

## **Arlington County E2C2 Energy Committee**

### **Meeting Summary**

Wednesday, October 7, 2020

7:30 am – 9:30 am

Held via Conference Call on MS Teams Due to COVID-19 Emergency Status

### **Agenda Items**

1. *Greetings and introductions*

2. *Review/approve agenda and September meeting summary*

- Today's agenda was approved and the September meeting summary was approved.

3. *Public Comment on General Topics*

- None

4. *Member updates*

- Any comments on the process of our meetings and how to improve our meetings?
  - **Regarding 7:30 am, do we still need to meet at this time? Should we change the times and/or dates for the meetings, or at least some of them, to an evening meeting?**
- What are you working on these days?
  - Scott Sklar: 1) Working with GWU and NYC on electric trash trucks; Norway has them; electrifying these types of vehicles in Arlington would be great; 2) GWU and MD Appalachian counties on job training using real projects; 3) his company is examining how microgrids in California could possibly address issues that arise due to forest fires. They are picking blocks where there are mixed use benefits to communities.
  - Michael Herbert - Working to implement the Clean Economy Act at the State level; energy storage is his focus. Dominion Energy (DOM) have been required to implement behind-the-meter storage programs and smaller scale storage projects – details on that TBD. So if we have any ideas, there's a chance to help shape what that could look like in a project. DOM is generally looking at larger-scale projects for storage instead of decentralized projects; could be medium-sized units to be dispatched at peak, or could be residential projects. There is also a lot of activity on the permitting process, e.g., spacing requirements for 100kW+ projects; tax treatment and possible tax benefits. FERC to allow distributed assets in wholesale energy markets.
  - Kevin Vincent – There is the DOM [Smart Charging Infrastructure Pilot \(SCIP\) program](#). Arlington should take advantage of it and apply for charging stations. The program is on a first-come, first-served basis. Process to begin at end of the

month – 2 pm webinar to learn more today; Also, APS could pursue DERA grants for electric school buses.

- Demetra McBride (OSEM Chief) – We already had a meeting with DOM on their grant programs and storage work. We’re looking at what makes sense for us to pursue.
- Scott Dicke – Started consulting with the Montgomery County Green Bank program, so let him know if any Green Bank questions come up. Working with EcoAction and helping them get into small to medium-sized commercial market.
- Rick Keller – Oct 13 – Sierra Club forum on greening sustainable buildings; ACEEE, Helen, David Peabody, and Hickok Cole reps will be on the panel.
- Irwin Kim – ACE – Oct 16 – Zero Carbon Panel – 3 speakers – will send an e-mail with more details.
- Vince Plaxico – Involved with an organization to get out the vote. Working on the largest solar and storage project in California – very difficult – 500MW battery and 300MW solar PV.

#### 5. *Arlington County AIRE 2021 Budget*

##### a. Brief update on budget – **Demetra McBride**

- Been in the process of having a second cut in the FY21 budget due to Covid-19 response.
- AIRE budget: We have offered to defer a budget line item, energy efficiency increases on County buildings, e.g., window upgrades on certain buildings. We did not offer up any personnel cuts.
- Working on no-capital efforts using a power purchase agreement (PPA) to advance solar PV on County buildings, riding Henrico PPA contract.
- Looking at various partnerships, grant opportunities, use of RGGI funds.

#### 6. *Development of University Collaborative CEP Metrics Proposal*

##### a. Presentation. – **Scott Sklar**

- The CEPIF update and the Covid-19 pandemic presented a great opportunity to bring local universities into the mix to help us identify possible metrics to incorporate into the CEPIF.
- He is proposing a metrics process to start by looking at bigger ticket items in the CEP.
  - Pick the top 5 issues in the CEP, work with universities in what they are strong in, and get students together to develop a product.
  - Helps forge stronger relationships with local universities and provides a no-cost way for the County to address CEP metrics development.

##### b. Discussion. – **Jonathan Morgenstein**

- Demetra asked whether it was possible to integrate a diversity element into this effort. The County is advancing equity internally.
  - Answer (A): While such an idea is not currently in the proposal, yes, the universities would be excited to pursue that as part of this effort.

- Jonathan – Is the goal to make the product into a letter to send to the universities to hold separate meetings from the EC meetings?
- Claire – This could provide metrics to be incorporated into the CEPIF.
- **Demetra – Before a letter goes out, it would be good to build in to the process a CMO check-in once a draft letter and framework proposal is ready to be sent out to the universities.**
  - Updated the letter during the meeting from comments from the EC and voted on moving the process forward
  - This document will be circulated for all in the EC to finalize – J. Morgenstein to share.

7. *Discussions on ART bus O&M facility, CNG fleet upgrades, and Arlington’s EV bus future*

a. Presentation on Arlington’s EV bus future (including upcoming report) – **Demetra McBride**

- CB was to approve a contract bid for the Arlington ART bus fleet O&M facility.
  - The EC viewed the staff report as a continuation of using CNG for the ART fleet for the foreseeable future
  - Kevin V spoke at the County Board meeting
  - CB did approve the contract
  - One CB member (C. Dorsey) did comment on EV bus technology, incorrectly, noting that EV buses could not meet the need of the County; he had the electric bus range ability incorrect.
  - Demetra suggested the EC could send to the CMO an update on proven electric bus technology. This would update the CB on the current state of the technology and range of buses that run today.
- Intent today: to understand the state of the EV bus fleet, where it is going, and the status of the AIRE efforts on the EV Bus Element.
- Demetra:
  - For the County vehicle fleet, we planned to buy over 20 EVs in this current FY, but we paused the sedan purchases due to teleworking and the change of work activity due to Covid-19.
  - A few Public Safety vehicles are being swapped out this FY.
  - Regarding the Comparative Cost Study: a draft is being developed.
  - The EV Bus Study is under development; draft is supposed to be available in November. It will include a literature review; question about full run-time for an EV bus to address EVSE needs.
  - There are terms to the County’s agreement with the State providing the County money for swapping out old diesel buses for CNG buses for the County. Since there are strings attached to that State money in terms of how long we keep the CNG buses, we’ll need to incorporate the terms of that agreement and reimbursing the State into the economic analysis of switching from CNG to electric buses.

- Q&A
  - Claire: Should we look at the current contractual agreements as show-stoppers for the County to implement any suggestions from consultants (ICF)?
    - Greg Emanuel asked for the analysis, so there is interest in looking at the options.
    - This is one of three EV-related projects tied to what the CB expects from the Sept 2019 CEP adoption.
  - Can the facility be easily converted to accommodate electric buses? A: Yes.
  - John Bloom: EC members can help influence the State to get the State to support electric buses.
  - Will the report look at the facility's needs when it comes to making it electric bus-friendly?

b. Presentation EV bus options. – **Kevin Vincent**

- Provided an update on the current status of the technology, particularly in the region. Below are notes from Kevin's presentation and e-mail to EC members.
- The ART Bus Fleet schedule calls for the replacement of 36 buses with new CNG buses, and the addition of 7 new CNG buses to the ART Fleet between 2020 and 2025. A few vehicles are scheduled for replacement each year but in 2024 the schedule calls for the purchase of 21 new CNG buses (14 replacement buses and 7 additions to the ART Fleet).
  - The Plan was issued in 2016 so the current schedule may be somewhat different. For example, the Plan projected a fleet size of 81 buses this year, but the current ART Fleet has 78 buses. The total fleet size is planned to be 85 buses in 2026 in the schedule, but planning for a fleet size of about 100 buses was mentioned in the County Board meeting. And the AOMF Contract requires a design of the facility for a fleet of 110 buses.

[https://projects.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/11/DES-2017-TDP-Chapter\\_6\\_Capital\\_Improvement\\_Program.pdf](https://projects.arlingtonva.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/11/DES-2017-TDP-Chapter_6_Capital_Improvement_Program.pdf)

- Other jurisdictions in our area are now acquiring or have announced they are acquiring electric buses:
  - Alexandria -- adopted last month a Transit Development Plan that provides for the gradual replacement of the existing DASH fleet with electric buses. DASH has already purchased 14 electric buses. The first three (3) buses have already been acquired and will be formally launched Oct. 19. Three (3) more electric buses are to be delivered in January. Eight (8) additional electric buses have been ordered.

<https://alexandrialivingmagazine.com/news/dash-adds-electric-buses-to-fleet/> (press article on launch event)

[https://www.dashbus.com/sites/default/files/2020-09/ATC%20Board%20Packet%20-%2009\\_09\\_2020.pdf](https://www.dashbus.com/sites/default/files/2020-09/ATC%20Board%20Packet%20-%2009_09_2020.pdf) (Board Minutes from September meeting)

[need to attach copy of Transit Development Plan]

- WMATA -- ordered 15 electric buses for a pilot project, and has one in service now
- D.C. Circulator
- Montgomery County <https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/transportation/montgomery-county-rolls-out-first-four-electric-ride-on-buses/>
- Prince Georges County
- City of Frederick, Maryland
- Fairfax County is considering the purchase of electric buses in 2022.

<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/sites/transportation/files/assets/documents/pdf/btc/item-6-btc-electric-buses-6-30-2020.pdf>

- Even less progressive communities downstate are acquiring electric transit buses
  - Blacksburg
  - Hampton Roads
- Transit fleets in many other states, e.g., Greensboro NC
- Compilation of electric transit buses in other states in this 2019 report [https://calstart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Zeroing\\_In\\_on\\_ZEBs\\_Final\\_10182018-10.21.19.pdf](https://calstart.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Zeroing_In_on_ZEBs_Final_10182018-10.21.19.pdf)
- The skepticism of staff and some County Board Members about the utility of electric buses is no longer warranted, even though there were good reasons for skepticism in the past. There have been tremendous strides in the capabilities of electric buses in just the last two years:
  - the range of electric buses are now more than sufficient for a geographically small jurisdiction like Arlington
  - New Flyer's newest bus -- 225 miles
  - Alexandria is acquiring buses with 175 miles of range
  - all the major bus manufacturers are now offering electric buses for sale in the United States (so the County is not stuck with vehicles produced by a start-up if it goes electric) -- New Flyer, Blue Bird, Proterra (teaming with Van Hool and on its own), Gillig, Lion Electric, BYD plus at least 6 other companies are offering electric transit buses
  - the operations and maintenance costs of electric buses are far less than the O&M costs for CNG buses

[https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/press-room/WMATAReport\\_Web.pdf](https://www.sierraclub.org/sites/www.sierraclub.org/files/press-room/WMATAReport_Web.pdf) (p.7)

- if Arlington County pursues EV incentives for the transition to electric buses, it will find the total cost of ownership for electric buses will be less than that for CNG buses.
- New incentive now from Dominion that will help pay for charging stations <https://vacleancities.org/dominion-energys-smart-charging-infrastructure-pilot-program/>

[In order to meet the County's Community Energy Plan's goal of carbon neutrality by 2050, Arlington County needs to transition to electric buses.]

- Democratic Presidential nominee Joe Biden has included the "goal that all new American-built buses be zero-emissions by 2030" in his campaign promises. One means of achieving this goal that is under consideration by the Biden campaign is the adoption of vouchers to incentivize local governments to purchase electric buses.
- The Democratic-controlled House passed a provision to add \$100 Billion in transit funding for zero-emission buses in H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act.
- The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis also recommended increased federal grant funding for zero-emission buses.
- Although the Republican Senate blocked the House actions from becoming law this year, the consensus within the Democratic Party is now clear -- the country needs to transition to zero-emission vehicles to address the climate crisis. It is also clear that if the Democrats retake the White House or the Senate, and certainly both, more federal funding for electric vehicles will be on its way. Very Democratic Arlington County need to join the rest of the Democratic Party in recognizing that we need more electric buses, and needs to stop heeding the calls of those who ask for delay in going electric.
- Arlington was at the forefront of "Green" ten years ago when it chose to make the ART Fleet CNG. But no environmental advocates consider CNG green now. So we can no longer rest on our past laurels but have to start the transition now to zero-emission vehicles.

c. Discussion. – **Jonathan Morgenstein**

- We will address this issue next month, with a comparison cost study brought forward by County staff.

8. *Agree on list of Green Building Incentives comments for submission*

a. Presentation & Discussion. – **Jonathan Morgenstein**

- Oct. 10 is the deadline for comments

b. Vote to approve letter. – **Jonathan Morgenstein**

- Jonathan developed a list of items the EC wanted to address in its comments

- See the draft letter Jonathan sent out to everyone regarding that list – e-mail was 8:04 am on 10/7/20
- The EC members discussed the comments to consider bringing forward to the AIRE staff
- EC members voted unanimously to have until Saturday to finalize the letter
  - EC members were encouraged to look at the letter through their specific lens(es) of expertise

9. *Community Energy Plan Implementation Framework (CEPIF)*

a. Brief update on status of CEPIF update process. – **AIRE Staff**

- First full draft availability and when will engagement sessions take place?
- A: We await review from the CMO before setting up the engagement sessions. We want to avoid setting a date then having to cancel them given issues beyond AIRE staffs' control.
- October into November is the tentative timeframe for the public engagement sessions.

10. *New business/ Other member updates*

- 6:30 pm THU (tomorrow night) – Jonathan is working with Joan Kelsch to get a Teams link set up for a chat with Greystar representatives to talk about their major development project going up in the Courthouse Metro station area. – please join us!
- Next meeting is Nov. 4, the day after the election – should we change the date?
  - A: Yes.
  - We will ID dates / times to hold that meeting

11. *Meeting adjourned at 9:34 am*