. Why? Combined households, multi generations, low unemployment rate; statewide seeing same trends?
 - OSI: FAP seeing decrease in numbers of households with young children
 - Concord Human Services: statewide decrease in welfare applications, but volume fluctuates

Next Meeting: January 25, 2019 at 9:00 am

Minutes by: New Hampshire Electric Cooperative