

# Minutes of the Low-Income Energy Policy Board Kickoff Meeting

Friday, April 29, 2022  
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

## Members Present:

- Co-Leader: Anne Armstrong – MPSC Energy Affordability and Accessibility Collaborative
- Co-Leader: Brad Banks – MPSC Energy Waste Reduction Low-Income Workgroup
- Co-Leader: Andrew McNeally - UPPCO
- Rick Bunch - 5 Lakes Energy; Michigan Municipal Association for Utility Issues
  - Co-chair DARR Subcommittee
- Alexis Blizman - Ecology Center
  - Co-chair Health & Safety Committee
- Briana DuBose- EcoWorks Detroit
  - Co-chair Outreach & Education
- Martin Kushler – ACEEE (American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy)
  - EWR-LI Steering Committee
- Patrick Leahy - SEMCO Energy Gas Company
  - EWR-LI Steering Committee
- Kasey McNeally - Superior Watershed
  - Co-chair DARR
- Standing in for Briana Parker of Elevate - Tim Skrotzki
  - Co-chair Outreach & Education
- Wende Randall - Kent Co. Essential Needs Task Force
  - Co-chair Definitions Subcommittee
- Synia Gant-Jordan – Board Member with Lived Experience
- Cory Connolly - Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy
- Rachael A. Eubanks – Department of Treasury
- Jeff Guilfoyle - Department of Treasury
- Joshua Rivera – Department of Health and Human Services
  - Governor’s Poverty Task Force
- Kelly Rose – Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Ninah Sasy - Department of Health and Human Services
  - Social Determinants of Health Strategy
- Sam Whilans- Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), Proxy for Derrell Slaughter with NRDC
  - Council on Climate Solutions.

## Members Absent: None

## MPSC Staff Policy Experts Present:

- Elaina Braunschweig - Analyst, Regulated Energy Division
  - Co-chair AAA Subcommittee
- Jamie Curtis - Grant Administrator, Michigan Energy Assistance Program
  - Co-chair AAA Subcommittee
  - Governor’s Poverty Task Force
- Shatina Jones - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Amy Rittenhouse - Communications Specialist
  - EAAC Support
- Mary Wilkins - Departmental Specialist, Customer Assistance Division
  - Co-chair Definitions Subcommittee
  - Co-chair Outreach & Education

## MPSC Staff Policy Experts Absent:

- Christina Forist – Manager, Compliance & Investigation Section
  - Co-chair DARR Subcommittee
- Jake Thelen - Departmental Specialist, Compliance & Investigation Section
  - Co-chair DARR Subcommittee
- Reka Holley - Voelker – Manager, Communications Section
  - Co-chair Outreach & Education

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At 10:04 a.m. the meeting was opened by Brad Banks who introduced the agenda and housekeeping items.

Commissioner Tremaine Phillips shared opening remarks and introduced the Co-leaders of the Board.

Andrew McNeally conducted a roll call and members introduced themselves by sharing about their hopes and passions for the work of the board.

Anne Armstrong provided an overview of the Board including its history and charge from the commission in case U-20757 as well as the direction the board is heading.

Andrew McNeally expounded on the structure of the Board, the Board's nature, and its responsibilities.

Brad Banks provided information on the history and collaboration in the Energy Waste reduction Low-Income Workgroup. Anne Armstrong and Andrew McNeally conveyed the information provided due to technical difficulties.

## SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENTATIONS

Subcommittees made presentations to the board including their charge and/or goals, stakeholder involvement, progress, and next steps. The subcommittees submitted the following to the Board for consideration:

### Definitions Sub-Committee:

- Noted that in considering a standard, of energy affordability there may be cross-over with the Affordability, Alignment, and Assistance and the Data Analysis and Regulatory Review Subcommittees.
- It was also noted that energy affordability is most commonly calculated by dividing annual energy costs by annual income, otherwise known as energy burden. Through committee discussions and constituent surveys, it became apparent that affordability is more complex than this simple calculation. Customers want us to know that health and wellness, safety, efficiency, and sustainability are important considerations in assessing the affordability of energy.

### Affordability, Alignment, and Assistance

- Noted opportunities for collaboration with other committees or groups including the Energy Waste Reduction-Low-Income Workgroup as they are currently working with Brad Banks on optimizing EWR referrals for assistance recipients; the Data Analysis and Regulatory Review Subcommittee as they look into data required to determine program effectiveness; the Outreach and Education Subcommittee regarding recommendations on customer outreach; and the Ad-hoc Definitions Subcommittee as they pursue affordability work.
- The subcommittee posed questions to the Board including:
  - How should the AAA implement recommendations?
    - Work directly with utilities/MEAP grantees to implement process improvement recommendations?
    - Have the Commission create an order on their own motion for utility matters?
    - How does the board plan to approach state legislative change if called for?
  - Are there any other topics the AAA should address?

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## Outreach and Education

- The Outreach and Education Subcommittee noted that the Commission hosted its first Resource Fair and Listening Session in Gaylord on April 18, the subcommittee worked with the Definitions and Affordability, Alignment, and Assistance subcommittees to identify topics for discussion during the listening sessions.
- As materials are developed and prepared for distribution for the 2022/2023 heating season, opportunities for collaboration exist with both the Michigan Energy Assistance Program workgroup and the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm.
- The committee also envision potential to collaboration with MDHHS in their Social Determinants of Health work.

Data Analysis and Regulatory Review, Health and Safety, and Workforce Development Subcommittees brought no items for discussion at this time.

Andrew McNeally presented next steps including meet monthly on the fourth Monday of the month, encouraging board members to engage in follow-up reflection on discussion topics, preparing to come with thoughts on how this board can impact system issues, and preparing to discuss LIEP Board goals. The Board will be involved in planning a Low-Income Energy Summit to take place in early November 2022. A survey will be sent via email to sign up for the planning committee.

The meeting adjourned at noon.