

NYSERDA 35th Governance Committee Meeting
October 3, 2022
Clean Copy of Transcript

Sara LeCain:

We good now? Okay. You have to start that over, sorry. Sure.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Good morning. I'd like to call to order the 35th meeting of NYSERDA's Board's Governance Committee. A notice of the meeting was forwarded to Committee Members and Press on September 26, 2022. This meeting is being conducted in person and by video conference. The Authority will post a video and transcript of this meeting on the web to confirm that we have a quorum, I would like to ask the Committee Members to introduce themselves. I'll start with myself. I am Arturo Garcia-Costas, Chair of the Committee.

Chair Kauffman:

I'm Richard Kauffman. I'm Chair of the Authority.

Frances Resheske:

Frances Resheske. Member of this Committee.

Sherburne Abbott:

Shere Abbott, Member of the Committee. Member of the Board.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Oh, let's end in Albany.

Charles Bell:

Chuck Bell, a Member of the Committee. Member of the Board.

Chair Kauffman:

Chuck.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Thank you. That's Chuck. You look a little bit lonely up there. So the first order of business is approval of the minutes of the 34th Committee meeting that was held on June 28, 2022. Are there any comments on those minutes? Hearing none. May I have a motion approving the minutes? All in favor?

Members of the Committee:

Aye.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Any opposed?

Chair Kauffman:

Aye.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Hearing no opposition. The minutes have been approved. The next item on the agenda are proposed amendments to the Authority's By-laws. This item was presented by Peter Costello.

Peter Costello:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. the proposed By-law changes are as follows, Amendments to Article II and III provide more flexibility in the scheduling of meetings. A note that we will make the further ministerial change of referencing months rather than dates to conforming changes. Next changes to Article IV, Reconstitute the legacy Officer position of Senior Vice President for Strategy to the position of Chief Program Officer, which is a posted position for which we are currently recruiting. The Chief Program Officer will be responsible for the discharge of the Authority's programs and providing strategic guidance and program development. Next, the proposed changes renamed the Vice President for Policy and Regulatory Affairs to the Executive Vice President for Policy and Regulatory Affairs. This position is currently held by John Williams, who is attending remotely today. In addition to the name change, the By-laws include the additional responsibility for ongoing performance management across the authority, which previously fell in the Senior Vice President for Policy. Lastly, there are conforming ministerial changes throughout. Happy to answer any questions.

Chair Kauffman:

These title changes are these, these are things that would relate to no particular individual or more related to what you think is the right thing for

Peter Costello:

That's correct, Yes.

Chair Kauffman:

The strategy going forward.

Peter Costello:

Yes. Yes. And part of what's motivating, at least John's title change is that we do have a level of Vice Presidents that are not By-law Officers. And so to distinguish the fact that John is a By-law Officer or adding the additional title to Vice President as Executive Vice.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Any other questions or comments?

Sherburne Abbott:

So I have a question about, So, so the last sentence on section design, it says, Any two offices other than those of the Chair and Vice Chair may be held by the same person in making this transition to a new titles. Is it logical? Because the qualifications for some of these offices are very different.

Peter Costello:

Two offices, other than most of the Chair and Vice Chair may be held by the same person. Yeah. That's been in there for time memorial. Yeah. Do you have any history on that?

Sara LeCain:

I don't. Other than it was allowing us flexibility something under State.

Peter Costello:

Yeah. I'm not, I'm not sure. We can certainly look into it. You can.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Is it possible that it might consonants temporary interim role for different Officer?

Peter Costello:

While, Yeah, because Doreen does have delegation authority, as does Richard actually to delegate in the absence of, in the absence of the person or disability, et cetera, to make for instance there was a time when Jeff Pitkin was the Treasurer as well as the Secretary of the Board. So I think, I think we do actually need that. We can start to clarify in the event of delegation.

Sherburne Abbott:

But a Chief Program Officer who also serves as a Chief Financial Officer would be very challenging.

Peter Costello:

Indeed.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

That would be subject to the Board's approval. That sort of delegation.

Peter Costello:

No, the, the By-laws currently give Richard and Doreen delegation rights.

Sherburne Abbott:

Just

Peter Costello:

The, again, in, in special circumstances now.

Sherburne Abbott:

Yeah.

Peter Costello:

Not as a matter of course.

Doreen Harris:

I think that's the difference is this is sort of a temporary

Peter Costello:

Yeah. Acting type

Doreen Harris:

Yeah. Necessity. That in, in the ways in which I've utilized it, it's been very limited.

Peter Costello:

Yes.

Sara LeCain:

In the ways that we've ever used it. It's been very, it's been limited from, you know, there was someone out of the office or a change in position from that standpoint.

Sherburne Abbott:

But that would be logical, but at a literal read in that it could be a long period of time the wrong circumstances, it would, could be very difficult.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

I will, I won't entertain a motion to amend the, the current proposed amendments. But the closing,

Sherburne Abbott:

Yeah.

Charles Bell:

Yes. So moved.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

I will second that.

Sherburne Abbott:

Current, the current thing.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Adding language, adding language about delegation or, or basically some sort of qualification there. So it's not permanent, it's not prevented delegation of the two offices held by the same person.

Peter Costello:

Yeah. So we could say, we could qualify the sentence with, in circumstances set forth and then reference back to Doreen's powers and Richards.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Mm-Hmm.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Okay. So I seconded a motion. We have a vote on this particular issue and not the whole, not the entire By-law. So think we have to

Peter Costello:

I mean, you could vote, you could, you could vote on the totality of the changes.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Okay.

Peter Costello:

Including this one.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Including this one.

Peter Costello:

Yeah.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Right, right. So do I will entertain your motion. Is that okay? Entertain It has been moved to approve, approve all By-law amendments, and I have seconded. All those in favor?

Members of the Committee:

Aye.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Any opposed? Any opposed hearing opposition? The motion carries. So the next item on the agenda is a report on the Authority's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work. Michelle Andry, the Authority's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer will discuss this item. Michelle.

Michelle Andry:

Thank you very much. Good morning everyone. For today's update from the DEI Initiative. I'd also like to introduce Bianca Shaw, who's a Senior Project Manager from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team. She will be leading a portion of this presentation. Bianca started in this role in April of this year and has been with NYSERDA for over four years based in the Buffalo office. She supports implementation of the DEI Strategic Plan, and prior to this role, she was the Project Manager in the Communities and Local Government team managing the Statewide outreach and engagement program to help New Yorkers access the energy programs, particularly in under-resourced communities. So with that, I'll turn it over to Bianca for the first portion of the presentation.

Bianca Shaw:

Thank you, Michelle. And good morning. Thanks to the Members of the Board for having me today. Apologies. I'm trying to figure out where to look. I have three screens, but I'll figure it out. So today I'll be providing an overview of the indicators that we will roll out via a two phased approach to ensure our investments in DEI and employee engagement are on track. You will also hear from Michelle about priority actions we've been working on over the past few months. Members may recall in April we spoke about metrics; however, you'll hear these referred to as indicators throughout today's presentation as well as going forward. Next slide, please.

Thank you. So to start, I did want to provide a bit of background. Some of this may be a refresher, but I thought it was helpful to provide this refresher. So as you all know, we have a DEI Strategic Plan, which states that we will be accountable for our DEI efforts with comprehensive indicators, which is why we're having this discussion today. Additionally, last year we administered an employee engagement survey to understand employee perspectives and experiences the results of which indicated that employee engagement must be a focus moving forward. Additionally, the DEI strategic plan identified the annual engagement survey as the central measurement for employee engagement and DEI at NYSERDA. Next slide, please. Okay. So once I started in April of this year, over the spring and summer, I began engaging various teams across NYSERDA for their input on the indicators. This feedback, in addition to the feedback from the Board in April, was really helpful in supporting us in refining and really narrowing the focus of the DEI indicators from a list of about 50 to about 15 to 20 priority indicators. Next slide.

So we've begun a series of steps that you see on this slide to develop the indicators that will be rolled out again via two phased approach beginning in 2023. I won't go into this process in depth in the interest of time, but I will note that we've started engaging relevant teams to identify existing reporting and tracking mechanisms and processes that we may leverage to capture the information we need for the phase one indicators that I'll go over in just a moment. Also not pictured on this slide, but just as critically important is the reevaluation process. So looking at the indicators on a regular basis, whether that's quarterly or annually, to determine whether these indicators that we've rolled out are working as intended. And if there are, are other indicators that are important at that time that we need to reconsider. One last note. The timeline for these steps is based on calendar year, not fiscal year.

Next slide please. Thank you. All right. So the, the first phase of indicators that you see on this slide is, is a much smaller set of indicators from what you've seen previously. And it's really gonna focus on employee engagement. So making sure our employees are engaged and thriving and that they have the opportunity to build valuable skills while at the same time improving diversity and opportunity and reducing costly turnover and ensuring that everyone feels valued at NYSERDA. I'm not going to read off this list of indicators, but I'll pause to give folks a moment to take a look at these. Next slide, please. All right. For the second phase of the rollout for the DEI indicators those will focus on building a greater sense of belonging and inclusion, ensuring a recruitment process infused with DEI and providing a fair shot for all at NYSERDA to advance within the organization. And again, in the interest of time, I'm not going to read these, but you can see the various indicator categories here on the screen that cut across accessibility, performance recruitment, retention, supplier diversity and talent mobility. One other note on the

indicators, and this goes for phase one and phase two we will look at these indicators across all of NYSERDA's, employees and workforce, but we will also drill down by demographic where data is available to determine how different processes are impacting different groups at NYSERDA.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Bianca, this is Arturo. I just have a question about the retention indicator.

Bianca Shaw:

Sure.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

So I presume that NYSERDA has an exit interview when someone leaves the organization Correct. In that exit interview. Do you ask the question of why, why they're leaving and that information will be captured and, and used for this particular indicator?

Bianca Shaw:

Yes. So the, we do capture that, and that is one of the questions. It's a separation reason question. That is done as part of the exit interview that we'll actually be part of the phase one indicator for reasons that folks are leaving. So we'll look at that across the various demographics. So that is gonna be part of phase one.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Thank you.

Chair Kauffman:

Hey, Bianca, you entertaining questions now or should we wait?

Bianca Shaw:

I'm not sure how these typically go. I was told I had 15 minutes, so if I have time, I, I'm happy to take questions now.

Chair Kauffman:

Okay, well, I'm sorry. So on the phase one, I had a question in terms of how somebody feels about the, the kind of responsibilities and as assignments they have. That's not really picked up in, in the phase one indicators. If you could go back, Ralph, not that right? Yeah. So professional development, it's got development and training Sure. Doesn't have, it doesn't really, it doesn't really say whether somebody's really feels that they're getting the right kind of assignments or, or their satisfaction with the, with, you know, how challenged they are in in the assignments that they have.

Bianca Shaw:

Sure. Yeah, that's a great question. So actually, under the employee engagement survey, there are three categories of questions. There is a category called culture one called business outcomes, and then the employee value proposition under the employee valuation, employee value proposition category of questions. In the survey, it does ask them how they feel about their job

with regard to the work that they do. There is also a pay equity study and a job audit that is gonna be conducted. Michelle will speak to that later. That will also ask employees how they feel about the work that they do with relation to their job descriptions or job scope. So the way we're gonna get at that is via the survey with that specific category of questions.

Chair Kauffman:

Okay, thank you.

Bianca Shaw:

Sure.

Sherburne Abbott:

Can I ask a, a follow up question, a slightly different piece to it, which is if in those questions is, is there also some, something that gets at the, the, the question of the engagement of employees in the process of hiring? So, so this is a long, I'm trying to make this short. When I worked at the National Academy of Sciences in the 1980s, it wasn't well known for a recruitment of women. And the most successful strategy was actually a woman on the staff who put together a list of people who could be serve on Committees who are of all the different disciplines. And that that AC action resulted in more women being recruited into the academy in the next couple of years than any other. And it was initiated by a staff member who eventually got a staff award for it. And, and it was, it's just an example of the kind of engagement is outside the institution, but brings in

Bianca Shaw:

Yeah, and

Sherburne Abbott:

I dunno whether it's a question about that process. Like how involved are you in, you know, this sort of recruitment, You know, do you feel engaged in the recruitment of, of colleagues and, and whatever?

Bianca Shaw:

I don't know offhand if we have a question related to how involved staff are in the recruitment or diversity in hiring I'll definitely take that back. I will say that one of the indicators is going to measure diversity across NYSERDA in terms of the role, the staff who get those specific titles as well as progression through the, the agency. So I don't have an answer to your question. I don't know offhand if it's one of the, the survey questions at this time, but we aren't developing the survey, so it's something we could potentially incorporate.

Michelle Andry:

If, if I may the engagement survey does actually include in one of its four sections. It gets a little bit at this, but it includes a point around whether or not the person would actually, you know, recommend the organization to.

Sherburne Abbott:

Yeah, that's the other particular, That's great.

Michelle Andry:

So that's actually one of the key questions in the engagement survey score. So we'll have that available to us.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

And to reinforce Shere's point at EPA when I was at EPA there was an informal process cuz what you're describing is much more structured formula, which I, I very appreciate. But there was an informal group of folks that were tapped to go to Hispanic serving institutions, to sort the black colleges and universities. And they, they were very much involved in that. And you could see really good recruitment where EPA had a problem with intention. After about three to five years, you had a lot of people leaving EPA, people of color leaving EPA. So I don't know if we've got statistics about recruitment and retention, but they're interesting things to look at that dynamic.

Bianca Shaw:

Yep. That is definitely something we'll be looking at in terms of retention and recruitment across the different demographics. All right. So I just wanna go back to the phase two slide, Ralph or John, if you could. Thank you. All right. So actually I think that's, that's my, my update on the indicators. And with that I will turn it over to Michelle to provide an update on the priority action areas. Thank you.

Michelle Andry:

Thank you, Bianca. So if we can go to the next slide. Great. So we're just talking about our engagement survey and the fact that our engagement survey results will serve as a key source of data for tracking our progress on DEI and team engagement. So earlier this year we shared with the Board our 2021 engagement survey results and key opportunities for improvement identified in the findings. Since that time, we have translated those into priority action areas shown here, focused on workload and process streamlining, building more engagement within and across teams and business units, establishing competencies and development resources to support professional capacity and growth for both our managers and staff conducting our pay equity and job audit and establishing our capacity for continuous DEI learning and development. So we are working in these action areas now and for illustrative purposes, the timelines shown here, for the most part, represent completion of our development stages and milestones for these work streams around these action areas, not the final actions themselves.

So for example, the Q4 2022 estimate for our pay equity study is in anticipation of a first stage of analysis and recommendations. And after which we'll have a checkpoint with the Board regarding items related to that, to that process. As another example, we will, while we have already launched our yearlong organization-wide DEI training series, the major development milestone in that effort will be reached mid next year when we have built on the work we've, we've done with staff in that training series to develop DEI competencies for staff and business students as well as in-house resources to provide ongoing learning towards those competencies. So we will be renewing our engagement survey this fall, both to help us continuously align and refine these priority action areas and as well as to add to the very important data we just talked about that we'll be using for the DEI and engagement progress indicators. So with that I can take any questions on this information or any other part of the presentation for Bianca and I.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

I really appreciate the fact that you took on Board the, the Board's advice from last time to, to really narrow and focus the indicators. Yes. And I think the ones that you have provide a good amount of flexibility to still produce some valuable information. And also like that you're actually gonna review them periodically to see whether there's other indicators might that might be doing or, or get rid of one that is not working so well. So thank you very much.

Chair Kauffman:

It's a dumb question, but why the change between to indicators from metric?

Michelle Andry:

Bianca can answer that question.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

<Laugh>.

Bianca Shaw:

Sure. It may seem really small, but we found in engaging various teams across NYSERDA as well as the, the three resource groups that folks associated the term metrics with it was negative, It was perceived as a negative term because it's associated with having to be measured against some quantitative, you know target, which, you know, all of our teams do reporting regularly. They have metrics on their specific program objectives and outcomes, but with metrics, they felt this was just another layer of measurement they would have to do. And indicators covers both quantitative and the qualitative piece of the outcomes and employee perceptions that we're trying to measure at NYSERDA. So given that feedback, we chose to switch to indicators. It, it does mean pretty much the same, you know, measures of success to tell us where we are in comparison, where, where we want to be. But it was just perceived negatively by staff, so we chose to use indicators instead.

Chair Kauffman:

Good. Good.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

So there's no further questions. Thank you, Bianca and Michelle, for an excellent update. This item does not require any formal action from the Board. So that brings us the last item, which is other business. Are there any other matters the Members wish to discuss Governance matters to be clear, just to be clear a hearing, hearing none may I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

Sherburne Abbott:

So moved.

Charles Bell:

So moved.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Shere beat you to it, Chuck, but good, good try. All in favor?

Members of the Committee:

Aye. Aye. Aye.

Arturo Garcia-Costas:

Any opposed? Hearing? No opposition. The motion carries. The meeting is adjourned.

Bianca Shaw:

Thank you.