



Energy Efficiency Subcommittee
 Meeting Minutes
 October 22, 2019
 1:00pm – 2:30pm

Facilitator:	James Geisen		
Meeting Attendees:	James Geisen, Kendrick Heinlein, Tom Oosterbaan, Grettel Alvarado, Keisha Hills, Carissa Patrone, Monica Light, Brett Little, Dan Schoonmaker, Wende Randall, Brianne Czyzio Robach		
Time Convened:	1:04	Time Adjourned:	2:32

Introductions

Review of Minutes **From September 24, 2019**

Discussion	None
Amendments	None
Conclusion	Motion Passed

Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm Updates **Wende Randall**

Discussion

The Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm is hosting Advocacy at the State Legislature on October 31. There will be a breakfast training. Then participants will be reaching out to staff over the lunch hour to discuss the importance of utility assistance funding. Wende encouraged members to reach out to legislators in the next week with information around your agency and the need for utility assistance funding. This will tie in nicely with the legislative event.

A public act extended the sunset date for MEAP to September 30, 2023.

The Public Services Commission is looking into rates for consumers. Public Service Commission is also launching a redesign of their website which will allow the public to submit comments directly to PSC. In addition, members of the public will be able to track different filings.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

MEAP Updates

Discussion

Salvation Army has not yet received funds. KCCA's amount is lower than last year. North Kent Connect funds will be going to St. Vincent DePaul, they were supposed to receive fund this week. DHHS is averaging about 200 SER applications per week. There was policy change that increased the liquid asset limitation to \$1500; this will be self-reported unless there is suspicion of false reporting. In addition, the vehicle limitation changed. DHHS will likely begin getting people back around December who they will then refer to agencies for MEAP funds.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum **Dan Schoonmaker**

Discussion

The event will be on December 9th at the LIT event space (formerly the Ladies Literary Club). The event will include a presentation to introduce the need and root causes, the steps for assistance, and the end result. Then, attendees will be breaking into table groups to discuss how to utilize energy efficiency and weatherization to move the needle in lessening the need for utility assistance.



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The goal is to use the November ENTF meeting to discuss what the discussion prompts for the day. In the meantime, general information will be finalized and shared within networks. WMSBF wants to increase participants from the utility assistance sector.

Overview of event agenda:

Presentations on both sides of the issue (50 minutes total)

- Utility Assistance: representatives to set the stage on the need for utility assistance, an explanation of how utility assistance works, and opportunities for improvement. (30 – 35 minutes for all presenters). Presenters could include:
 - o Susan to overview ENTF Energy Efficiency subcommittee (Wende to provide bullet points)
 - o DHHS staff (James) to speak to SER specific to volume and application process;
 - o A provider who receives MEAP funds (Susan?) to talk through the process for receiving funds;
 - o Client experience. ENTF staff will update client flow and incorporate potential glitches to function as a visual for attendees. Include slide to show heat map of where people are accessing utility assistance.
 - o Presenters will develop slides or visual aids. DHHS slides and talking points will need to be approved through their Communications Office
 - o Utilities can speak about their programs. This will be helpful to open up dialogue in the table conversations. Guillermo Diaz (Clear Resolve) is a representative for Consumers rebates in GR. Brett will reach out to Guillermo.
- Solutions: Presentations will be discussed next month. Solutions include weatherization, utility rebates, emerging programs, micro-grids, community solar, more. The goal is to introduce attendees who work in the energy and development sector to the utility assistance space and prime attendees for table discussions.

Table Exercises (50 minutes)

Additional topics discussed:

- Are there policies that make it difficult for low-income households to access these resources (aside from cost)? Wende noted it would be important to ensure that any ideas developed are feasible or have a way towards feasibility. There may need to be advocacy to municipalities or utility companies to ensure accessibility.
- Brett noted that there are initiatives across the country that focus on solar projects for low-income communities.
- What is happening across municipalities: Whole Home program by City of Grand Rapids. The city is working to rewrite an ordinance that states homeowners cannot install solar facing a street.
- Has anyone asked municipalities whether local zoning or other regulations are conducive to energy investment? MI Public Service Commission workgroup has been talking with cities. This would be an important group to engage for the event. Brad would be great to invite. MPSC would likely have a better handle on regulations, as compared to municipalities as there is not necessarily local conversations happening throughout the state.



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Potential Attendees:

- Utilities – Consumers, DTE, Lowell Light and Power,
- Deliverable fuels: Crystal Flash, Alto Gas, Rural Gas,
- Municipalities: Allison (GR), Megan (Wyoming), Emily (Kentwood), county commissioners,

To-dos:

- WMSBF:
 - o Bring people into the room for November meeting
 - o Provide understanding for applicable solutions/technology (background behind microgrid, etc.) can surveying what organizations are looking at across the state
 - o Identify examples of similar minded initiatives that are happening across the country. Reach out for some ideas about conversation starters.
 - o Notable stories
 - o ID policies local and otherwise
- Define speakers for event, specific to the solutions side.
- Table leaders and discussion tool/prompts for each table developed next month.
- Wende, James, Susan will discuss items that will be presented
- Decide on a mechanism to capture ideas from the event.
- Develop some type of ask to help move attendees along. Potential asks:
 - o get people involved in the committee
 - o use ideas from event to inform subcommittee actions moving forward.
 - o look at characteristics of populations to identify what works best for specific population groups.
 - o Look at policy outcomes to decrease the number of people coming into the system for assistance. State, federal, and institutional policies. What specific policy outcomes enable this? Who would have an interest in being civically engaged to accomplish these outcomes?
 - o Ask people to be involved in a demonstration project. Could shift toward Brett or other groups to take on the heavy lift. ENTIF could solicit clients to be involved in the project, tap into funding resources.

Action Items	Person Responsible	Deadline

Agency Updates

Discussion

RideLink – there is the potential for increased funding for Senior Neighbors. They are hoping to increase the limit from \$350 to \$450 for one-time use.

Senior Neighbors – is slightly ahead of their fund.

ENTF – The federal government has a proposed rule change through Food and Nutrition Service. It is open to comment through December 2. The proposed rule would revise SNAP to standardize the methodology for utility assistance. It would be set at 80% percentile of low-income households in the



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state. There is a current standard amount that is already allotted for utilities, it changes from year to year. This rule will change the calculation.

WMSBF – the next monthly forum will be November 8th. Sierra Club president will be discussing the Green New Deal.

Green Homes Institute – Building Green and Beer Event at Founders on Monday night at 5:30.

Seeds of Promise – Resource fair event on October 25th with the idea of moving out of expensive rentals but instead building smaller green homes.

North Kent Connect – just had their annual fundraiser. They are working with Family Promise to open a shelter for families in northern Kent County.

TSA – they still have People Care funds. This seems to be more of a general fund that can be used for a variety of services.

DTE – is holding a consumer resource-fair event on October 25th at the DHHS building from 10-4.