Virginia Solar Energy Development and Energy Storage Authority Meeting

**Minutes**

**September 13, 2023**

**Fairfield Area Public Library**

**Call to Order**

Authority Chair Skyler Zunk called the meeting to order at 10:08.

**Members Present**

Paul Duncan, Michael Walsh, Skyler Zunk, Gregory Habeeb, Colleen Lueken, Jo Anne Webb, Katharine Bond, Rumy Mohta

**Members Absent:** Michael Herbert, Harry Godfrey

**Virginia Energy Staff Present:**

Ken Jurman, Aaron Berryhill

**Presentation East Point Energy**

Chris Meyer, Project Developer for East Point Energy gave a storage perspective on working in Virginia, indicating they currently have eight MW of operational storage in Virginia, with two more projects for Dominion Energy pending.

He discussed several Virginia initiatives that are supportive of storage development, their successes and failures getting projects approved in different localities, explained how PJM interconnection queue backlogs, competition for batteries and long lead times for equipment necessary for utilities to interconnect projects, such as transformers are delaying projects, and finally indicated several things that can help move project development along, including state level permitting guidance, SCC interconnection reform to improve approval time, and education for localities around Siting Agreements as there seems to be a lot of confusion around these.

**Annual Report**

The members had a lengthy discussion on the Annual Report, or more specifically on whether and what recommendations the Authority might propose, with several members holding that they should provide actionable recommendations to policy makers.

**Large-Scale Solar Energy Siting State Comparison**

Aaron Berryhill gave an overview of how different states address utility-scale solar siting rules, indicating that every state handles siting of solar differently, with some state’s solar siting being handled at the local level, some at the state level, and some by both. He compared Virginia to Maryland and North Carolina, and discussed solar siting legislation in several other states.

**Grant Proposals**

Mr. Berryhill talked about two grant opportunities Virginia Energy plans on submitting proposals for.

* The U.S. DOE ***Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning***, or R-STEP grant, has a goal of expanding the decision-making capacity and expertise of state and local governments around large-scale renewable energy siting processes at state and local levels.
* ***Solar for All****,* which is funded through the U.S. EPA’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund has a goal of expanding access to solar for low-income and disadvantages communities by priming markets for investment. Mr. Berryhill proposed the Authority submit a letter in support of the Virginia proposal. Staff will draft a letter for the Chair’s signature.

**Future Meeting Topics**

Mr. Zunk would like to hear from representatives from both VACO regarding their stance on solar siting in localities. Her would also like to hear from a representative from the Data Center Coalition to hear data centers perspectives as renewable power offtaker as many tech companies have clean energy goals and Virginia has a lot of data centers.

Mr. Duncan would like to invite someone from the SCC to hear what some of the ‘choke points’ are in the interconnection that are causing delays. He agreed to spearhead this.

**Future Meeting Location**

Mr. Zunk heard from the clerk of the House of Delegates was told the Authority was welcome to hold future meeting in either the Pocohontas Building or the new General Assembly Building. He hoped this would help ensure a quorum at future meetings.

**Public Comments**

Mr. Zunk called for comments from members of the public present online. None were offered.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be and all virtual meeting Wednesday October 4 to finalize the Annual Report

The meeting adjourned at 11:35.